Media and Populism

1st Lisbon Winter School for the Study of Communication

CATÓLICA
CECC · RESEARCH CENTRE FOR COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE
LISBOA

CENTER FOR
MEDIA
@RISK

1st LISBON
WINTER SCHOOL
FOR THE STUDY OF COMMUNICATION
MEDIA AND POPULISM

Media and Populism, 1st Lisbon Winter School for the Study of Communication

15-19 January 2019

CONVENORS:

Nelson Ribeiro, Universidade Católica Portuguesa
Barbie Zelizer, Center for Media at Risk, Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania
Francis Lee, Chinese University of Hong Kong
Risto Kunelius, University of Helsinki

Table of Contents

FOREWORD
Nelson Ribeiro and Barbie Zelizer

The Lisbon Winter School for the Study of Communication is a response to two troubling conditions of the contemporary moment: Firstly, it recognizes that doctoral students researching the challenges posed by contemporary phenomena in media and communication need new fora to foster discussion in real time of ideas and theories that may help them grasp more fully rapidly changing realities. Secondly, it aims to facilitate global discussions at a time marked by political and cultural polarization and the resurgence of nationalisms that diminish claims to identity and otherness.

As previously-stable political institutions are today being challenged by political actors who aim to transform the central structures of democratic societies, media scrutiny is being rejected widely as a forum for discussing ideas with those who think differently. In these circumstances, scholars cannot afford the luxury of being detached from everyday life and the problems being faced by increasingly polarized and divided societies. Instead, they must play a role in the analysis of current events, problems and issues. The call to act is being felt worldwide by academics who believe that knowledge and dialogue should be the grounds for understanding current times. Given the central role played by communication technologies in framing the public debates about the choices we ought to make or avoid as a society, researchers in media and communication needs to engage in these discussions and promote safe havens for intellectual debates that can help understand the contemporary phenomena that are impacting our societies.

The establishment of the Lisbon Winter School for the Study of Communication speaks to this call to act in times of uncertainty amidst the rise of anti-elitist and anti-science discourses. The School aims to contribute to the training of a new generation of media and communication scholars engaged with fostering a nuanced understanding of contemporary phenomena and their link to political, cultural, social and economic contexts. Functioning as a global intellectual hub, the Lisbon Winter School is set to take place annually, bringing together different groups of researchers delve into what is more and less understood and/or recognized about an enigmatic and emergent topic of current concern.

Organized by the Research Center for Communication and Culture (CECC) and hosted by the Faculty of Human Sciences at Universidade Católica Portuguesa in Lisbon, the Winter School for the Study of Communication follows the impulses that propelled the establishment of the Center for Media at Risk at the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School for Communication—launched in April of 2018 as a forum for scholars and practitioners to strategize about media at risk of political intimidation and to clarify possible mechanisms of resistance. The topic selected for the 1st edition – Media and Populism – speaks to the intellectual agenda we aim to pursue with the Winter School. Grounded on two focal points—temporal immediacy and geographic variability—we hope to discuss the role played by the media while taking into account how contemporary phenomena can assume different characteristics in different geographical and cultural locations. We also aim to track how distinct issues, events and personalities that emerge in one region might have ties to others that appear unrelated. Contemporary populism reflects these two focal points. While it has emerged all over the globe, namely in three of the most populous countries in the world, it assumes different local characteristics and is marked by networks of collaboration that operate worldwide. The participation of Nigel Farage in the US presidential campaign of 2016 is only one example of the repertoire of connections that currently tie international populist movements together.

In its 1st edition the Lisbon Winter School hosted 30 graduate students and post-doctoral researchers from 19 countries. In addition to the organizing committee – Nelson Ribeiro, Barbie Zelizer, Francis Lee and Risto Kunelius - additional scholars delivered lectures on the topic of populism and the media, including Ruth Wodak, Rolien Hoyng, Karin Wahl-Jorgensen, Sarah Banet-Weiser and Silvio Waisbord. All keynotes are published in this volume, made possible through a collaboration between the Center for Media at Risk **(www.ascmediarisk.org)** at

the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School for Communication and the Research Center for Communication and Culture **(www.fch.lisboa.ucp. pt/cecc)** at the Universidade Católica Portuguesa.

We share this volume in hopes that doing so may help instill better understanding of current conditions related to media and populism worldwide. We hope that it will offset—even if in a small fashion—the recurrent character of so many of today's troubling developments. By fostering the ongoing discussion of similar and divergent experiences in multiple locations, we hope to help develop the critical skills of a new generation of media and communication researchers, on whose efforts the future of the field rests.

The Emergence of Contemporary Populisms and Mediated Discourses: An Introduction

Jennifer R. Henrichsen

Populism is on the rise in numerous countries around the world. It has re-emerged in some countries and relied on existing power structures in others. Its visibility and representation has increased in some nations while swiftly and suddenly moving into the mainstream political environment in yet others. Populist discourse often involves a charismatic leader who is presented as an embodiment of the people's will in contrast to elite or established institutions. Such a leader is also presented as the only individual who can solve seemingly intractable problems that affect "the people." Although populist movements have myriad characteristics which differ from one another based on contexts and cultures, all forms of populism involve some aspect of mediated communication.

The media amplify and circulate messages which inspire particular affective responses among members of the population. Leaders utilize the media to create a shared community and an emotional bond between themselves and the people. The media have been co-opted to foster and perpetuate an "us versus them" discourse and hate speech against formulations of the "other" at various points throughout history. Technological mechanisms for such dissemination have evolved over time although the onus of keeping an "us versus them" formulation visible in the media has remained a priority for populist politicians.

In recent years, however, neo-populist contemporary movements have operated in a cultural environment saturated with populist media (Waisbord, 2003) and the emergence of rituals and practices that foster the prominence of populist discourses (Mazzoleni, 2003; Kramer, 2014). Thus, neo-populism and the media have a symbiotic relationship in part because coverage of politics follows an entertainment model based on shock-value, controversy and emotional rather than rational discourse.

Despite this synergistic relationship between populism and the media, journalists and other media practitioners are often vulnerable to threats and attacks by populist politicians who aim to use the media to extend their political power. As such, governmental actors attempt to reduce the autonomy and legitimacy of journalists when the press acts in critical and inconvenient ways.

Drawing from this context, in which both right and left-wing populist movements make savvy use of the media while attacking their existence and practices, speakers at the first Lisbon Winter School on Media and Populism in January 2019 focused on the role of the media in populist formations. Scholars examined how populists and media practitioners interact, how populism is represented in the media and how populists use media to connect with supporters and marginalize individuals voicing political discontent in various countries and across different time periods. The threat posed to freedom of information by populist movements is central, but it is part of a larger information ecosystem that raises critical questions about the capacity of the media writ large – journalism, documentary,

entertainment, digital spaces – to wrestle with issues and problems that trouble the essence of populist appeal.

This book provides a response to this challenge through its curated collection of keynote speeches delivered at the inaugural Lisbon Winter School on Media and Populism, which was jointly organized by the Faculty of Human Sciences (Universidade Católica Portuguesa), the Annenberg School for Communication (University of Pennsylvania), the Faculty of Communication Sciences (University of Tampere), and the School of Journalism and Communication (Chinese University of Hong Kong). The speeches transcribed for this collection aim to uncover what is familiar and distinctive about manifestations of populism around the globe by examining the phenomenon through a critical lens and across temporal and mnemonic landscapes.

In her chapter, "Entering the 'Post-Shame Era'", Ruth Wodak traces the emergence of a post-shame era following the increase in populism, illiberal democracy and neo-authoritarianism in Europe. She argues that present-day society is living in a post-shame era characterized by anti-elitist rhetoric, symbolic politics, 'digital demagogy', 'bad manners' and anti-political sentiment. Populist politicians who have rejected liberal values of dialogue, agreed upon norms and established conventions associated with the European Union project have embraced these authoritarian characteristics and engaged in their "shameless normalization," which is paving the way to illiberalism in previously strong democracies, including Austria, the United Kingdom, Italy and the Netherlands. Wodak calls on scholars and practitioners to develop new narratives, public spaces and communication modes and policies to ensure that the achievements of pluralistic and enlightenment liberal democracies are not shattered in this new era.

In contrast, in his essay "Idealizing History and Controlling the Media: Common Patterns in Populism and Authoritarianism," Nelson Ribeiro examines the phenomenon of populism through the lens of Umberto Eco's (1995) concept of "eternal fascism," or the idea that fascism is a political game with numerous forms and is not a homogenous political doctrine. Through the case of the former Portuguese dictatorship, The New State, Ribeiro shows how contemporary populism, with its different democratic contexts and levels of repression, has similarities with authoritarian regimes during the interwar period and utilizes fascist elements to obtain and maintain power and control.

Meanwhile, Francis Lee takes us across the ocean to Hong Kong to assess how we should understand the relationship between populism, the media (especially digital and social media) and the dynamics of contentious politics. In his chapter, "Populisms, Media and the Dynamics of Contentious Politics," Lee shows how inefficient governance and stagnant democratization led to contentious politics in Hong Kong, which, in turn, contributed to the rise of populist localism and state-sponsored populism since 2010. Lee argues that the development of these populist discourses is emblematic of a process of contesting and negotiating the repertoire of social movement discourses. He shows how social media are a contributory condition for the rise of populism and that social media become part of the dynamics of populism by contributing to populism's scale and speed.

Rolien Hoyng also assesses the intersections of state power, populism and digital media but in the context of Turkey and through the lens of digital intimacy. In her article, "Digital Intimacy and its Metadata: Rethinking Populism," Hoyng examines the relationship between the micropolitics of affect, state power and digital infrastructure. She assesses how digital intimacy reconfigures or displaces populism by examining the connectedness of human relations and the connectivity of algorithmic processing within social media. Using examples from social-media campaigns that occurred during regime change in Turkey as well as Turkey's military mobilization in Syria and its deepening economic crisis, Hoyng challenges the notion that the crowd is homogenous and scary because it undermines the notion of liberal and "rational" subjectivity. Instead, she argues that the crowd is dangerous as a result of its disconnections and erasures which are facilitated through digital media. Thus, she claims it is important to question in what ways and to what extent affect and intimacy are technologically captured, exploited and articulated into projects of authoritarianism and othering.
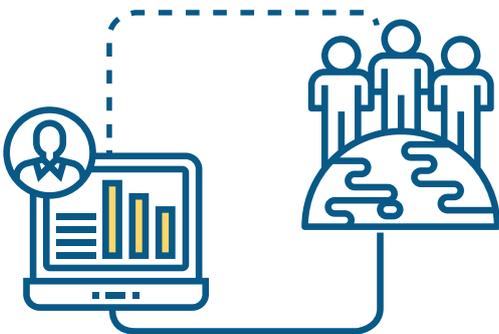
In her essay, "Media and the Emotional Politics of Populism," Karin Wahl-Jorgensen uses the case study of Donald Trump to examine the relationship between anger, populist politics and media coverage. Wahl-Jorgensen argues that Trump embodies "angry populism" or a rhetoric which aims for broad appeal through the strategic and deliberate expression of anger. This form of populism represents a shift in William Reddy's (2001) concept of an "emotional regime" or a "set of normative emotions, and the official rituals, practices and emotives (emotion words) that express and inculcate them" which are perceived

as essential for any stable political regime. Wahl-Jorgensen observes that anger works for Trump and appears to be a resource for populist politics more generally. Anger also has a home with Trump's supporters. This unspecified anger of Trump's supporters, as shown through mediated discourse, suggests that anger is essential to their identity and worldviews and it reveals that Trump embodies a particular brand of exclusionary populism that depends upon performative anger in order to dramatize grievances. As such, Trump's anger has provided an important mode of understanding his presidency and brand of populism. Wahl-Jorgensen argues that the emotional regime of angry populism is concerning because of the anger it embodies, the emotional climate it creates and the actions (such as hate crimes) that it facilitates. Thus, mediated anger in political life is a distinctive formation. Yet it can continue to be contested as collective and political emotions are dynamic and ever-changing.

Meanwhile, Sarah Banet-Weiser shifts the conversation from angry populism to anger toward women as emblematized by a rise in popular misogyny. In her chapter, "Popular Feminism and Popular Misogyny," she examines how and in what ways the rise of popular feminism has invited a response and an intensification of popular misogyny, or the idea that women have taken something essential and important away from men and thus that men are the real victims. Banet-Weiser argues that popular feminism is characterized by confidence, competence, rage and shame, characteristics which are then taken up and distorted by misogynists who actively target women with them. Popular misogyny can be considered a type of populism because it mobilizes a particular kind of networked movement and it is about a shared sense of victimhood and a desire and a perceived right to

take things back. Both popular feminism and popular misogyny are popular because they manifest in discourses and practices that are circulated in popular and commercial media, they have a condition of being liked or admired by like-minded people, and the popular, following Stuart Hall, is a terrain of struggle where competing demands for power battle one another. Banet-Weiser argues that popular misogyny is deeply connected with neoliberalism which operates as a structuring force that is both popular and networked and thus produces a populism that finds coherence and a shared sense of victimhood and which aims to recuperate and restore norms of dominant masculinity, patriarchy and whiteness.

In their keynote speeches which concluded the conference,Zelizer and Silvio Waisbord took a critical look at contemporary journalism and media practice and offered ways to improve on both in the future. In her essay, "Why Journalism Needs to Change," Zelizer draws from Federico Finchelstein to argue that contemporary populism developed in the absence of fascist movements following WWII and amidst the emergence of a bipolar world which pitted capitalism against communism and the West against the East. In this black and white world, populism percolated and morphed into whatever was necessary to fill the in-between space. Populism also took on the colors of fascism to an extent to make democracy more authoritarian. The ensuing form of democracy thus depended on a charismatic leader, an apocalyptic view of the future, anti-elitism and anti-institutionalism, and an anti-pluralist view of popular representation. Populism became a counterpoint to liberalism, the Enlightenment and an undercurrent of Cold War thinking.

The resultant contemporary authoritarian populism impacts and shapes democratic institutions, including journalism. Yet, rather than respond to populism by critically dissecting it, many journalists and journalisms have facilitated the conditions necessary for populism to flourish. This has occurred for a variety of reasons including journalism's entrenchment in a Cold War mindset, which has informed its binary thinking, its compliance and deference to the status quo, tendency toward simplification and its adherence

to long-standing conventions of objectivity, neutrality, impartiality and balance. Zelizer argues that journalists need to find and adopt a less reactive, defensive, deferent, dichotomized, objective and impartial stance to more critically, thoroughly and effectively cover the rise of contemporary authoritarian populism. However, journalists by and large are not yet doing so. Instead, they continue to resist change and their non-reflective mindset continues to entrench and naturalize a non-critical and compliant response to authoritarian power dynamics that prevents journalists from being able to contest contemporary authoritarian trends. Zelizer calls on journalists to better understand how authoritarianism is invading the institutional landscape rather than shrinking from challenging it because they are worried about reduced access to sources, criticism from powerful figures, or because it may not contribute to the bottom line. According to Zelizer, journalists' "deep memory of Cold War mindedness" may help ease occupational dissonance but it also results in a blindness to ideological inconsistences and an inability to see the dissolution of tenets of liberal democracies.

Similarly, Silvio Waisbord argues for changes in the media landscape as well as in the academic environment. In his essay, "Ideas for Comparative Studies of Populism, Media and Communication," Waisbord calls on academics to not only focus on the causes of populism but to figure out ways for societies to emerge from populist environments. Waisbord argues that this is best achieved through a rigorous comparative approach that examines the relationship between media and populism. Waisbord acknowledges that populism is difficult to define because it has amorphous conditions and characteristics, yet he notes that a consistent tenet of populism is that it pits one group against another
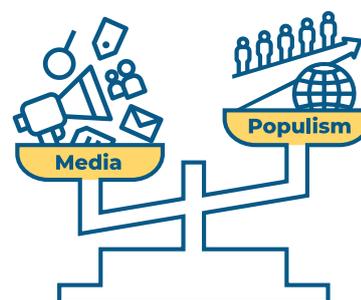
Such an oppositional approach can swiftly devolve into treatment of the other as an enemy, which implicates implicates authoritarianism. Thus, Waisbord argues that populism sits at the edge of democracy because it refuses to recognize diversity and can quickly devolve into antiliberal democracy which has no patience for critical thinking, critical journalism or critical opposition.

The essays in this volume traverse complicated manifestations of populism and the media, as they are inflected by different democratic and historical contexts. They reveal the ways in which populism simultaneously relies on and strives to undermine the media and populism's continued power to divide and demonize people into "us versus them" categories. The authors underscore the complexity of populisms and the mediated discourses associated with them and they also point to the need for urgent and in-depth understandings of the phenomenon as it rises in power and frequency across many countries around the world. Their calls for urgent changes in journalistic practice and academic focus are important to heed if citizens want to help ensure that liberal democracies survive in these increasingly populist and authoritarian times.

REFERENCES

• Krämer, B. (2014). Media Populism: A Conceptual Clarification and Some Theses on Its Effects. *Communication Theory, 24* (1), 42-60.
• Mazzoleni, G. (2003). *The Media and Neo-populism: A Contemporary Comparative Analysis*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
• Waisbord, S. (2003). Media Populism: Neo-Populism in Latin America. In G. Mazzoleni, J. Stewart, & B. Horsfield (Eds.). *The Media and Neo-populism: A Contemporary Comparative Analysis* (pp. 198-216). Westport, CT: Praeger.

Entering
the "Post-Shame Era"

Ruth Wodak

INTRODUCTION

On 17 July 2018, former US president Barack Obama was invited to give the Nelson Mandela Annual Lecture in Johannesburg. In his speech, he warned that:
"A politics of fear and resentment and retrenchment began to appear, and that kind of politics is now on the move … I am not being alarmist, I am simply stating the facts. … Strongman politics are ascendant suddenly, whereby elections and some pretence of democracy are maintained – the form of it – but those in power seek to undermine every institution or norm that gives democracy meaning."

Obviously, Obama did not use the terms 'illiberal democracy', 'neo-authoritarianism' or 'populism' (or other terms which currently dominate social-science scholarship and media reporting), but he certainly put his finger on the drastic socio-political changes that have been taking place globally, including in EU member states, specifically since the so-called 'refugee crisis' of 2015 (Rheindorf and Wodak, 2018).

Indeed, as a study on 'Fear not values' conducted by de Vries and Hoffman (2016) in eight EU member states illustrates, over 50% of the voters for far-right parties viewed *globalisation* as the major threat in the future.Moreover, 53% of those who fear *globalisation* perceive migration as the major global challenge, and 54% display anti-foreigner sentiments. In a similar vein, political scientist Ivan Krastev concludes in his widely acknowledged essay *Europadämmerung* (2017: 48–49) that the 'refugee crisis' of 2015 might eventually lead to the destruction of the EU.

STUDY ON 'FEAR NOT VALUES' CONDUCTED BY DE VRIES AND HOFFMAN (2016)

50% of the voters for far-right parties viewed globalisation as the major threat in the future

53% of those who fear globalisation perceive migration as the major global challenge

54% display anti-foreigner sentiments
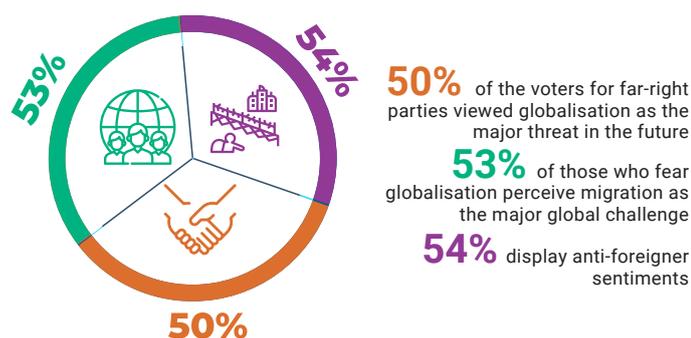
Although many politicians at EU and national levels, as well as other prominent public intellectuals, are explicitly warning against the European and global drift towards more (ethno-)nationalism, illiberal democracies and authoritarianism – and thus against violations of human rights, international treaties and EU norms and values (for example, Otmar Karas, Emanuel Macron, and Jürgen Habermas) – official responses on the part of the EU have been slow and follow complex, institutionally defined procedures (Article 7 of the European Treaty). Along these lines, Grabbe and Lehne (2017b: 8) state that:

"EU actors must therefore explain why they have to protect core EU standards and make it clear that steps will be taken against any government that undermines EU law. Strong statements from other Central European governments would be particularly helpful. The EU can also counter claims of double standards by getting tougher on bad behaviour by member states across the board, particularly on corruption and misuse of public funds."

Due to space restrictions, I will have to neglect the institutional struggles on the EU level and the various attempts to negotiate with Hungary and Poland, but those have been covered extensively by Uitz (2015), Kerski (2018), and Möllers and Schneider (2018). Uitz (2015: 293–295) also provides compelling evidence for the impossibility of drawing on the agreed-upon conventions of *dialoguing*, *negotiating* and *compromising*, if one of the partners in these interactions does not want to comply with the established rules of such language games (Wodak, 2015a, 2017): this precludes 'productive dialogue' (Utiz, 2015: 294). The Hungarian and Polish governments seem convinced that these conventions do not apply to them and are driven 'by the urge to establish exceptions, in the spirit of constitutional parochialism' (Utiz, 2015: 296). In other words, context-dependent discursive strategies of blame avoidance, denial, Manichean division, victim-perpetrator reversal and eristic argumentation dominate official communication, accompanied by ever increasing nationalism, chauvinism and nativism.

In this vein, I claim that this kind of rejection of dialogue relates to a *'post-shame era'* rather than, as many scholars believe, merely to a 'post-truth era' (for example, Scheff, 2000; Hahl et al, 2018): anti-elitist and anti-pluralist/exclusionary rhetoric, symbolic politics (such as focusing on the 'headscarves' of Muslim women while neglecting complex socioeconomic issues associated with migration and integration), 'digital demagogy', 'bad manners' and 'anti-politics' support the non-complying behaviours of powerful politicians that frequently resonate as 'authentic' with the core followers of these politicians, their parties or governments. Instead of discussing and providing solutions for major socio-political problems such as globally rising inequality and youth unemployment, and the consequences of climate change for migration politics, refugees and migrants serve as *the* scapegoat and simplistic explanation for all woes. Against this background, 'anti-politics' is defined as a specific attitude and related discourse which systematically undermine democratic institutions (Diehl, 2017: 28–29). The state itself, the entire political system, is challenged, like in reality TV: shamelessness, humiliation of other participants, defamation, lies and ad hominem attacks dominate. Indeed, such shameless behaviour could be observed, for example, in several TV debates during the presidential election campaign in Austria in 2016, employed by the far-right populist candidate (for the Freedom Party of Austria, FPÖ), Norbert Hofer (Wodak, 2017). Mastropaolo (2000: 36) mentions similar patterns of scandalisation, *'politicotainment'* and the decay of democratic procedures in Italian politics in the 1990s (Wodak, 2011).

In this paper, I trace the trajectory of the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) in its transformation into the 'New People's Party' under Chancellor Sebastian Kurz, recently entering a coalition government with the populist extreme-right FPÖ. This allows me to identify the many small and large changes that Austria has undergone on the way from a constitutional liberal democracy since 1945 to a potentially Orbánesque illiberal democracy, thus indicating some limits of the liberal democratic European project envisioned by the founding fathers. This, I argue, must be recognised as a process of *'normalisation'* – the normalisation

of far-right ideologies in both content and form. This process can also be observed in the Netherlands, where Geert Wilders' Party for Freedom (PVV) has exerted much influence on the mainstream, labelled the 'Geert Wilders-effect'. Thus, specific patterns and stages of the Austrian trajectory can most probably be generalised to other EU member states. In this context, I will also discuss some constitutive discursive strategies of the *post-shame era*, the adaptation and integration of illiberalism and authoritarianism into formerly liberal democratic regimes. First, however, I shall briefly define the relevant concepts mentioned above and necessarily restrict myself to briefly elaborating on 'populism', 'authoritarianism/ neo-authoritarianism' and 'illiberal democracy/managed democracy'.
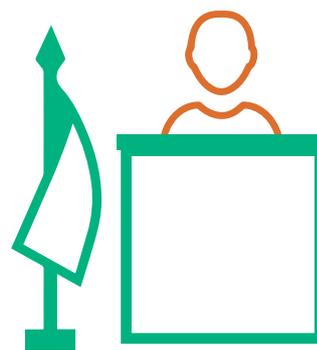
DEFINING RELEVANT CONCEPTS

POPULISM

There is no consensus as to whether 'far-right populism/populist right-wing extremism' is an ideology (*thin* or *thick*; Kriesi and Pappas, 2015: 5), a philosophy (Priester, 2007: 9), a specific media phenomenon (Pajnik and Sauer, 2017), a strategic option for right-wing extremists like the strategies used by the Nazi Party in the 1930s and 1940s (Salzborn, 2018) or a specific political style (Moffitt, 2017; Brubaker, 2017: 3) that manifests mainly in performance and communication. In their frequently cited approach, Mudde and Kaltwasser (2017: 9–12) emphasise three parameters of populism: first, the opposition between 'the people' and 'the corrupt elite'; second, a grounding in the *volonté générale* of the people; third, its character as a *thin* ideology, because it does not constitute a coherent structure of beliefs but assembles contradictory ideologemes in an

eclectic fashion. As Mudde and Kaltwasser do not restrict their definition to the populist far right, the notion of 'the people' refers to the people as both sovereign (*demos*) and the common people. Moreover, it can refer to the people as *ethnos*. Furthermore, the notion of 'the elite' is differentiated into elites with (cultural, economic or social) power and elites defined on purely ethnic grounds. Finally, the *volonté générale* is equated with the general will of the people in Jean-Jacques Rousseau's sense.

This rather general definition must be specified – four dimensions are crucial in the context of recent political developments in the EU (Wodak, 2015a: 20–22, 25–33):

• *NATIONALISM/NATIVISM/ANTI-PLURALISM:* Far-right populist parties stipulate a seemingly *homogenous ethnos*, a *populum or Volk*, which can be arbitrarily defined – often in nativist (blood-related) terms. Such parties value the *homeland or Heimat*, which seems to require protection from dangerous invaders. In this way, *threat scenarios* are constructed – the homeland or the 'we' is threatened by 'others': strangers within *and/or* outside society.

• *ANTI-ELITISM:* Such parties share an anti-elitist and anti-intellectual attitude (*'arrogance of ignorance'*; Wodak, 2015a) related to strong EU scepticism. According to these parties, democracy should essentially be reduced to the majoritarian principe, that is, the rule of the (arbitrarily defined) 'true people'.

• *AUTHORITARIANISM:* A *saviour, a charismatic leader* is worshipped, alternating between the role of Robin Hood (protecting the welfare state, supporting the 'simple folk') and the 'strict father' (Lakoff, 2004). Such charismatic leaders require a hierarchically structured party and government to guarantee 'law and order' and 'security'.

• *CONSERVATIVISM/HISTORICAL REVISIONISM:* Far-right populist parties usually represent *conservative values* (emphasising family values) and insist on preserving the status quo or a return to former, 'better' times. The aim of protecting the homeland also builds on a *shared narrative of the past* in which *'we'* are either heroes or victims of evil (a conspiracy, enemies of the *fatherland*, and so on). This transforms past suffering or defeat into stories of the successes of the people or into stories of betrayal and treachery by others. Social *welfare*, in the concomitant welfare *chauvinism*, should only be given to 'true' members of the *ethnos*.

Although not all far-right populist parties endorse all of the above, these – realised in specific combinations – can be generalised as typical ideologies of the far right. In all cases, such parties will advocate *change*, moving away from an allegedly dangerous path – a looming crisis – that would lead straight to catastrophe.

ILLIBERAL DEMOCRACY

The distinction between 'liberal/constitutional democracies' and 'illiberal democracies' is not new. The salient criterion for the existence of a liberal democracy is constitutionalism in the sense of checks and balances designed to protect the state and its society from the accumulation of power and the abuse of office. According to Zakaria (1997: 23–24), who coined the term, illiberal democracies are increasing around the world and are increasingly limiting the freedoms of the people they represent (such as civil liberties of speech or religion). Nevertheless, the term 'illiberal democracy' remains a contested concept (see Krastev, 2006).

Since its public use in 2014 by Hungarian Prime Minster Victor Orbán, leader of the far-right/nationalistic-conservative party Fidesz, 'illiberal democracy' has entered everyday discourse in Europe and has been appropriated by some politicians as a positive model to be followed; and as a political system to be vehemently opposed by others. In his speech on 30 July 2014, Orbán maintained that: the new state that we are

constructing in Hungary is an illiberal state, a nonliberal state. It does not reject the fundamental principles of liberalism such as freedom, and I could list a few more, but it does not make this ideology the central element of state organization, but instead includes a different, special, national approach.

speech by Minster Victor Orbán 30 July 2014

Here, Orbán defines 'illiberal democracy' as rejecting tolerance for minorities while supporting strong forms of majoritarianism. He emphasises his belief in nationalism (Hungary's uniqueness vis-à-vis the EU and the other 27 EU member states) and exceptionalism. The Hungarian Constitution, which was revised and accepted by the Hungarian Parliament on 25 April 2011, reflects Fidesz's illiberal values by, for example, cutting the freedom of the press, reforming the electoral system in unfair ways, and challenging and undermining the independence of justice (Uitz, 2015: 285–288; Grabbe and Lehne, 2017a). In Poland, similar developments are taking place under the nationalistic-conservative government of the Law and Justice Party (PiS) and its leader Jarosław Kaczyński (Grabbe and Lehne, 2017b; Kerski, 2018). Of course, gerrymandering and using the resources of the state on a very large scale to ensure a sweeping full-majority victory would not necessarily imply fraudulent elections in a formal sense, but the boundaries of legality are shamelessly pushed as far as possible (Uitz, 2015). Indeed, Sutowski (2018: 17–18) labels the new Polish way as 'neo-authoritarianism'.

Thus, liberal democracies cannot be defined solely by the fact that elections are formally held; as Möllers and Schneider (2018: 7–9) maintain, the

protection of oppositional parties and movements, freedom of opinion and the press, fair elections and independence of the judicial system must be guaranteed. Therefore, the authors argue that potential future majorities must be protected: the opposition must retain the institutional opportunities to win majorities in a future election (pp 89–90). This specific criterion is necessary, the authors argue, to prevent the rise of an authoritarian system.

(NEO-)AUTHORITARIANISM

Fuchs (2018: 56–58) defines *right-wing/neo-authoritarianism* by drawing on the traditions of the Frankfurt School (specifically Franz Neumann and T.W. Adorno) along four similar dimensions, namely: *Nationalism, Friend/Enemy-Scheme, Authoritarian Leadership* and *Patriarchy and Militarism.* Two elements stand out in Fuchs' conceptual framework: political fetishism of the nation 'to deflect attention from class contradictions and power inequalities'; moreover, 'leader fetishism is used as a political organization principle that often extends to the organization of the capitalist economy, culture and everyday life' (p 56). Secondly, Fuchs emphasises the glorification of the soldier and warrior; indeed violence, imperialism and war are accepted 'as appropriate ways for organizing social relations' (p 57). Fuchs' neo-Marxist framework allows understanding the link between the neoliberal world order and the rise of illiberal democracies as well as neo-authoritarian regimes.

Nationalism

Friend/Enemy-Scheme

Authoritarian Leadership

Patriarchy and Militarism

Mudde (2007: 22) also draws on the Frankfurt School but subscribes to a more socio-psychological tradition: authoritarianism is defined as 'a general disposition to glorify, to be subservient to and remain uncritical towards authoritative figures of the ingroup and to take an attitude of punishing outgroup figures in the name of some moral authority' (Adorno et al, 1969:228,). However, Mudde also points to Juan Linz's influential definition of authoritarianism as a form of government characterised by strong central power and limited individual freedoms. Following Linz (1964), four dimensions are emphasised as salient elements of an authoritarian government:

- limited political pluralism places constraints on political parties, interest groups and NGOs;

- legitimacy is largely dependent on emotions, on identification with the regime;

- suppression of the opposition; and,

- vague and non-transparent definitions of the powers of the executive.

Obviously, these criteria overlap with the definitions of illiberal democracy mentioned above.

Furthermore, Levitsky and Way (2002) point to another relevant concept: 'competitive authoritarianism', which differs from so-called 'façade' electoral regimes (also labelled 'pseudo-democracies', 'virtual democracies' and 'electoral authoritarian'), that is regimes in which electoral institutions exist but yield no meaningful contestation of power (such as Egypt, Singapore and Uzbekistan in the 1990s). Competitive authoritarianism implies regimes that are democratic in appearance but authoritarian in nature; thus, democratic institutions exist in form but not in substance, because the electoral, legislative, judicial, media and other institutions are so heavily skewed in favour of current power holders. Russia under President Vladimir Putin, the authors claim, would fall within the category of competitive authoritarianism. In a detailed comparative study of media systems, Becker (2004: 149) regards the Russian press under Putin as a neo-authoritarian media system. He argues that 'state-owned media have limited autonomy, and appointments to key positions are linked to political loyalty. Access to the media may be open and private ownership may be tolerated, but other mechanisms are used to control messages.' Economic and legal pressures are applied to suppress freedom of opinion. The regime also uses or tolerates violence against opposition journalists and editors. In this way, self-censorship is reinforced.

As will be elaborated later, the Austrian government coalition between ÖVP and FPÖ has placed severe controls on information and is attempting to intervene in the public state-owned media; this could certainly be regarded as a significant step in the direction of an illiberal democracy and a neo-authoritarian media system. Such developments clearly point to the limit of EUrope as envisioned and indeed as stipulated, for example, in the European Treaty of Lisbon 2008–09.
The Austrian 'Freedom Party' (Freiheitliche Partei

THE TURQUOISE-BLUE GOVERNMENT IN AUSTRIA, 2017–18

LOOKING BACK: THE RISE OF THE FPÖ

Österreichs, FPÖ) must be distinguished from other populist far-right parties in terms of its history and continuous ties to National Socialism, as well as its nativist, anti-immigrant, anti-pluralist and white-supremacist ideology. Today, one might consider labelling the party as populist extreme-right, owing to some of its ideological characteristics, as well as its leading members who belong to German-national duelling fraternities (see below).

After Heinz-Christian (HC) Strache took control of the FPÖ in 2005, frontstage activities of the party saw a softening of extreme-right positions and an increase in the salient mobilisation of symbols of banal nationalism (Billig, 1995): displaying the Austrian flag, singing the national anthem and utilizing an abundance of other symbols of national pride. In many instances, the respective texts and performances feature Strache himself wielding these symbols (see Figure 1), portraying the FPÖ politicians as brave, strong and skilled mountaineers who have climbed to the very mountain top, and subsequently addressing their role as the saviours of 'true Austrians'.

With Strache's leadership came

a re-branding of the FPÖ as the 'Soziale Heimatpartei', the Social Homeland Party (a label it shares with the extreme-right National Democratic Party of Germany, NPD). Further provocations relate to the use of religious imagery and symbols (for example, Strache carried a Christian cross during a demonstration against the building of a Mosque in Vienna; Wodak, 2015a: 140), as well as the redefining of religious concepts, such as Nächstenliebe (neighbourly love or charity) in nationalistic terms. The accompanying claims
to represent and 'defend' the Christian heritage of Austria in the face of an alleged 'Islamic invasion' have been protested, inter alia, by the Catholic Church. Indeed, the FPÖ's 'othering' has come to focus strongly on Islam, cast as an ethnic other, medieval/ pre-modern/ barbaric and religious zealot/ fanatic or terrorist threat (Wodak, 2017: 116–117; Wodak and Rheindorf, 2018).
The Austrian parliamentary elections

Figure 1 | Harald Vilimsky (Party Secretary and MEP, Europe of Nations and Freedom Party), HC Strache, Johann Gudenus (Deputy-Mayor of Vienna; since 2018, MP and FPÖ whip) and Herbert Kickl (Party Secretary; since 2018, Minister for Interior Affairs) brandishing the Austrian flag at the Großglockner peak, Austria's highest mountain (Strache, 2017)

2017 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

on 15 October 2017 exemplify the shameless normalisation of the previously far-right positionings of the FPÖ. The ÖVP (now rebranded as 'Ballot Sebastian Kurz – The New People's Party', strategically changing colour from black to turquoise) focused almost exclusively on migration issues (equating all refugees with so-called 'illegal migrants'). This new programme changed the agenda and structure of the ÖVP, which had been established immediately after the restoration of Austria's independence in 1945 and has been represented in parliament ever since. The ÖVP has consistently been the strongest or second-strongest party; as such, it has led or at least been a partner in most of Austria's governments (Grande et al, 2012: 52). Sebastian Kurz, who had strategically prepared to take over the ÖVP since mid-2016 (as was disclosed by newspapers in June 2017), was elected as party leader on 1 July 2017, after his predecessor had resigned, and immediately changed the structure of the 'grand old party': he surrounded

himself with an extremely loyal team of mostly young male supporters and with politically inexperienced career-changers who are completely dependent on him. He employs a large team of spin doctors who cleverly manage his online presence and his campaign, apparently copying many elements of US election rallies (see Horaczek and Tóth, 2017; Hofer and Tóth, 2017). In this way, the party has become identified with his persona to the point where Kurz is the new ÖVP with a strict centralised, hierarchical structure.
Apart from proposing to dismantle the social

partnership (and thus one of the constitutive cornerstones of the Austrian social model) and support employers' organisations, the new ÖVP repeatedly promised to close the 'Mediterranean route' to migration; to reduce the legally fixed minimum welfare (for recognised refugees but also for other people in need); moreover, to reduce the upper limit for asylum applicants, in effect since 2016, from 35,000 to zero (although the number of new arrivals since 2015 has decreased dramatically). In so doing, Kurz adopted almost verbatim the programme of the FPÖ. It is thus fitting that the Green Party referred to Kurz during the 2017 election campaign as 'the better Strache'.

Fearmongering was the persuasive macro-strategy in the FPÖ's and ÖVP's election campaigns in 2017 (Wodak, 2018a). They wilfully selected specific scapegoats as being responsible for the misery or threat identified: 'illegal migrants', Muslims and Islam, the Jewish philanthropist George Soros, NGOs, the EU and the media, as well as the previous coalition government, in which Kurz had served six years as minister for foreign affairs, and the integration of migrants. Both Strache and Kurz staged themselves as saviours of the 'true Austrian people' (see Figures 1 and 2), ready to 'solve' the alleged problems by, for instance, closing borders and deporting 'illegal migrants'.

A new, positive narrative was created, which should raise hope, advertised as an unspecified change. The stirring up of resentment by Kurz and

Figure 2 | Poster with Sebastian Kurz: 'Now or never! ÖVP, Ballot Sebastian Kurz, the new People's Party. Movement for Austria!' (personal photo)

Strache was successful at the election. The national-conservative ÖVP won a majority with 31.5%. The FPÖ took third place with 26%. Due to the substantial overlap between the political programmes of the FPÖ and ÖVP, coalition talks began soon after. The new turquoise-blue government, albeit accompanied by loud protests, was inaugurated by President Van der Bellen on 18 December 2017. During negotiations to form this government, President Alexander van der Bellen (in office since 26 January 2017) successfully prevented the Ministries of the Interior and Justice going to FPÖ officials as part of the coalition deal and pushed for the EU agenda to be relocated from the FPÖ-led Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Chancellery of Kurz. Despite all this, Van der Bellen did inaugurate the turquoise-blue coalition, notwithstanding frequent assurances to the contrary he had given while running for president.

ÖVP
31,5%
WINNER

FPÖ
26%
THIRD PLACE
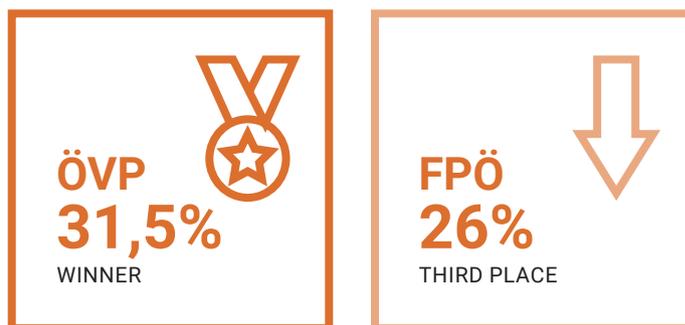
MOVING TOWARDS 'ORBÁNISM'

The ÖVP's adoption of a far-right, nationalist-conservative agenda implies the normalisation of a previously extreme-right, taboo agenda. It is thus not surprising that the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) published an editorial on 6 July 2018 – after the beginning of Austria's EU presidency on 1 July 2018 – with the headline 'Austria: When good countries go bad', thus clearly indicating the limits of EUrope with respect to the officially accepted values of the European Treaty:

"Concerns centre on a set of inter-related issues: the Austrian Government's stance on asylum

and migration; its closeness to the demagogic leaders of certain countries; its underlying anti-EU stance; its courtship with Russia.
The country's ability to play the role of the Presidency is questioned because its obsessive and biased approach to migration and its love-in with the extremists may preclude the neutrality required.
... while the threat from extremist-nationalists like the Freedom Party is clear ..., the anti-migration, anti-Europe agenda becomes far more powerful through the conversion of mainstream leaders and parties to the cause, along with their subsequent complicity in allowing institutional and political capture by the migration obsession of the bad company they decide to keep."

In the following, I briefly point to some salient indicators for Austria's move towards an illiberal democracy while focusing on the discursive and argumentative strategies accompanying new legislation.

FEARMONGERING: US AND THEM

The new Austrian government propagates an extremely restrictive immigration policy (Rheindorf and Wodak, 2018) and closed borders (even to Italy and South Tyrol), including the so-called Mediterranean route. Shamelessly, both the FPÖ and the new ÖVP are actively spreading rumours, strawman fallacies and erroneous reports about migrants and refugees – which all merge into a single threat scenario consisting of an imagined 'invasion' by so-called 'illegal migrants' (Wodak, 2018b). To sidestep the obligations of the Geneva Refugee Convention and prevent further loss of voters to the FPÖ, ÖVP politicians now define people who have been persecuted and are fleeing as 'illegal migrants' in their government programme. This implies that they are claiming to be refugees but are in fact travelling to rich European countries to live off welfare and benefits, and thereby endanger the prosperity of those countries. Such fallacies foment resentment and envy: why should foreigners gain access to benefits that take something away from 'us'? Such exclusionary and xenophobic politics – sustained and implemented by the formerly Christian-social ÖVP – correspond to the welfare chauvinism of other far-right

populists in Europe, such as the German Alternative for Germany (AfD), the Sweden Democrats or the Dutch PVV (Wodak, 2017, 2018a).

Euphemisms are used with the aim of making restrictive new migration policies acceptable: in a meeting of EU heads of state in Brussels on 28 June 2018, Kurz and his allies Orbán and Matteo Salvini (LEGA, Italy's Interior Minister) launched new terms, such as 'regional disembarkation platforms' instead of 'camps', to retain refugees in Northern Africa, thus preventing them from entering Europe. Moreover, facts about the plights of refugees are challenged and expert opinions neglected.
For example, on 22 June 2018, in an interview with the German weekly Die Zeit, editor-in-chief Giovanni Di Lorenzo asked Sebastian Kurz what he felt when confronted with videos and pictures of children who had been separated from their parents at the US–Mexico border. Kurz argued that these accounts may have been 'fake news': 'I don't want to speculate, but I have devoted myself a lot to migration. I know that frequently the mistake is being made, that something is represented differently than it is.' As Hannah Arendt (1971) asserted long ago, politicians can quickly change facts into opinions that one can then oppose – quite shamelessly – with alternative viewpoints. In this way, she argues, scholarly and factual evidence can be blunted and even negated.

ANTISEMITISM/RACISM/HISTORICAL REVISIONISM

As Hans-Hennig Scharsach (2017) argues in his book *Stille Machtergreifung* [Quiet Coup], the FPÖ's internal structures have changed significantly since HC Strache took over as leader in 2005, moving the party ever closer to the radical and extreme right: members of duelling fraternities, which make up only 0.4% of the Austrian population, have effectively taken over the FPÖ. FPÖ politicians such as Strache, Norbert Hofer (Minister for Infrastructure), Johann Gudenus and Manfred Haimbuchner (vice-governor of Upper Austria) constitute the highest leadership body of the FPÖ. They all belong to duelling fraternities (Schlagende Burschenschaften; Rauscher, 2017). Core characteristics of the extreme right, such as anti-liberalism, authoritarian leadership and subservience, a so-called Volksgemeinschaft (an ethnoculturally defined people), misogyny and racism apply to most duelling fraternities.

Immediately after the new government was formed on 18 December 2017, numerous scandals related to antisemitic and revisionist documents disrupted the everyday agenda of the government: this included Facebook posts as well as songbooks containing Nazi-songs with explicitly antisemitic stereotypes which are typical of such extreme-right duelling fraternities. Moreover, the FPÖ's Herbert Kickl, now Interior Minister, proposed 'to concentrate people who enter asylum procedures in one place, because it must be our common interest to reach a corresponding result very, very quickly'.

Obviously, the phrase 'to concentrate people' invites associations with the Nazi term 'concentration camp'. The centre-left broadsheet *Der Standard* maintains and continuously updates a list of euphemistically labelled 'singular events' [Einzelfälle] of antisemitism and revisionism which have been occurring on an almost weekly basis and keep the FPÖ in the headlines. Conspiracy theories have become a salient strategy in this context. They draw on the traditional antisemitic world-conspiracy stereotype which also characterised and continues to characterize Nazi and fascist ideologies (Richardson, 2017). For example, Hungarian Prime Minister Victor Orbán published a list of 200 so-called 'Soros mercenaries' (including scholars, journalists, intellectuals and NGOs, who allegedly supported the Jewish Hungarian-American philanthropist) who are trying to help refugees in Hungary. Indeed, Soros has been demonised via such traditional antisemitic conspiracy stereotypes as the primary *Feindbild* of Hungary and, subsequently, also of the FPÖ (Wodak, 2018b).

Symbolic politics intentionally and strategically distract and divert from unpopular reforms implemented by the government and dominate the media. For example, Harald Waldhäusl, FPÖ councillor in Lower Austria, challenged the slaughtering of animals according to Jewish and Muslim rites, and proposed monitoring and registering orthodox Jews who bought such meat – as was to be expected, this provoked
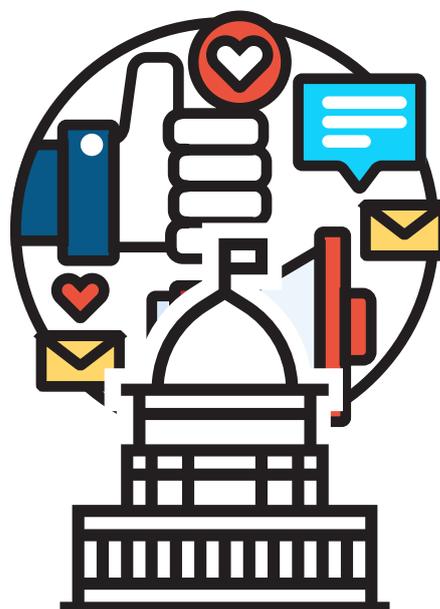
a media scandal and negative responses by the opposition and the Jewish community. Another highly emotional issue relates to the Muslim headscarf: for years, the FPÖ has been protesting 'the headscarf' as a symbol of female oppression (an example of the *'right-wing populist perpetuum mobile'*; see

Wodak, 2015a). The government has proposed forbidding the headscarf in kindergarten – although nobody knows how many, if any, three-year-old Muslim girls are forced to wear a headscarf in kindergarten. On 24 July 2018, an FPÖ village councillor was finally expelled from the party

after he had labelled the French soccer team that had won the World Cup as 'Congo-monkeys' (Kongoaffen).

CHALLENGING PRESS FREEDOM

It is also part of the current government's programme to 'reform' the media – which seems to be a euphemism for continuous and vicious attacks on established journalists and moderators. Figure 3 exemplifies such attacks by the FPÖ via social media, using the rhetorical strategy of 'calculated ambivalence'. This strategy seeks to convey distinct messages to multiple audiences (the party's extreme-right base and the public) while maintaining plausible deniability through ambiguity (Engel and Wodak, 2013). In this case, the meme posted by Strache (as Austrian Vice-Chancellor) was headed by the label 'satire!' and a smiling emoticon. Showing the well-known and internationally renowned journalist and moderator of the main news show of the Austrian public broadcaster ORF in the background to the right, the text reads 'There is a place where lies become news. That is the ORF. The best of Fake News, lies

and propaganda, pseudo-culture and involuntary fees. Regional and international. On television, radio and the Facebook profile of Armin Wolf.'

Both Armin Wolf and the ORF have sued Strache for libel and won. Strache had to apologise publicly and pay €10,000 to Armin Wolf, who donated this money to the Dokumentationsarchiv des Österreichischen Widerstandes (DÖW), an NGO that documents neo-Nazi and extreme-right activities. Meanwhile, the FPÖ has continued to publicly campaign for the downsizing or privatisation of the ORF, while backchannel pressure on editors and journalists has been increased.

pay
€10,000
to ARMIN WOLF

Figure 3 | **Facebook post by HC Strache, 13 February 2018.**

Kurz and his government have also implemented a strategy of *'information management'* (labeled, message control). Each week, a specific topic is launched in a press conference and is then elaborated on for one week, until being replaced with a new agenda seven days later. In this way, the media are kept busy and simultaneously distracted from other relevant news. Moreover, access to information is being severely restricted: government employees have been forbidden to speak with the press. Such rules come close to 'managed democracies' and their press policies, as defined earlier.

CONCLUSIONS: 'SHAMELESS NORMALISATION' – PAVING THE WAY TO ILLIBERALISM

Investigative journalist Florian Klenk aptly illustrates the strategies of *distraction and silence* employed by the coalition government when challenging the Austrian postwar liberal consensus and its open society. For example, the Austrian government has pushed a new law through parliament (without the conventionally agreed-upon period for seeking expert opinions) which raises maximum daily working hours from 8 to 12 and maximum weekly working hours from 40 to 60. They have sought to legitimise this by appeals to 'flexibility' – a neoliberal notion – thus destroying an extremely important pillar of Austria's post-war democracy and 'guaranteed workers' rights. Raising the number of hours has predictably angered the electorate of the FPÖ. A first huge demonstration organised by the trade unions against this law took place on 30 June 2018. Specific populist measures such as the retraction of the antismoking law, which would have taken effect on 1 May 2018 – a concession the ÖVP made to the FPÖ despite the abundance of scientific evidence for the raised mortality caused by cigarettes – have not sufficiently appeased the FPÖ's core electorate. One could thus speculate that the government has strategically decided to please its electorate with ever-more restrictive migration policies, while implementing many 'uncomfortable' policies even though the numbers of migrants and refugees have fallen drastically.

Interestingly, Chancellor Kurz usually remains silent when the FPÖ crosses a so-called 'red line', ignoring multiple requests for interviews or comment on false claims about 'illegal migration', revisionist or racist and antisemitic incidents, potential violations of human rights or attempted dismantling of the social welfare state. Moreover, the government does not take parliamentary enquiries posed by the opposition seriously, answering in vague and ambiguous terms. This blatant disregard forced even Wolfgang Sobotka, the ÖVP-nominated President of the Parliament, to reprimand Kurz and his ministers for not adequately fulfilling their parliamentary duties.

As already observed by Uitz (2015) regarding Orbán's Hungary, dialogue with experts, the opposition and journalists also seems to be out of the question in Kurz' Austria; consultations with the trade unions, NGOs and other important organisations are not granted; rational discussion is mostly substituted by symbolic politics, impoliteness, eristic argumentation or denial. Legislation that is not sufficiently well worded is pushed through parliament; scientific empirical evidence is frequently neglected or ridiculed. It seems as if the ÖVP in its streamlined, strategically planned trajectory to power in the sense of leading the new government has either ignored or quietly accepted the kind of non-democratic ideologues they have aligned themselves with, thus normalising the previously unsayable and unacceptable.

Indeed, most of the breaches of constitutional order, such as freedom of opinion, freedom of assembly, freedom of press and the independence of the legal system in illiberal democracies (Poland and Hungary) are not announced explicitly; they are made in small – seemingly unimportant – steps like the intervention into the Supreme Court in Poland, where replacing irremovable judges was implemented through a small, banal paragraph about the retirement age of judges, although the Constitution sets a

fixed term for supreme court judges. In this case, some of the supreme court judges resisted, and thus this incident made international headlines. As Grabbe and Lehne (2017b: 3) argue, these changes imply 'mind-closing narratives' which are obviously 'gaining force as formerly liberal politicians run after populists'.

Such a dynamic corresponds to – what I have labelled elsewhere – *"shameless normalisation'* (Wodak, 2018a), to be observed not only in the Central and Eastern European countries but also in Austria, the UK, Italy and the Netherlands. The noncompliance with EUropean values and the yearning for exceptionalism vehemently challenge the European project; the rejection of all dialogue, agreed norms and established conventions seems to render negotiations impossible and to pave the way for illiberalism and neo-authoritarianism. New narratives, new public spaces, new communication modes and – most importantly – new policies are urgently needed to protect the achievements of enlightenment and pluralistic liberal democracies.

REFERENCES

• Adorno, T.W., Frenkel-Brunswick, E., Levinson, D., and Sanford, R.N. (1969) *The Authoritarian Personality*, New York: Harper.
• Arendt, H. (1971) *Wahrheit und Lüge in der Politik*, Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp.
• Becker, J. (2004) 'Lessons from Russia. A neo-authoritarian media system', *European Journal of Communication*, 19(2): 139–163, https://doi.org/10.1177/0267323104042908
• Betz, H.-G. (2013) 'Mosques, minarets, burqas and other essential threats: the populist right's campaign against Islam in Western Europe', in R. Wodak, M. KhosraviNik and B. Mral (eds), *Right-wing Populism in Europe: Politics and Discourse*, London: Bloomsbury, pp 71–87.
• Billig, M. (1995) *Banal Nationalism*, London: Sage.
• Brubaker, R. (2017) 'Why Populism?' *Theory and Society*, 46(5): 357–385, https:// doi.org/10.1007/s11186-017-9301-7
• Closa, C., Kochenov, D. and Weiler, Joseph H.H. (2014) *Reinforcing Rule of Law Oversight in the European Union*, EUI Working Paper, RSCAS 25.
de Vries, C.E. and Hoffman, I. (2016) 'Fear not values. Public opinion and populist vote in Europe', post, http://eupinions.eu/de/text/fear-not-values/
• Diehl, P. (2017) 'Antipolitik und pastmoderne Ringkampf-Unterhaltung', *ApuZ,* 67(44–45): 25–30.
• Engel, J. and Wodak, R. (2013) "Calculated ambivalence' and Holocaust denial in Austria', in R. Wodak and J.E. Richardson (eds), *Analysing Fascist Discourse; European Fascism in Talk and Text*, London: Routledge, pp 73–96.
• Forchtner, B., Krzyżanowski, M. and Wodak, R. (2013) 'Mediatisation, right-wing populism and political campaigning: the case of the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ)', in M. Ekström and A. Tolson (eds), *Media Talk and Political Elections in Europe and America,* Basingstoke: Palgrave, pp 205–228.
• Fuchs, C. (2018) *Digital Demagogue. Authoritarian Capitalism in the Age of Trump and Twitter*, London: Pluto Press.
• Gasiorowski, M. (2006) 'The political regimes project', in A. Inketes (ed.), *On Measuring Democracy*, New Brunswick: Transaction Books, pp 105–121.
• Grabbe, H. and Lehne, S. (2017a) *Defending EU Values in Poland and Hungary*, Brussels: Carnegie Europe.
• Grabbe, H. and Lehne, S. (2017b) *The Closing of the European Mind – and How to Reopen it, Brussels*: Carnegie Europe.
• Grande, E., Dolezal, M., Helbling, M. and Höglinger, D. (2012) *Political Conflict in Western Europe*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
• Hahl, O., Kim, M., and Zuckerman Sivan, E.Z. (2018) 'The authentic appeal of the lying demagogue: proclaiming the deeper truth about political

illegitimacy', *American Sociological Review*, 83(1): 1–33.

• Hofer, T. and Tóth, B. (eds) (2017) Wahl 2017. *Loser, Leaks & Leadership*, Vienna: Kremer & Scheriau.

• Horaczek, N. and Tóth, B. (2017) *Österreichs neues Wunderkind?* Vienna: Residenz.

• Kerski, B. (2018) 'Was uns trennt, verbindet uns', *ApuZ*, 68(10–11): 4–8.

• Krastev, I. (2006) 'Democracy's 'Doubles", *Journal of Democracy*, 17(2): 52–62.

• Krastev, I. (2017) *Europadämmerung. Ein Essay*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.

• Kriesi, H. and Pappas, T.S. (eds) (2015) *European Populism in the Shadow of the Great Recession*, Colchester: ECPR Press.

• Krzyżanowski, M. and Wodak, R. (2009) *The Politics of Exclusion: Debating Migration in Austria*, New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.

• Lakoff, G. (2004) *Don't Think of an Elephant!: Know Your Values and Frame the Debate*, White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green.

• Levitsky, S. and Way, S. (2002) 'The rise of competitive authoritarianism', *Journal of Democracy*, 13(2): 51–65.

• Linz, J. (1964 [1973]) 'An authoritarian regime: the case of Spain', in R.A. Dahl (ed.) *Regimes and Oppositions*, New Haven: Yale University Press, pp 171–259.

• Mastropaolo, A. (2000) *Antipolitica: All'origine Della Crisi Italiana*, Naples: Ancora.

• Moffitt, B. (2017) *The Global Rise of Populism. Performance, Political Style, and Representation*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.

• Möllers, C. and Schneider, L. (2018) *Demokratiesicherung in der Europäischern Union*, Heinrich Böll Stiftung.

• Mudde, C. (2007) *The Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mudde, C. and Kaltwasser, C.R. (2017) Populism, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

• Nergelius, J. (2015) 'The role of the Venice Commission in maintaining the rule of law in Hungary and in Romania', in A. von Bogdandy and P. Son-nevend (eds), *Constitutional Crisis in the European Constitutional Area*, Oxford: Beck, pp 291–310.

• Nisnevich, Y.A. and Ryabov, A.V. (2017) 'Modern authoritarianism and political ideology', *Basic Research Program Working Papers* (Series Political Science) WP 44/PS.

• Ötsch, W. and Horaczek, N. (2017) *Populismus für Anfänger: Anleitung zur Volksverführung*, Frankfurt/ Main: Westend.

• Ottomeyer, K. (2000) *Die Haider-Show: zur Psychopolitik der FPÖ*, Klagenfurt: Drava.

• Pajnik, M. and Sauer, B. (eds) (2017) *Populism and the Web: Communicative Practices of Parties and Movements in Europe*, London: Ashgate.

• Pelinka, A. (2017) *Die gescheiterte Republik*, Vienna: Böhlau.

• Pfahl-Traughber, A. (2015) 'Die Nicht-Erkennung des NSU-Terrorismus', in U. Backes, A. Eckhard and J. Gallus (eds), *Jahrbuch Extremismus und Demokratie 27*, Baden-Baden: Nomos, pp 73–96.

Priester, K. (2007) *Populismus. Historische und aktuelle Erscheinungsformen*, Frankfurt/ Main: Campus.

• Rauscher, H. (2017) 'Stille Machtergreifung' der Burschenschafter, *Der Standard*, 1 September, http://derstandard.at/2000063481709/Stille-Machtergreifung-derBurschenschafter

• Reisigl, M. and Wodak, R. (2001) *Discourse and Discrimination. Rhetorics of Racism and Antisemitism*, London: Routledge.

• Rheindorf, M. and Wodak, R. (2018) 'Borders, Fences and Limits: Protecting Austria from Refugees. Metadiscursive negotiation of meaning in the current refugee crisis', *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, 16(1): DOI: 10.1080/15562948.2017.1302032

• Rheindorf, M. and Wodak, R. 2019(forthcoming) "Austria First' revisited: a diachronic cross-sectional analysis of the gender and body politics of the extreme right', *Patterns of Prejudice* (in press)

• Richardson, J.E. (2017) 'Fascist discourse', in J. Flowerdew and J.E. Richardson (eds), *The Routledge Handbook of Critical Discourse Studies*, London: Routledge, pp 447–462.

• Salzborn, S. (2018) 'Right-wing Populism as a strategy of the Radical Right', *CARR:*
• *Center for the Analysis of the Radical Right*, 21 May, www.radicalrightanalysis. com/2018/05/21/right--wing-populism-as-a-strategy-of-the-radical-right/
• Scharsach, Hans-Henning. 2017. *Die Stille Machtergreifung: Hofer, Strache und die Burschenschaften*. Vienna: Kremayr & Scheriau.
• Scheff, T. (2000) 'Shame and the social bond: a sociological theory', *Sociological Theory*, 18(1): 84–99.
• Sutowski, M. (2018) 'Guter Wandel' zum 'Neuen Autoritarismus' – und wie weiter? *ApuZ*, 68(10–11): 15–18.
• Uitz, R. (2015) 'Can you tell when an illiberal democracy is in the making? An appeal to comparative constitutional scholarship from Hungary', *I.Con*, 13(1): 279–300.
• Wodak, R. (2011) *The Discourse of Politics in Action: Politics as Usual*, 2nd edition, Basingstoke: Palgrave.
• Wodak, R. (2015a) *The Politics of Fear: What Right--wing Populist Discourses Mean*, London: Sage.
• Wodak, R. (2015b) 'Normalisierung nach rechts: Politischer Diskurs im Spannungsfeld von Neoliberalismus, Populismus und kritischer Öffentlichkeit', *Linguistik Online*, 73(4): 27–44.
• Wodak, R. (2017) 'The 'establishment', the 'élites', and the'people'. Who's who?' *Journal of Language and Politics*, 16(4): 551–565.
Wodak, R. (2018a) 'Vom Rand in die Mitte – 'Schamlose Normalisierung'', *Politische Vierteljahres Zeitschrift*, 75: DOI: 10.1007/s11615-018-0079-7
• Wodak, R. (2018b) 'The Revival of Numbers and Lists in Radical Right Politics', *CARR: Center for the Analysis of the Radical Right*, 30 June, www. radical-rightanalysis.com/2018/06/30/the-revival-of-numbers-and-lists-in-radicalright-politics/
• Wodak, R. (2018c) 'Antisemitism and the radical right', in J. Rydgren (ed.), *Handbook of the Radical Right*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp 61–85.
• Wodak, R. and Pelinka, A. (eds) (2002) *The Haider Phenomenon in Austria*, New Brunswick: Transaction Press.
• Wodak, R. and Rheindorf, M. (2018) 'The Austrian Freedom Party', in A. Waring (ed.) *The New Authoritarianism: Vol. 1: A Risk Analysis of the Alt-right Phenomenon*, New York: Ibidem.
• Zakaria, F. (1997) 'The Rise of Illiberal Democracy', *Foreign Affairs*, 76(6): 22–43.
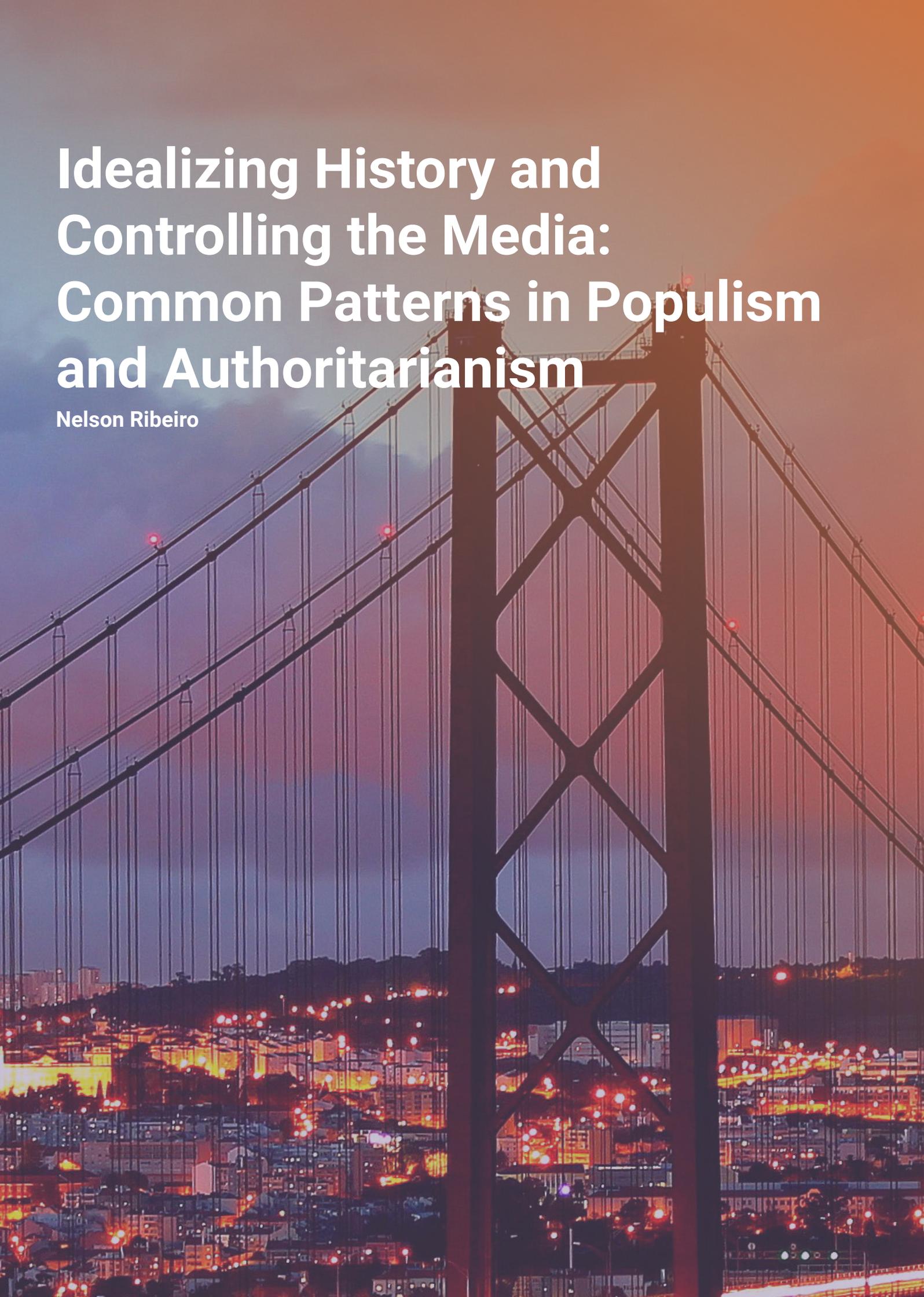
Idealizing History and Controlling the Media: Common Patterns in Populism and Authoritarianism

Nelson Ribeiro

Since the election of Donald Trump back in 2016, there has been an impressive increase in the interest for literature on fascism with a large number of academic and also nonacademic books being published each year. While some of these books deal with interwar fascism, others have tried to establish parallels between contemporary nationalism and xenophobic discourses, and those used by fascist leaders in the interwar period. Some of those attempting to make sense of the rise of contemporary populism have considered that these leaders resort to communication techniques that resemble the rhetoric of the European dictators of the 1920s and the 1930s. Others, however, have underscored the importance of being very cautious before labeling contemporary discourses that have emerged in several democratic countries as "fascist."

Furthermore, even though the election of Donald Trump has motivated a huge debate on how populism is changing the political landscape in democratic countries, his xenophobic speeches against immigrants, his criticism of the elites and the galvanization of his supporters through the discourse of *us* against *them* is far from being unique in contemporary times, as we all know. Obvious parallels can be drawn with the ideals being promoted by many, such as Jair Bolsonaro or Viktor Orbán and the list would continue on and on.

These also include many far right movements in Germany, Austria, Sweden, France, the Netherlands, Italy-- just to mention a few European countries where political parties with anti-immigrant and anti-establishment discourses have managed to gain traction by entering into government coalitions as is the case of Italy, for example, or gaining seats in parliament, which has been the case all over Europe.

The movements that have been labeled as "populist" are having significant influence on policy making, not only through their own voices, but in many countries also because they have the ability to impact the policies being proposed and implemented by more traditional and moderate political parties that are struggling to combat the far right by moving closer to their ideals.
One of the difficulties for those trying to counter

populism is the fact that it is far from being a homogeneous phenomenon and can indeed assume different forms. As Silvio Waisbord has underscored, "populism is an extremely elastic concept and has been used very lightly to describe a wide variety of political phenomena", making it a concept "full of inconsistent definitions."

Acknowledging that one can meaningfully speak of different degrees of populism, Jan-Werner Müller considers that populism is always against the elites and anti-pluralist. Populists claim that " they, and they only, represent the people." When running for office, they portray their political competitors as part of the immoral corrupt elite, and when in power they refuse to recognize any opposition as being legitimate.

All those who do not support them are labeled as "not being part of the people," or at least the true people, and are instead presented as enemies that aim to undermine patriotic values. The discourse that we find in many different contemporary political movements, mostly on the right, resonates with authoritarian ideals from the 1920s and 1930s, opening a wide debate on the similarities and differences between the contemporary political landscape and the emergence of fascism in Europe in the interwar period.

While some scholars such as Jason Stanley have described what is happening in Hungary, Poland and the United States as "a rapid normalization of fascism," which makes us able to tolerate what in the very recent past was non-tolerable, others have considered this to be an overreaction. Those who follow this second line of thought underscore that, besides not promoting world domination, contemporary populists function within democratic

regimes and therefore are distant from interwar fascisms.

Federico Finchelstein's perspective on this is particularly enlightening. In his view, today's xenophobic, anti-elitist and anti-pluralist movements are not a form of fascism, but instead, "an authoritarian form of democracy that emerged originally as a post war reformulation of fascism." For Finchelstein, modern populism begins with the early Cold War post fascist contestation in Latin America, starting with the Perón regime in Argentina.

Despite the many connections between fascism and authoritarian forms of democracy, while the former aims to instate a dictatorship, modern populists have not destroyed--at least yet-- democracy, even though they do undermine the rule of law and the separation of powers. Müeller, for instance, considers that populists test the limits of the democratic system by introducing changes in electoral laws, destabilizing the separation of powers and pressurizing the media. Nevertheless, officially abolishing or suspending democracy is not on their agenda as this would cost them an enormous loss of international support.

Even though populists have not transformed democracies into dictatorships, the connections that

do exist between some of the tactics used by contemporary populists and fascism have raised major concerns about the authoritarian turn in contemporary politics.

Looking back, we should remember that both Mussolini and Hitler rose to power after leading populist movements, meaning that they were populists, and later on fascist. However, the point I wish to make is not that all populists will become fascists (at least if we understand fascism as leading to the end of democracy and to the end of parliamentarianism). My argument is somewhat different.

[My argument is] That we can learn about contemporary populism by looking into what it has in common with authoritarian regimes from the interwar period and also by considering the characteristics of what the Italian intellectual Umberto Eco defined as "eternal fascism." For Eco, fascism is far from being a homogeneous political doctrine and it is instead a political game that can be played in many different forms.

Even though fascist regimes do not share all the same characteristics, Eco argues that fascism should be understood as an all-purpose term because one can eliminate from a fascist regime one or more features and it will still be recognizable as fascist. Two examples would be the Spanish and Portuguese dictatorships that despite not being imperialistic were still fascist.

The same could be said about the Croatian Revolutionary Movement Ustashe, that was not a colonialist dictatorship, but was, even so, a fascist movement. Eco considers that while Nazism and Stalinism were regimes with complete political programs and strong ideological foundations, and therefore totalitarian, the same cannot be said about fascism. Eco says that, "Mussolini's regime was based upon the idea of the charismatic leader, on corporatism, on the utopia of the Imperial Fate of Rome, on an imperialistic will to conquer new territories, on an exacerbated nationalism, on the ideal of an entire nation regimented in black shirts, on the rejection of different philosophical and political ideas…" In short, a beehive of contradictions.

For Eco, Mussolini did not have any philosophy. What he had was only rhetoric, which explains how he could have transitioned from transitioned from a militant atheist at the beginning to someone who signed the convention with the Church and from then on spoke frequently about God. According to Eco, Mussolini's regime was marked by a fuzzy ideology with many contradictions. Furthermore, the concept of fascism is a label attached to different authoritarian movements that found a sort of archetype in Mussolini's regime.

Despite their differences for Eco, all regimes that share the archetypal elements and values of fascism are parts of what he has labeled "eternal fascism." Some of these elements are:

- cult of tradition and the past

- rejection of modernism

- rejection of criticism

- fear of difference

- cult of nationalism

- xenophobia

- machismo (meaning disdain for women and intolerance towards nonstandard sexual practices and orientations)

- appeal to a frustrated middle class

- idea of powerful enemies (some of which are said to be taking advantage of the real people, whomever those people are)

- Popular elitism (meaning that those who belong to the party or follow the leader are presented as being the best citizens)

- demonization of rotten parliamentary governments

- use of simple impoverished language

Many of these elements can indeed be found in today's populist movements that therefore fit into what Eco defined as eternal fascism, in which the leader speaks in the name of the people.

For this to be possible, leaders tend to assume control over communication with their followers either by putting an end to free media or by using technologies that will allow them to bypass traditional gatekeepers. The obsession of many contemporary populist leaders with communicating directly with the people, or at least with those that follow them, encounters what I consider to be a clear parallel with Mussolini's and Hitler's obsession with radio obsession with radio, that allowed them to speak directly to the masses, promoting their ideas and instigating against all those who are not aligned with the official agenda.

Both Mussolini and Hitler respected what Goebbels considered to be the golden rule of propaganda: the usage of a very simple language which allowed ideas being presented to be understood by all those who listened. This characteristic can also be found in contemporary populisms, which usually resort to a black and white discourse, known since ancient times to be a very powerful propaganda technique.

black and white discourse
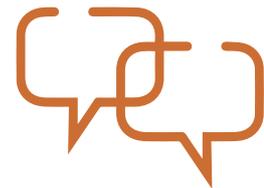
Even if we do believe that today's populist or eternal fascist movements will not degenerate into dictatorships because most countries have solid democratic institutions and structures that will prevent this from happening, it is worth looking back and discussing how authoritarian regimes fooled public opinion with concepts that are today prevalent in populist discourses. This is what I intend to do in the next few minutes.

I'll look at how the Portuguese dictatorship, known as New State, used different available media to promote its nationalistic, corporatist and colonial ideas. I will do this by focusing on two main features:

First,a strict control over the media, both state and private owned. Second, the regime's idealization of the past grounded in a utopian vision of the Portuguese discoveries of the 15th and 16th centuries.
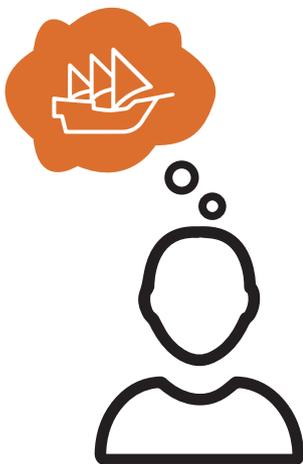
Before looking at these two features, I will briefly present Salazar's regime that ruled Portugal for more than 40 years. Contrary to most dictators of his time, Salazar had a reserved personality which led him to avoid personal contact with the masses. While this characteristic clearly distanced him from Mussolini, Hitler and even Franco, Salazar was represented in the regime's propaganda as the embodiment of the people's will--the man who was putting an end to decades of chaos that had been brought by incompetent politicians.

If one focuses on Salazar's distant relationship with the masses, he probably would not be classified as a fascist leader. However, if one looks at how he was represented, he was given attributes that do place him very close to other fascist rulers, thus fitting into what Eco labeled as eternal fascism. Moreover, Salazar himself had no problem being labeled a fascist as he openly disclosed his admiration for Mussolini--a picture of whom he kept on his own desk during the 1930s.

In the official propaganda, Salazar was presented as embodying the will of the "real" people--those who were tired of being led by a political elite that was only interested in intrigue and its own wealth and not on the wellbeing of the people. Despite being a professor at the University of Coimbra, Salazar was always portrayed as a very simple man who lived a simple life and whose ideal of a great vacation was returning to his home village in the center of Portugal where people lived a modest life in the countryside. The propaganda presented him as a man who enjoyed this simple and rural life- a life that was actually being lived by the majority of the population at a time during which Portugal was mostly a rural country.
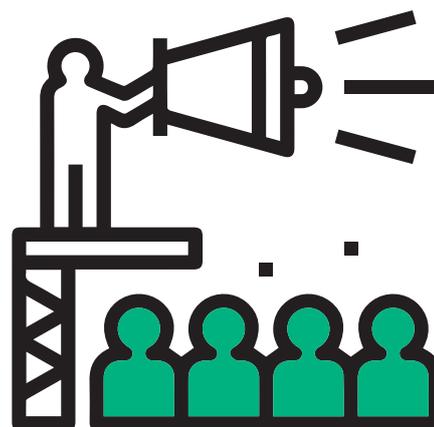
In a 1949 speech, Salazar actually thanked God for being poor, which enabled him to understand the humblest sectors of the Portuguese society. I quote him when he says, "I owe to the divine providence the grace of being poor. To earn the daily bread and to live the modest life to which I am accustomed, I do not need to take part or belong to any network of business interests. I am an independent man. If I tenaciously defend the interests of the humblest and occupy my time with their claims, this is due to the merits and the imposition of my conscience as head of government." In this sense he presented himself as the man who understood what people wanted and what they needed.

Before becoming head of government, Salazar had been a professor of political economy and finance at the University of Coimbra where he was awarded a PhD in law. Contrary to Mussolini and Hitler, his rise to power followed a period of agitation. Before leading the government, Salazar had been Minister of Finance since April 1928 under the military dictatorship that had put an end to the Republican regime two years before.

Established in 1910, the Republican regime was marked by intense political instability, with governments lasting an average of only five months. It came to an end with a military coup that took place as a form of protest against the rule of the party, parliamentary inefficiency, governmental instability, the discrediting of institutions and social unrest. When Salazar assumed the post of Minister of Finance, the country was facing a severe financial crisis and had a huge external debt. In 1928-29 thanks to huge tax increases and budget cuts,he managed to achieve a state surplus, which led him to be presented on several occasions as the savior of the fatherland.

As early as 1928, in an interview to the daily newspaper *Diário de Notícias*, Salazar presented himself as different from all other politicians who had preceded him. The major differences were: first, he told the truth, and second, he was concerned with concrete things that could easily be understood by the people. I will quote him again because it is interesting to think about how he wanted to be represented:

> "I represent a policy of truth and sincerity opposed to a policy of lies and secrecy. I have always advocated that administrating a country is clear and simple, something that any good housewife can do. A modest administration that consists in spending well what one has and not spending more than the resources that we do have."

There's a lot that we could say about this quote related to gender issues, but I will not go into that now.

The idea he aimed to convey was that he was doing something that the people could understand because he also understood what they wanted. In 1932 Salazar proposed a new constitution through which he established a single party regime that became known as the New State. The constitution was approved via a referendum that took place in 1933, and it has become known for how referendums actually lead towards the end of any

possibility for democracy.
The new constitution was being represented as the beginning of the reconstruction of the Portuguese nation that was said to have fallen into disgrace in the years that had followed the implementation of the Republic in 1910. According to the official propaganda, the country ought to be reconstructed piece by piece.

In a propaganda poster of the 1934 election the symbols of the national flag are being put together, symbolizing the reconstruction of the country that would be operated by Salazar's regime. Democratic institutions such as elections and parliament were maintained. These, however, did not perform any kind of representational activity. Only one party was allowed to operate in the country-the official party-and the parliament's powers were soon transferred to the government allowing Salazar to decide on all matters.

Censorship and the political police also played an important role in this context, silencing all critical voices. Salazar's nationalistic and colonialist regime was represented as the only valid option to avoid going back to the troubling times of the Republic. Also in 1934, another image was used to illustrate the idea of a sunny future that was made possible after the outset of the regime, and that of course contrasted with what had existed under the Republican government that lasted until 1926, and that's why the rainstorm hovers over on 1925.

Even though Salazar was not against the elites, like other contemporary dictators of his time, he was set to represent the will of the nation: someone who was working for the people. His low-key international policy allowed him to be one of the few dictators to keep hold of power in Western Europe after the end of World War II, which actually led *Time magazine* to label him as the "dean of [Europe's] dictators" in an edition that came out in 1946.

Now let's look at Salazar's relationship with the media and with history, looking first at the media. The fact that he did not engage in big rallies and he preferred his office to the streets, does not mean that he was not aware of the importance of reaching the public and controlling those who

could speak to the population through the media. In his own words, when it came to public opinion, there were only two options.
"Public opinion could be left to its own devices or it could be properly directed."

Of course his choice was to direct, which led the regime to actively control the media and the news that reached the public. While most newspapers were run by private companies, those with the largest circulation had very strong economic ties with the state. Shortly after becoming head of government Salazar approved a list of newspapers in which official notices and advertising could be published. All the nonaligned papers were left out of this list.

Of course with no advertising from the state, these were soon out of money and after that out of print. Besides economic suffocation, censorship played a decisive role in Salazar's media policy. The 1933 Constitution, allowed the approval of laws that aimed at avoiding what was labeled as "the perversion of public opinion."

Salazar himself had spoken openly about the role of censorship in a series of interviews he gave in 1932. The dictator described the press as the spiritual food of the people, and thus it ought to be subject to scrutiny, as with all types of food. Asked by his interviewer about the possibility of abolishing censorship that had been established by the military, Salazar answered, "The facts are the facts, and it cannot be admitted that the numbers and the acts of the state are questioned."

This idea, according to which the facts presented by the government were objective, means that there was no possibility for discussion or debate of what was being said and presented by the regime. This line of thought was used to justify the continuation of censorship, which ironically Salazar had himself considered to be "defective" and "an unfair institution." We think about authoritarian regimes as being filled with contradictions; you can actually find them all over the place.

The radio and the press were called to play a significant part in promoting the dictatorship and making a contribution to the continuation of the regime. For Salazar media should play a patriotic role, which meant giving visibility to the dictatorship's achievements and to its ideology. Therefore, his policy towards the media was twofold.

Firstly, censorship ensured the invisibility of the topics and the events that did not fit in the regime's agenda. Secondly, the media were urged to present Salazar and his government in a positive light, emphasizing all that had been achieved since the dictatorship had been instated. In order to ensure that the media did not give much attention to news that could somehow distract the people from the regime's agenda, over the years the Secretariat for National Propaganda created propaganda events that would be given great relevance in both newspapers and radio broadcasts.

The period of World War II was particularly illustrative of this. During the war, several recommendations were issued by the censorship office for the press to moderate the attention it was giving to war news. The aim of course was to guarantee that all papers reserved enough space, mostly on their front pages, for the news that exalted and promoted the New State. Even during the early stages of World War II, when of course there was a justified interest to know about what was happening in the war, the press tended to follow the regime's recommendations of reserving a significant amount of its front pages for news that praise the government, and mostly giving visibility to its actions and transcribing excerpts of official speeches.
An example of this took place on September 13,

1939 in the very early stages of the war. The two major daily newspapers occupied their first pages with the return of President Óscar Carmona from an official visit to the Portuguese African colonies and to South Africa. *Diário de Notícias*, the newspaper with the largest circulation, printed three photos

in which the president was seen with Salazar and other cabinet members and also was being greeted by crowds that had rushed to the docks to meet him.

The text reinforces this idea. It reads something

13 SEPTEMBER 1939
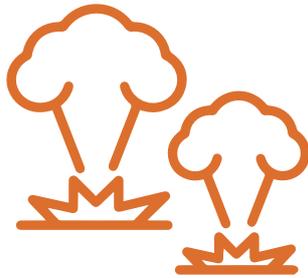
like: "Many thousands of people cheered the head of state from Lisbon to Cascais. The president of the republic was enthusiastically greeted by the crowds." All the big events organized by the regime were what we would label as media events, that became known by the majority of the population through the media.

1940 offers many intriguing examples of this, as it was a year of intense propaganda activity. The regime organized "the centennial celebrations," designed to commemorate 800 years since Portugal's foundation and 300 years of the restoration of independence after a 60 year period of occupation by the Spanish. It was a year of intense nationalistic propaganda that celebrated the greatness of Portuguese history.
On several occasions, the news of the festivities

occupied the whole front page of the main newspapers while the news on the war was relegated to the inside pages. This is *Diário de Notícias'* front page on June 4, 1940. You can see that all the entire page is occupied by news on the centennial celebrations and only at the bottom is it possible to find a reference to the war, which reads "The bombing of Paris, page five."
On June, 23, the day after the capitulation of

France, the main story on the front pages was the inauguration of the exhibition of the Portuguese World in Lisbon. Besides illustrating one of the many occasions in which the press gave more visibility to domestic events than to a central development in the war, this example is even more significant because the newspapers gave less attention to the surrender of France to Nazi Germany than they did to an event that had not yet taken place.

The inauguration of the exhibition of the Portuguese World was only going to take place that afternoon. The papers were talking about what they were expecting would happen that day. Now, the fact is that Salazar neither gave regular interviews to the press nor was he a regular presence on the radio, which might make us think, "Well, maybe he's not really a fascist somehow-his relations with the media actually distance him from what was happening in other fascist regimes." Nevertheless, this does not mean that the New State did not use the media to promote its own agenda and ideology.

As Salazar himself stated in a speech delivered in 1940: "Politically, the only realities that exist are those that the public are aware of." Therefore, controlling the media agenda was central for the dictatorship's survival, using radio, the press and also other cultural industries to be in permanent contact with the public. In other words, I would say that even though at a glance, Salazar's media policy might look distant from those implemented by other fascist regimes, using another lens as suggested by Eco, we can conclude that despite the techniques used to control the media being different from those used in Nazi Germany or Italy under Mussolini, the New State clearly had a fascist approach to the media.
Let's look quite briefly at how the past was also

used as a central element for the affirmation and promotion of the regime. Salazar's main mission as head of government was described by official propaganda as leading Portugal back to its glorious past. This was of course the time of the discoveries of the 15th and 16th centuries in which Portugal had dominated the seas, controlling territories in Africa, in Asia and in the Americas.

The idealization of the past was at the core of the

15th **and 16th** **centuries**
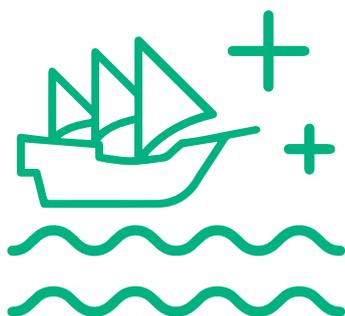
regime's discourse along with colonialism. Portugal was presented as a nation that had once been a major power and had inherited an empire that it should preserve. One of the main lines of the regime's propaganda was that Portugal was a big country that under Salazar's direction would once again achieve glory.

The idea of Portugal as a big nation is very well illustrated by a propaganda map produced in 1934 entitled "Portugal is Not a Small Coutry", that is a symbol of the colonial that was also at the core of the regime.

So what was done here was very simple-- the Portuguese colonies were superimpose on the map of Europe just to illustrate that the Portuguese

nation was larger than the entire continent. For Portugal to be great again, it was necessary to go back to the nation's true roots, values and traditions. And even though Salazar had a reserved personality, the Secretariat for National Propaganda

produced several materials in which the leader was portrayed as representing the nation, the man who not only understood but defended Portuguese history and heritage.

One of the many examples of this is a map in which Salazar's face is used to represent the Portuguese territory. In other contemporary dictatorships, at the time, it was also common for leaders to be represented as medieval figures. We have all seen Hitler as a medieval knight. In Portugal no such picture was produced by the regime's official propaganda. However, popular posters did circulate in the country in which Salazar was represented as Portugal's first king. Even though this was not an official picture, it is representative of the regime's mythology of Salazar as re-founder of the nation, and the one who would take it back to its glorious past.

Along with the visuals, the same idea was conveyed on both print and broadcast media. In 1940 during the opening of the centennial celebrations the chairman of the state broadcaster announced that Salazar would deliver a speech via radio from Guimarães, which symbolically is said to be the hometown of the first Portuguese king. When he was introducing Salazar over the radio, he presented him like this: "In the house where the founder of the fatherland was born, the Voice of the re-founder of Portugal sounds with the highest and most impressive solemnity."

Presenting Salazar as the re-founder of the country was a consequence of the past being a central value for the regime. Contrary to the years that had preceded the dictatorship and that were presented as chaotic, during which incompetent and corrupt elites had led the country, the future under Salazar was presented as being bright because he was a humble man. And second, he would bring back the true values of nationhood, thus allowing Portugal to once more be put on a path towards greatness.

The state broadcaster was particularly active in promoting this idea by contrasting the dictatorship years with the political situation that existed before the military coup. Many talks that were aired on the station tendes to underscore one

very important idea, which was that Portugal would once more be a great nation if it managed to honor

its own history and tradition.

The regime's propaganda apparatus promoted the idea of a national rebirth that was being achieved through stable political institutions and a balanced budget. Nationalism was of course central to Salazar's vision of a future. The regime's motto was "all for the nation, nothing against the nation," which was extensively used in propaganda materials. It soon became clear that Salazar himself represented the nation. Therefore, all those who were against him were also against the nation, and deserved to be treated as enemies.

In several speeches and other propaganda materials, Portugal's 800 years of history were used to incite citizens to be vigilant about all those who thought differently and that could pose a threat to the nation. This is just an example from the New Year speech delivered by the head of state in 1940:

> "We are in fact the heirs of a great tradition, who received an inestimable wealth made up of sacrifices, heroic gestures, discoveries and conquests of many generations. To the efforts of the generations who preceded us, we owe the existence and independence of the nation and the greatness of its history. It is now up to us to continue this glorious history with the sacrifice, and efforts that may well not be inferior, though expanded in many different endeavors."

This nationalist discourse obviously also developed into xenophobic remarks that were made by several regime officials. In a speech in 1935, the Minister

of Education exalted patriotic values, underscoring that the Portuguese people had achieved "ethnic purity that they should be proud of." All these ideas were disseminated through the media, with radio playing a very central role because at the time it reached the largest segments of the population.

This idealized view of the past and the nationalistic discourse can actually be found in most fascist regimes, namely in Italy where Mussolini promoted a utopian view of the Roman Empire. This idea of going back in time and restoring the great nation that in actual fact never existed is a powerful idea. Just as it was central to the fascist regimes in the 1930s, it seems to be also present in many contemporary populist movements that aim to lead people to believe that the greatness of the nation is directly connected to a system of closed borders and patriotic values.

In fascist regimes, and the Portuguese one was not an exception, nationalism is usually combined with the idea that the nation has to be defended from powerful forces that aim to destroy it. This leads the fascist discourse to resort to a very powerful propaganda technique that Ruth Wodak was talking about yesterday, the dissemination of fear.

The Nazi anti-Semitic discourse is an obvious example, while contemporary fascist-like movements also tend to present migrants and those with different cultural backgrounds as aiming to destroy the nation, its values and traditions. The idea of a powerful enemy that has to be stopped allows the creation of a common goal that is shared by those who support the nationalist leaders. In the case of the Portuguese dictatorship, the main enemy was communism.

Soon, all those who disagreed with Salazar were labeled as communists and anti-patriotic. The dictator himself explained how crucial it was that Portugal would defend itself from the pernicious ideas that were coming from outside and that would endanger the nation. The danger was clearly portrayed as standing at the door, just waiting to come in. And this led Salazar to conclude that the media had to be on a short leash, and that journalists needed to be on the front line of

defending the nation.

I think I will quote Salazar for the last time: "Paradoxically as it may seem, in contemporary times, censorship constitutes the legitimate defense of free, independent states against the great disorientation of modern thought, international revolution and disorder. I do not fear the great journalist as long he is Portuguese and demonstrates it." I don't have to explain what, in his mind, it meant to demonstrate that you were a Portuguese journalist.

Troubling as it might seem, many contemporary populist movements do agree with the idea that journalism exists to defend the nation and those in power. In Turkey, Erdoğan has closed dozens of media outlets and jailed dozens of journalists in order to eliminate critical voices. Inside the European Union, suffocating or persecuting the critical press is also on the rise. In Poland since 2016 more than 300 journalists have been dismissed from the public service broadcaster that in the meantime has been transformed into an official voice of the government, with the excuse

that it has to serve the Polish people.

A report published in 2018 by the Polish Journalist Society has also demonstrated how television is being used to discredit the opposition and disseminate fear against all those that come from abroad (and many of you in this room know more about this than I do). The obsession with controlling the media also extends to the left. In 2016 the Greek government led by Alexis Tsipras passed legislation aimed at reducing the number of television licenses which would lead to the closure of the largest television operators in the country. The process was deemed unconstitutional by the Greek high courts.

We have many other examples. Another very obvious one would be Viktor Orbán in Hungary- we had a very interesting talk yesterday about what is happening in Hungary, where all sorts of techniques are being used to gain control over the media.

Last November, media owners actually donated their news channels, internet news portals, tabloids and sports newspapers, also several radio stations, numerous magazines and all of Hungary's national newspapers to a newly formed media conglomerate named the Central European Press and Media Foundation headed by an Orbán supporter. It now controls over 400 media outlets and has received donations from pro-government businessmen who have been able to deduct them as charity donations.

The acquisitions by the Central European Press and Media Foundation have also been exempted from scrutiny of the competition authority and the media council after the government declared these to be of "strategic national significance." I think this resonates very much with the idea of how populism tests the resistance of democratic institutions.

Now I reach my conclusion, in which I would like to speak about these troubling parallels between populism and authoritarianism. How can we actually discuss them? Well, with this very brief excursion into the Portuguese dictatorship of the 20th century, I aim to demonstrate that Salazar's view on the role of the media and also his presentation of an idealized view of history both find parallels in contemporary populist discourses.

As advocated by Umberto Eco, fascism does come in different shapes and formulas. Salazar was never against the elites. On the contrary, he believed that the future of his regime depended less on the masses and more on the elites, educated in the spirit of the true national interest. However, this did not prevent him from being presented as the leader who embodied the will of the nation.

Despite having a reserved personality, from a very early stage Salazar understood how crucial it was

to control the media agenda, presenting his version of the facts as the truth that could not be disputed.

What is most troubling about this is that contemporary populists continue to use this rhetoric of *our* truth against their lies to discredit *their* opponents. Along with the control over the media, another feature that links contemporary populists to eternal fascism is the creation of an idealized version of the past to justify nationalistic and xenophobic discourses.

The reconstruction of public memory also plays a central role in many populist movements. Salazar not only promoted the centennial celebrations and many other commemorations of the heroic past of the Portuguese nation, but he also promoted the creation of many new monuments to honor the great past of the Portuguese nation. The Discoveries monument in Lisbon that many of you will probably visit is an emblematic example of this, but many others can be found throughout the country.

Reconstructing the public memory was central in the Portuguese dictatorship, as it is today in many populist regimes. One of the most recent examples is also from Hungary, where the statue of the Hungarian hero Imre Nagy was removed last month from a square near the parliament in Budapest. He was prime minister and he was a symbol of free Hungary and maybe that was the reason why the statue had to somehow disappear.

Even though fascisms from the 1920s and the 1930s were marked by some features that we do not find in contemporary populist movements, some characteristics that were central to the dictatorships of the interwar period do exist today in populism. Just a few examples: a savvy use of the media, the idea that leaders should communicate with the public directly; the exploitation of crisis that creates dissatisfaction among large segments of the public; an attempt to bypass or at least test the limits of democratic institutions; a patriotic discourse; and

the useof an idealized version of the past to create a national identity based on exclusion.

The democratic context in which contemporary populisms have emerged, and the level of repression employed against those who do not support these regimes of course distance them from fascism. However, this should not disable us from looking into these political phenomena using the lens proposed by Umberto Eco. And if we do so, we will actually conclude that eternal fascism is a strong, very strong inspiration for most contemporary populist movements.

REFERENCES

- Eco, U. (1995). UR-Fascism, *The New York Review of Books*, https://www.nybooks.com/articles/1995/06/22/ur-fascism/

- Ferro, A. (2003). Entrevistas a Salazar [Interviews with Salazar]. Lisboa: Parceria A.M. Pereira.

- Finchelstein, F. (2017). F*rom Fascism to Populism*. Oakland: University of California Press.

- Müller, J.W. (2017). *What is Populism?* London: Penguin.

- Ribeiro, N. (2017). Censorship and Scarcity. Controlling new and old media in Portugal, 1936–1945, *Media History,* 21 (1): 74-88.

- Rosas, F. (2013). *Salazar e o Poder: a arte de saber durar* [Portugal and the Power]. Lisboa: Tinta da China.

- Stanley, J. (2018). *How Fascism Works: The Politics of Us and Them*. New York: Random House.
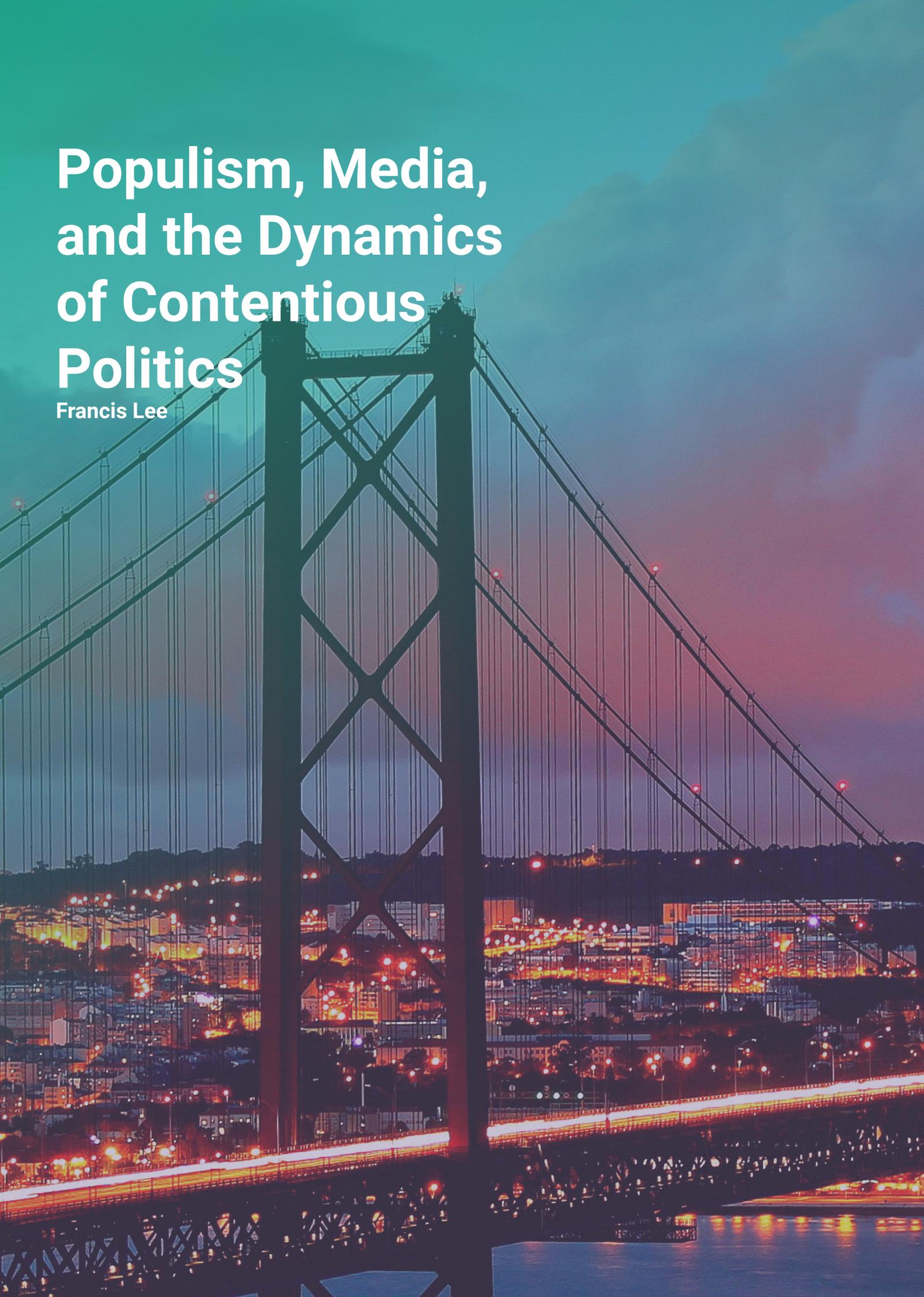
Populism, Media, and the Dynamics of Contentious Politics

Francis Lee

Today I am going to share on the topic of "populism, media, and the dynamics of contentious politics." What I am going to do is to discuss the case of, or to offer a case study of where I come from, namely Hong Kong. I have to say "media and populism" is not exactly the topic that I have been focusing on in my research. Populism is certainly a very important and hot topic in communication research over the past five years or so, but as I will show in a moment, the significance of and the amount of research attention paid to the concept of populism can vary across contexts. What I will be doing is to offer Hong Kong as a case study by re-articulating what I have been doing—mainly research on media and social movements, and try to address the question of how we should understand the relationship between populism, media—especially digital media and social media, and the dynamics of contentious politics.

Media Digital and Media Social

When I started preparing for the talk, I tried to figure out how significant the notion of populism is in research from different countries. I did a very simple search. Table 1 presents figures derived from the social science citation index (SSCI). The figures in the first column are the total number of articles that one can derive from SSCI by using the keyword set "populism AND [country name]." For example, "populism and Germany" returns 64 articles, "populism and France" returns 36, etc. In the subset of European countries included in my search, plus the US and Canada, there are a total of 531 articles containing the keyword populism.

I also want to highlight the figures in the last column. For Europe and America, the figure is 1.51%. It refers to the number of articles about

"populism and a given country" divided by number of articles about "politics and a given country." While the figure of 1.51% seems very small at first glance, I think it is actually normal. With the vast possibility of political research topics, there is no reason why researchers should uniformly study populism. But the important point here is to compare across regions. In the middle part of Table 1, we can see the figures about five Latin American countries. The total number of articles about populism and at least one of the five countries is 179. Interestingly, the proportion of populism research to general political research is substantially higher (4.09%). Again, the percentage itself does not sound large. Nevertheless, it means that for every 25 research articles studying politics in these five Latin American countries, there is one article studying some kind of populism in these countries. It seems to suggest populism is a bigger phenomenon in Latin American politics.

LATIN AMERICAN

What about East Asia then? The numbers are much smaller. In my search of 12 East Asian countries, including the city of Hong Kong, there are only 87 articles about populism, and the ratio of articles on populism to articles on politics is only 0.66%. Therefore, the first thing I would note from a comparative angle is not how populism manifests itself varies, but how the prominence of populism as a topic in political research varies. There have been, of course, quite a few populist leaders in East and Southeast Asia in the past two decades. One example is Jokowi, the current president of Indonesia, who is a very well-known populist figure. Another prominent example is Thaksin, who was the Thai leader in the mid- to late-2000s. Estrada and Duterte, the former and current president of the Philippines respectively, were also known for their populist style. In Taiwan, we had Chen Shui-bian as president between 2000 and 2008, and his

rhetoric was also often described as populist. In other words, there have been a few leaders who could be classified as populist. But overall, there have not been many studies about populism in East Asia.

179 Latin America articles

87 East Asian articles

|	Total	2014 or after	% 2014 or after	% of all articles including "politics"
Europe and North America	64	39	60.94%	1.61%
Germany	64	39	60.94%	1.61%
France	36	25	69.44%	0.98%
Italy	45	25	55.56%	2.64%
United Kingdom / UK	68	55	80.88%	2.12%
United States / US	212	135	63.68%	1.40%
Portugal	6	5	83.33%	2.11%
Spain	31	22	70.97%	2.13%
Netherlands	51	36	70.59%	5.59%
Canada	27	9	33.33%	1.16%
Russia	55	22	40.00%	2.16%
Total	531	334	62.90%	1.51%
South America				
Brazil	37	15	40.54%	2.19%
Argentina	58	29	50.00%	5.58%
Chile	24	6	25.00%	2.92%
Peru	30	4	13.33%	6.24%
Bolivia	30	14	46.67%	8.55%
Total	179	68	37.99%	4.09%
East Asia				
China	19	11	57.89%	0.40%
Indonesia	18	14	77.78%	1.73%
Thailand	15	6	40.00%	2.91%
Japan	10	3	30.00%	0.48%
Philippines	8	4	50.00%	1.84%
Korea	7	0	0.00%	0.53%
Malaysia	4	0	0.00%	0.78%
Taiwan	3	0	0.00%	0.42%
Hong Kong	1	1	---	0.18%
Singapore	1	1	---	0.20%
Vietnam	0	0	---	0.00%
Burma	1	0	---	0.62%
Total	87	40	45.98%	0.66%

No matter what explains the relative lack of research on populism in East Asia, there are certainly media and political phenomena in the region with populist flavor. That is, no matter whethe the people in the region use the term "populism" or not, we can identify and analyze the media and political phenomena with populist flavor. Or, there are phenomena that can be described as populist if we understand populism in terms of family resemblance. Let me put it this way, if we understand populism from an empirical perspective, we may identify certain characteristics as the characteristics of prototypical populism. These characteristics are generally what people are referring to when they talk about populism in reality. From my understanding of the literature and reading of news reports, I think there are at least six key characteristics: 1) emphasis on popular sovereignty, 2) the (social construction of the) idea of a pure, homogeneous, and morally good people, 3) the Othering of both internal and external enemies, 4) attacks on elites and/or the system, 5) mobilization by leaders/figures outside the establishment, and 6) an appeal to emotion over reason. The list is not meant to be exhaustive, but they are some of the most prominent characteristics of populism. Treating these characteristics like a checklist, what I mean by populist flavor and family resemblance is the idea that a phenomenon does not necessarily have to check every single box in order to be classified as populism. The idea of family resemblance is that when something shares some, or most, characteristics with the prototypical phenomenon, it can be described as belonging to the same "family." If we take this principle in our understanding of populism, then, many phenomena in East Asia, even though people may not describe them as populism in their discourses, may share such key characteristics and can be analyzed as populism. This is the understanding of populism underlying this talk.
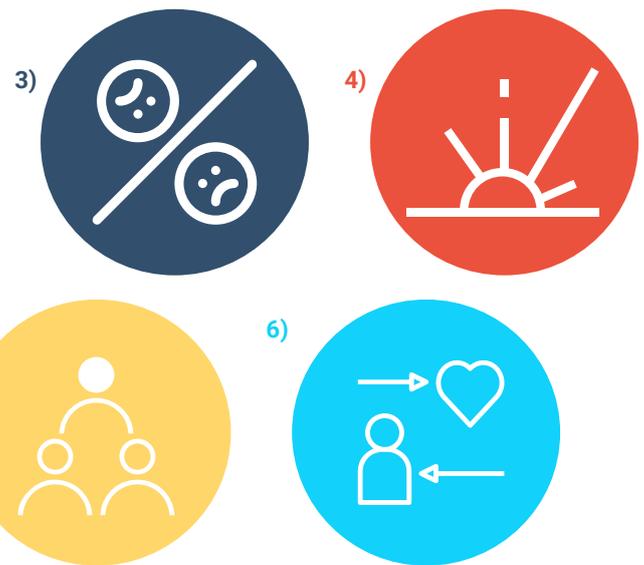
As I said, what I am trying to do is to offer a case study of Hong Kong. What I will do is to produce an account of the characteristics of populisms (the plural form is deliberate here), their emergence, and the role of media in a contextualized and historicized manner. I believe that the "Hong Kong story" can shed light on a few things. First, the case can illustrate how populisms emerged as part of the dynamics of contentious politics in the city in the past 15 years, as I will talk about the rise of populism in relation to the rise of social protests. Second, the case can illustrate how multiple populisms emerge in relation or in reaction to each other. I will talk about not just one form of populism but two emerging, interacting forms of populism. What I will analyze is not so much the rise of forms of populism as the emergence of a specific configuration of populisms. Moreover, the case of Hong Kong should contribute to our understanding of populism in a so-called hybrid regime. I have to admit that I personally do not like the term "hybrid regime" very much, because to call something hybrid does not say too much about what it actually is. In the comparative politics literature in the past ten years, there have been a lot of discussions about authoritarianisms with adjectives and democracies with adjectives (Levitsky & Way, 2010). When people talk about authoritarian countries, there are "competitive authoritarianism," "responsive authoritarianism," and many other variations. Similarly, we have democracies with adjectives. These are, broadly speaking, hybrid regimes, and Hong Kong is one of them.
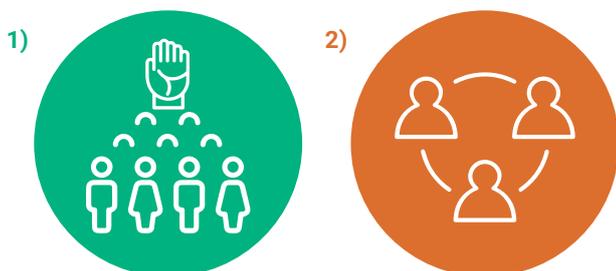
So, what does it mean to say that Hong Kong is a hybrid regime? Hong Kong is a small city in the southern part of China. It has a population of seven million people. China is a huge country with 1.36 billion citizens. Hong Kong has a "tradition" of civil liberties since the 1980s. Democratization began in the last decade of the colonial era. Right now, Hong Kong is a city with a partly democratically elected legislature and a non-elected government, which is basically accountable to a highly authoritarian state. Structurally speaking, the Hong Kong government is not accountable to the public at all. However, when Hong Kong was returned to China, there was the promise of a high degree of autonomy and gradual democratization in the city. It was the promise that the Chinese government put forward in the 1980s and the early 1990s in order to win the heart of Hong Kong for a smooth transition.

HONG KONG
seven million people

Conventionally, the most important cleavage in Hong Kong politics is that between the "pan-democrats" and the "pro-establishment" forces. The "pan-democrats," as its name suggests, are the people and politicians who call for further democratization and urge China to keep its promise. They constitute one end of the political spectrum in opposition to the "pro-establishment" or the "pro-government" forces. When it comes to the media, we see a media system structurally independent from the government, which is unlike the situation in mainland China, where all the media organizations are directly under the propaganda system at different levels. In Hong Kong, the media are at least not part of the government, but they are deeply embedded in the dominant political economic system. Virtually all media organizations in Hong Kong, with a few exceptions, are owned by major business people who have intricate interests in mainland China. In fact, many media owners in Hong Kong are local business people who are appointed with political titles in China. For example, they could be members of the

National People's Congress, the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, etc. As a consequence of the political economy of the media system, a high degree of self-censorship can be observed in the mainstream media, even though self-censorship is constrained by the news workers' sense of professionalism.

There is no need to go further into the complexities of the media system. What I need to emphasize here is the tension between the promise of democratization and the reality of tightening control by the Chinese government. While the Chinese government promised that Hong Kong can democratically elect its leaders at a certain point of time, over the years the progress had been stagnant. This is because, ultimately, China's policy toward Hong Kong is tied to its policy toward Taiwan, its internal policies, and its foreign policies at large. Since president Xi Jinping came to power in 2012, China has adopted a more proactive, or you may say aggressive, foreign policy. Economically, it has the one-belt-one-road initiative; politically, it becomes much more assertive on a number of issues, such as the territorial dispute in the South China Sea, and its recently worsening relationship with the US, etc. Internally, the Chinese government started to tighten controls on the civil society and the press. There used to be a period of time during the Hu Jintao presidency when China had a relatively higher degree of press freedom and a nascent civil society. But when Xi came to power, everything changed. As Xi tightened control of the Chinese society, it is not surprising that control of Hong Kong has also been tightened.
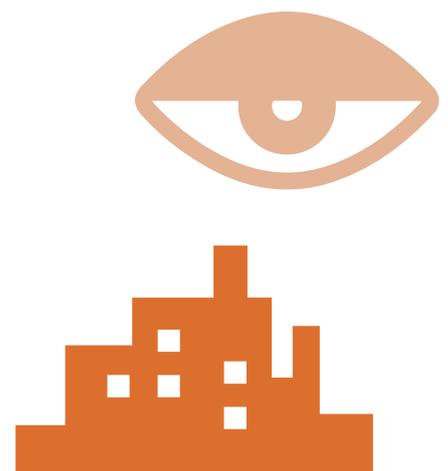
Stagnant democratization and inefficient governance of the city have led to the growth of contentious politics in the city, which in turn contribute to the rise of two forms of populism—"populist localism" since the early 2010s and "state-sponsored populism" since the mid 2010s. But we need to go a little further back to the early 2000s in order to provide the background for the subsequent rise of populism phenomena. In 2003, half a million Hong Kong citizens marched to the streets in protest against the enactment of national security law. As Joseph Chan and I explicated in a booklength study (Lee & Chan, 2011), the protest was a critical event in Hong Kong history. It not only successfully forced the government to put the legislation on hold; it changed the state's and other political actors' perceptions of reality. Similar to other cases of large-scale, successful protests, the 2003 July 1 protest kick-started what social movement scholars called a "protest cycle." It led to the outburst of social and political energies throughout Hong Kong society.

In 2005, as part of the protest cycle, a group of activists founded the heritage protection movement in Hong Kong and articulated a discourse of "progressive localism" in their quest for democratization of urban development. They broadened the idea of democratization from a narrow focus on the direct election of political leaders to democracy in the processes of policy making and urban planning. In their articulation of progressive localism, this group of activists started to put an emphasis on local culture and history. They also put forward a criticism toward the government's neoliberal framework for economic development. The discourse was called "progressive localism" because its advocates

directly employed and emphasized the term "local." In Cantonese, it is called *"bun-tou."* However, for this group of activists, "local" is not pitted against the foreign or the non-local. In fact, given Hong Kong's colonial history and its status as an international trade hub, many academics and activists have long been treating the "local" of Hong Kong as composed of layers of international relations. This was the idea of the "local" perpetuated by progressive localism. But for the present discussion, the most important thing is that, regardless of their intention, this group of activists of the heritage protection movement successfully popularized the term "local" in media discourse. And this will have implications on what happened subsequently.

More or less during the same period of time, increasing social integration between Hong Kong and mainland China started to lead to adverse impact on citizens' everyday life. Since the late 2000s, we saw the influx of Chinese capital (one reason why Hong Kong now has the most expensive property market in the world), increasing number of mainland tourists (for a few years, Hong Kong had 50 million visitors per year, which is even larger than the number of visitors to the whole of Japan, and about 80% of the visitors to Hong Kong are from the mainland). The influx of money and people had created a lot of problems for the everyday life of the citizens in Hong Kong. Combining with the increasing political intervention by the Chinese central government in local affairs in Hong Kong, there has been the rising concern of "mainlandization," that is, the concern that Hong Kong is fast becoming just like mainland China. As a response, national identification among local young people dropped quickly, especially after year 2008. Around 2010, a new group of "confrontational localists" emerged (Lo, 2018), and they appropriated the term "bun-tou" and articulated a new discourse.

The confrontational localists are the group of activists that can be considered as having a strong populist flavor. For example, the poster below, which was in fact a full-page newspaper advertisement made by the confrontational localists, features a "locust," representing the mainland Chinese, and the Lion Rock, a signature landmark of Hong Kong. The poster says, "for every 18 minutes, Hong Kong spends $1 million for nurturing children coming from the mainland." In other words, mainland Chinese are portrayed as threats to Hong Kong, as "locusts" that swarm the city and leave it devastated. More generally, the discourses of confrontational localists have several key characteristics. First, they treat Hong Kong as a separate "nation," and the character of its people is distinctive from that of the "mainlanders." Second, they view the social system itself as fundamentally flawed. Third, they call for "valiant contention" in protests. They argue that protesters should not put too much emphasis on being peaceful; instead, they advocate the use of physical force. In contrast to progressive localism, the confrontational localists can be regarded as having put forward a form of populist localism.

Interestingly, the new populist localism is not only against the pro-government forces, they are actually against the democrats and the progressive social movement. The populist localists view the progressive social movements as "leftards," which means "retarded leftists." They argue that the progressive social movement activists have a blind belief in the values of equality, tolerance, and inclusiveness irrespective of the actual situation. Moreover, they criticize the democrats for being ineffective in dealing with Beijing.
In other words, the populist localists are not only against the Chinese state. They are against the elite-led politics of compromise and the established system of promised incremental democratization. They see the system of gradual democratization as a failure. The following is a poster which was prevalent in the Mong Kok occupied area during the Umbrella Movement. The Mong Kok occupation had a relatively strong localist presence (Lee & Chan, 2018), and the poster urged the occupiers to beware of the "leftards" and warned against the forms of actions that they saw as meaningless (e.g., group discussions, singing songs, taking pictures, etc.).

"Populist localism" became even more appealing to many young people after the Umbrella Movement in 2014. In the Umbrella Movement, a lot of participants were very frustrated, as it seemed like people had done the last thing that they could do, with one million people taking turns to occupy the heart of Hong Kong, but the government still didn't make any concession. Therefore, many wondered if the politics of incremental democratization had collapsed. To that question, the populist localists gave a resounding Yes. For the localists, the Umbrella Movement also signaled the "failure" of peaceful protests. For a period of

time, the populist localists further radicalized and even turned to advocate Hong Kong independence. This has of course further heightened the conflict between the local society and the Chinese government.

At this point, it should be noted that digital and social media were definitely part of the dynamics. They are contributory conditions to the development of populist localism. It's not that digital and social media started all of these, but obviously their presence contributed to the evolution of the dynamics. In the digital media arena, there has been the proliferation of online alternative media since 2012 and the emergence of a distinctive group of localist online media. These are not just "news sites." Especially for the localists, the most influential and popular sites are usually the "satire sites." Take *Cemetery News* as an example. What it does is to publish fake interviews with dead people. Let's imagine that there is an on-going social issue, and I would interview Karl Marx to see what his take on it is. On any given issue, the writer of the *Cemetery News* would "invite" early 20th century nationalists, or a 3rd century Chinese Emperor, or whoever, to do satirical interviews on public affairs.


CEMETERY NEWS

In an article that I published this year on *Social Movement Studies* (Lee, 2018), I presented evidence from a survey showing that the experience of participating in the Umbrella Movement *and* consumption of localist alternative media combined to generate more radical views toward movement goals—support for Hong Kong independence—and movement tactics—support for violent protests. That's why I said that digital and social media are contributory conditions that facilitate the growth of populist localism.

With all the things that I've been talking about—the rise of protests and the rise of populist localism etc.—how did the government respond? And it is related to this question that we can understand the rise of what I call "state-sponsored populism."

In Hong Kong, the public can be roughly divided into those who are on the pro-government side, those who are in the middle, and those supporting the democrats. Normally, in a democratic system, we conventionally expect the political parties to move toward the median voters. But in the case of Hong Kong, which is not a democracy and has an overseeing Chinese state, does the government have the incentive to appeal to the median voters? Or, would the government rather choose to stand as close to the Chinese state as possible? Admittedly, this is not completely an either-or choice, but I am sketching the basic situation here. To the extent that the government finds the 2nd option more attractive (again, ultimately the Hong Kong government is accountable not so much to the local public than to the Chinese state), how would the Hong Kong government handle public opinion?

In short, what the government did after 2012 was to counter-mobilize their own supporters to produce vocal support, despite the risk of creating a polarized public. For example, during the Umbrella Movement, the Chinese and Hong Kong government did not make concessions. They basically adopted a policy of attrition, but the pro-establishment forces also mobilized counter-protests. There were regular confrontations between the Umbrella Movement participants and counter-protests in parts of the occupied areas.
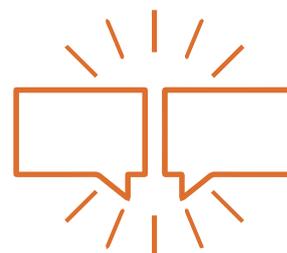
Beyond the Umbrella Movement and as a part of the broad strategy of promoting "state-sponsored populism," the pro-government forces have created their own digital media outlets, including a lot of websites and Facebook pages (Facebook is

overwhelmingly the most popular and important social media
in Hong Kong). During political controversies, the most prominent pro-government social media pages often acquired levels of "engagement," such as likes, comments, and shares, that were close to or even surpassed the levels of engagement acquired by prominent alternative media belonging to the progressive social movements. In terms of contents and practices, the pro-government Facebook pages are first of all highly nationalistic. They exhibit a strong confirmation bias, that is, they selectively "report" on and share information that is favorable to the government, and they heavily criticize the opposition.

One may argue that these are just what all partisan media do, and in one sense they are. But I would argue there is a distinction between the partisan legacy media and partisan social media in the Hong Kong case. If we compare the pro-government legacy media and the pro-government social media in Hong Kong, we can actually see some major differences. Firstly, it seems that the workers for pro-government social media are much less constrained by any sense of professionalism. This is partly because they have never explicitly claimed to be journalistic, and partly because the writers largely remain anonymous (as opposed to the presence of bylines in legacy media). The "quasi-anonymous character" of the social media pages, together with the phenomenon of the blurring of the distinction between public and private in the social media arena as well as the importance of "engagement" on social media, have led to fundamentally different style of communication by the pro-government social media. They included more emotional language and more frequent personal attack, for example. And generally speaking, I would argue that there is a high degree of what I called "normative disinhibition." Let me use one example to illustrate what is meant by normative disinhibition. In 2015, a university student committed suicide. It was a simple social news story. But on one of the most prominent pro-government pages, the "news report" emphasized that the student had supported the Umbrella Movement, and the report claimed that the experience of protest turned the student to "go to the extreme." The claim is not just groundless

and absurd but also simply indecent. The usual social norm of decency would prevent anyone from politicizing the tragedy. But apparently, there is a much higher degree of normative disinhibition in the social media arena, as the pro-government social media outlets would make claims that we do not really expect any legacy media to make.

There is evidence about the impact of such pro--government online media on public opinion. From a survey we conducted in 2018, we found that the more a citizen saw the contents from pro-government online media, the more conservative the citizen would be. This, of course, could be a matter of media effects or selective exposure. But more interestingly, the pro-government online media can neutralize the impact of alternative online media. When one is constantly exposed to the contents from pro-government online media, then whether one sees the contents from the alternative media or not does not matter in attitude and opinion formations. This can be understood in terms of "inoculation effects" — the pro-government inculcate a set of beliefs and ideas to the mind of the pro-government citizens. When the pro-government citizens encountered contents critical toward the government, the inculcated beliefs can become counter-arguments they use

MEDIA EFFECTS

to dismiss the critical contents.

Nevertheless, what is populist about the online public opinion produced through the pro-government outlets? First of all, the discourse produced by the pro-government online media tends to dehumanize the Other, in this case, the democrats. The most conspicuous example is the fact that the pro-democracy citizens and public figures were consistently labelled the "yellow corpses" (in Cantonese, "ribbon" and "corpses" are pronounced exactly the same, "yellow corpse is therefore a derogatory reference to "yellow ribbon," a key symbol of the Umbrella Movement). Second, the pro-government outlets also invoked a morally good people. In this case, the good people are the Chinese, not "Hong Kongers." Third, the pro-government outlets appealed to emotions over reason and disregarded the norms of the elite public discourse. Interestingly, behind the pro-government online media are not the major pro-government political parties and figures in Hong Kong. While those outlets and their discourses are generally supportive toward the government, sometimes they also see the Hong Kong government as too weak in dealing with the opposition. It is possible that, in association with the nationalist discourse of supporting China, the outlets may accuse the Hong Kong government as too accommodating in their dealing with the opposition. In this sense, they are also critical to the elites, which potentially include the Hong Kong government. These are the characteristics which, to me, make it sensible to associate the outlets with the label of "state-sponsored populism."

Let me present a few final remarks that concludes how the political context in Hong Kong has led to the rise of protests, to populist localism, and, as a reaction, to state-sponsored populism. I think the case of Hong Kong has shown, first of all, the

varieties of populisms. This is the point I made at the beginning: specific contexts and dynamics can generate not so much specific forms of populism but specific configurations of populisms. I think it would be interesting to look at any society with this idea in mind to see how different forms of populism connect and react to each other.

The Hong Kong case is intriguing in the sense that, while populism tends to attack the current system and establishment, different forms of populism in Hong Kong actually construe the "current system" in vastly different ways. As I said, the traditional understanding of Hong Kong politics is organized around the political division between the authoritarian state as "the establishment" and the democrats as the opposition. But the populist localists arguably do not share the same view. Instead, they see the system as comprising the state and the democrats. The conflicts between the state and the democrats are just conflicts within the failing system (i.e., the failing politics of incremental democratization). They believe they have to overthrow the entire system, hence they are against both the government and the democrats. Meanwhile, the state-sponsored populists see the system in yet another way. By placing China into the sacred position, the state-sponsored populists see the local system as failing because, in the boarder context of Chinese politics and sovereignty, Hong Kong is not fulfilling its obligations. In any case, what we see here is that competing populisms can be contesting the definition of "the establishment.".

One more point I want to highlight in the development of the populist discourses is also a process of contesting and negotiating the repertoire of social movement discourses. As I mentioned, the term "local" was first popularized

by the progressive activists, only to be appropriated by populist localism in the early 2010s. A similar process exists with state-sponsored populism, as shown in the example of "yellow corpses.".

Another remark would be about the relationship between social media and populism. Some researchers have argued that there could be an elective affinity between the two (Gerbaudo, 2018). There are "lonely individuals" with extreme opinions who can nonetheless form an online crowd and support each other on social media. There is also the collapsing and the blurring of the public-private boundary and a stronger degree of normative disinhibition in the social media arena. Public visibility is less constrained by public norms on social media.

Social media serve as a contributory condition to the rise of populism. It does not kick start the dynamics, but when it becomes part of the dynamics it contributes to its scale and speed. My last point of remarks is that there are undeniably political and economic forces at work on social media. In the past decade, there have been many discussions around the ideas of filter bubbles and echo chambers. Most literatures seem to suggest that these phenomena are caused by the tendency that people like to talk to like-minded others. In a sense, this claim suggests that echo chambers are formed from the bottom-up. But at least in the case of Hong Kong, I would argue that such echo chambers are established by political and economic forces. Without such political and economic forces behind, echo chambers may still exist, but their configuration and characteristics may differ.

REFERENCES

• Gerbaudo, P. (2018). Social media and populism: An elective affinity? *Media, Culture & Socety, 40(5)*, 745-753.
• Lee, F. L. F. (2016). Impact of social media on opinion polarization in varying times. *Communication & The Public*, 1(1), 56-71.
• Lee, F. L. F. (2018). Internet alternative media, movement experience, and radicalism: The case of post-Umbrella Movement Hong Kong. *Social Movement Studies*, 17(2), 219-233.
• Lee, F. L. F., & Chan, J. M. (2011). *Media, social mobilization, and mass protests in post-colonial Hong Kong.* London: Routledge.
• Lee, F. L. F., & Chan, J. M. (2018). *Media and protest logics in the digital era: The Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong*. New York: Oxford University Press.
• Levitsky, S., & Way, L. A. (2010). *Competitive authoritarianism: Hybrid regimes after the Cold War.* New York: Cambridge University Press.
• Lo, S. S. H. (2018). Ideologies and factionalism in Beijing-Hong Kong relations. *Asian Survey, 58(3)*, 392-415.

Digital Intimacy and its Metadata: Rethinking Populism

Rolien Hoyng

(Abbreviated version of the keynote speech "Digital Intimacy and its Metadata: Studying Data Publics in Closed Contexts")

INTRODUCTION

The video streaming application TikTok has taken Turkey by storm, and the hype involves, among others, video-making by soldiers fulfilling military service. While the footage from the barracks is punctuated by nationalist and militarist symbols, what prevails is everydayness and silly, occasionally carnivalesque performances in front of an intimately present camera. Does such video production lend voice and creative expression to conscripted youth? What kind of togetherness is showing itself here? Does the affective intimacy merely reproduce a nationalist body politic and its exclusions? Or, if it appears rather nationalist now, can it become something else, nonetheless? And, if social-media platforms play a role in facilitating and organizing such communication, how does it relate to state power and macropolitics?

In this talk, I look at digital intimacy discursively, aesthetically, and infrastructurally in order to think about the possibilities and excesses of digitally mediated populism. I am especially interested in how digital intimacy reconfigures—or displaces—populism, which works through the affective and intimate mediations of a popular body. To this end, I explore the intersection of what José van Dijck (2013) has distinguished as the *connectedness* of human relations at the front-end of social media and the *connectivity* of data infrastructures and algorithmic processing at the back-end. Connectedness covers the lateral exchanges of intimacy animating front-end publics. Deploying reiterative memes and hashtags, users indicate their participation in such publics and extend connectedness among a "like-minded" crowd, or to sound less Cartesian a "like-vibed" crowd. Connectivity involves the affordances of back-end infrastructures and computational "gazes" of trackers, platform algorithms, and, possibly, surveillance technology. My overall objective is to *think through the relation between the micropolitics of affect, digital infrastructure, and state power*. Many, especially journalists, have already written about authoritarian populism and the "strong leader," but the challenge I set for myself is to focus as little as possible on the figure of the leader and instead highlight the agency of the crowd as well as of mediating infrastructures. These are

commonly reduced to respectively "dupes" and "tools" of the strong leader. I will start with a review of narratives of the crowd and intimacy. The further discussion draws on examples of digital intimacy from Turkey. These examples involve social-media campaigns taking place in the context of the referendum in 2017 that consolidated regime change; the mobilization for a military operation in the Syrian city of Afrin in January-March 2018; and the economic crisis that started to deepen in the same year.

NARRATIVES OF THE INTIMATE CROWD

The first narrative I want to discuss involves the liberal fear of the "irrational" crowd. Drawing on Le Bon and Freud, the narrative of the irrational crowd revolves around the lack of individuality and therewith rationality: "any congregation of individuals will serve only to weaken the rationality of each of its constituent members, who will find themselves easily swayed either by random suggestions or by charismatic leadership" (Gilbert 2014, 52). The irrational crowd is assembled only thanks to the image of its charismatic symbolic leader, who is the meta-individual, the super-ego, with whom the members of the crowd identify (Gilbert 2014).

The second narrative involves the intimate crowd as counterpublic. Challenging the exclusions of the liberal public sphere, feminism and sexuality studies have been spearheading the celebration of public manifestations of intimacy and affect. They draw the attention to counterpublics that mobilize more intimate styles of communication, forming contestations of the Habermassian exclusive public sphere with its constitutional outsides. I am referring here to the work by Nancy Fraser and Michael Warner and their uptake in media studies. This work also builds on Lauren Berlant's thesis (1998) on intimacy as a pre-stage of publicness, where the formation of subjectivity takes place before it enters the public sphere (i.e., reading at home). In order to go beyond "proper," recognized intimacies that keep in place dominant institutions and ideologies from which 'others' are excluded, Berlant hails more transgressive and "unconstrained," minor (in Deleuzian sense) intimacies.

feminism and sexuality studies

The third narrative involves the affective crowd as democratic expression. Henry Jenkins has used the idea of "voting naked" for a democratic culture that does not impose thresholds for participation and welcomes vernacular expression. Writing about "connective logics," Bennet and Segerberg's (2012) widely cited article holds that participation revolves around personally expressive content that is "shared with, and recognized by, others who, in turn, repeat these networked sharing activities." As Shiftman (2014) has argued, memes exemplify imitation but also adaptation and deviation, which differentiates them from virals. A post-liberal take on affect runs through the radical theory by Hardt and Negri on the multitude, which became a common reference around the years of the Arab Spring, Gezi, Umbrella, and Occupy uprisings.

This type of work rejects the notion of the atomistic individualistic subject and it has been influenced by a line of cultural theory, including Spinoza, Tarde, Simondon, and Deleuze and Guattari. Simondon's idea is that a pre-individual reality connects us all, prior to our status as individuals, and this reality can be "individualized." The pre-individual is a reservoir of potential—a "general field of relations and potentialities" (Gilbert 2014, 111)—from which collective individuation can emerge. The latter process does not involve separate "individuals" now forming a group, but a psychosocial transindividual being. In Hardt and Negri (2005), the transindividual involves a radical potential for transgressive commonality and love by the *"multitude," which as a collectivity does not pose an identity on its constituents.*

However, in the years following the aforementioned uprisings, with the outpouring of intimacy on digital networks, we see a revived discourse of the irrational crowd in rejections of populism as well as a return of the defense of normativity, especially in response to fake news. And then there is the fear of authoritarian leaders, to which mediated affect is key, especially hatred, anger, supremacism, racism, and sexism. Critical scholars who rejected rationality and standards of civility in public life as exclusive, dominant norms are now at pains to argue that "this" (fake news, hatred, loss of civility) is not what they defend either.
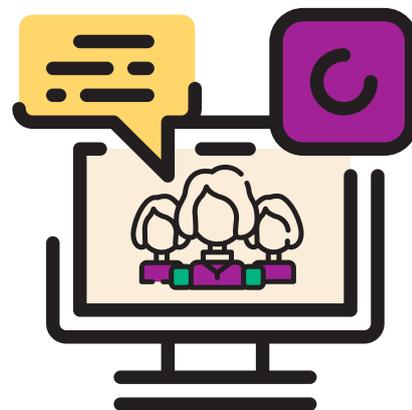
Simultaneously, digital intimacy literature has had to deal with the fact that the current social-media environment does not just invade privacy but governmentalizes intimacy. Intimacy online comes together with its datafication, and, therewith, its governance, its grammatization, and its exploitation. Where does this leave our discussion of digital intimacy and the crowd? Post-liberal theories imply that affect and desire do not originate from the individual as subject (pace Freud and Lacan), but from lateral relations of imitation among proximate bodies. Even without appealing to Simondon's ontological philosophy, crowds seem more lateral and decentralized. But also, intimacy seems always already social due to digital infrastructure's mediating relations. This complicates existing narratives, both of the "active," emancipatory crowd of uprisings and of the "passive" crowd that is a tool of the populist leader. If affect/intimacy is not individual but always already social, the crowd is not 'scary' for lacking individuality. Surely, a crowd can be scary. But how does it come to be so? And how do we distinguish between different formations of crowds, of populisms?

CONNECTEDNESS AND INTIMACY

I want to take the example of manifestations of digital intimacy in the context of regime change away from parliamentary democracy toward The Executive Presidency in Turkey. During this time, social-media users shot intimate confessional videos, reminiscent of a challenge meme. These videos are typically shot in personal settings, in close-up frames, and they come across as the first self-recorded videos shared by these users. After declaring their support for regime change, the users then hail a personal contact, inviting them to make their own video. These performances cite an intimacy with the leader and among a national or socio-spiritual body often sealed with tropes of the family: the nation as intimate family and its leader as simultaneously "one of us" and the "true/authentic us." However, rather than taking for granted the Leviathan identity and consolidation of "the people" only thanks to their individual identification with a representative "leader," we could try to understand the role of contagion and imitation in a more horizontal fashion.

Populism thrives on bottom-up processes and the lateral relations among the imitating *and* inventing crowds: the crowd is not sheepish or entirely homogeneous; imitation or repetition comes with difference. Interestingly, in the above performances support for the national leader Erdoğan is exchanged for support for Turkey, and, more so, for city districts and hometowns that these people identify with, and eventually for relatives and loved ones. Hence, the articulation of local to national scales of belonging is in question.

Such slippages do not mean that the intimate crowd is not populist, or that "leaders" do not exist. Instead, macropolitics is composed of micropolitics. Yet tapping and controlling the lateral relations and affective energies of the imitating, inventing crowds is not easy. For one, there are slippages in which the intimate becomes the private or personal in yet other senses. Take the scribbling on the Howitzer shells deployed by the Turkish military to target the Syrian city of Afrin in 2018. These shells themselves have somehow emerged as fetish objects because they are produced "100 percent locally and nationally." Yet the messages on the shells include personal business promotions, greetings to friends or to the local mayor (always good to have personal connections...), and, in other instances, celebrations of preferred soccer teams.
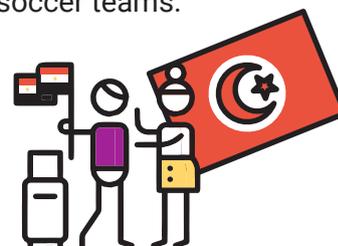
Moreover, while the "closed context" is commonly understood in terms of censorship and the prohibition to speak, we should not overlook the pressure to speak, but to speak in a certain way on certain terms, and digital intimacy can be surprisingly prevalent next to censorship. Often

confessional culture in the closed context involves the display of the inner self in order to show to oneself (one's neighbor and the government) that one is fully aligned with the populist body. This is not just an expression of the public self, but the display of one's "entire" soul so that nothing remains unknown. Yet in this process, intimacy turns into a performance of a recognizable repertoire of stylized acts. As such, intimacy also becomes a formula lending a mask: it can be copied (and this is literally what happens in digital ecologies of copy/paste). Hence, there is no end to suspicion, panic and mistrust.

Last, a transindividual body once in place can be repurposed and new campaigns do build on previously rendered affective connectedness. In response to the economic crisis and increasing costs, there currently is an electricity bill campaign, in which self-identified government supporters vent anger about the steep rise in prices. Affiliated videos are intimate displays because they take place in the privacy of the living room, show everyday life and emotion, and the personal details often disclosed to guarantee these are "real people" like you and me, not trolls or paid actors. Here people who are rather sure of themselves that they count as *the* people who belong and are entitled, vent their anger and frustration, even going as far as cursing President Erdoğan.

CONNECTIVITY AND POPULISM

At the backend of computing, data bodies exist in the infrastructural and computational "gazes" of sniffers, trackers, platform algorithms, and, possibly, surveillance technology such as Deep Packet Inspection. How do we relate the infrastructural back-end to questions of populism and state power?

Key is to realize the state is not simply successfully availing itself of the resources of digital data and Artificial Intelligence (AI). For instance, the Turkish state's desire for control over the national "data body politic" is clear and the argument that data fall under national sovereignty underlies proposed initiatives such as assigning an email address to each citizen by birth, developing a local search

engine replacing Google called e-Çelebi (after the 17th-century Ottoman travel writer), and a more recent attempt to create a national alternative to Whatsapp, named in reference to the national telecom institution of the past "ptt messenger." These services are about techno-nationalist pride but also about ownership of data. The opening of the Turkcell Data Storage Center was touted to be an important step towards storing digital data in Turkey (a Turkcell representative said that 99 percent currently is stored abroad). The minister in charge of communication emphasized the importance of Turkey becoming a country that can store its own data and that Turkey should become a data center market.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

However, in practice Turkey lacks sovereignty over citizens' digital data as well as the capacity to process it, in the way China or USA have. Like most others, it is a "have-not" state for data and AI. By consequence, next to alleged use of surveillance technology, there is extensive reliance on crowdsourcing for data, again deploying and exploiting the lateral relations of the crowd, with the goal to eliminate or incapacitate supposed threats. But one consequence of peer surveillance initiatives has been that the police force is overwhelmed by irrelevant information provided by overeager informant citizens or citizens motivated by private matters and personal feuds.

Big data approaches to governing data bodies seem to be in an initial phase only. However, a state relying on big data tools might find itself on slippery grounds, as it draws on technologies initially developed for marketing. For instance, the affordances of technologies in micro-targeting and neuromarketing may interfere with the nature of state politics and statecraft. In *Weapons of Math Destruction,* O'Neill describes the longer history of microtargeting (starting with direct mail). Such fragmentation and multiplicity of the public hardly translates into coherency of the message from the populist leader that consolidates the body politic (Andrejevic 2013; Maly 2018; Baldwin Philippi 2018). Whereas both Democrat and Trump campaigns have turned to such means, my point is: let's not forget that technological adaptation generates transgressions and contradictions; our human and social complexities are not reducibl to the patterns that network science proudly presents (though the failure to be accurate might not be less scary); and the concrete futures of digital intimacy and algorithmic populism are undecided.

CONCLUSION

On the one hand, twenty something years after the defense of intimacy and affect in the public sphere, intimacy appears displayed, shared, and rendered governable through technological mediation. Yet the idea of our transindividual connectedness allows us to challenge the narrative of the crowd being "scary" and dangerous due to loss of individuality and rationality; as well as the narrative of a homogeneous, sheepish crowd following top-down authoritarianism. Rather than the loss of "rational" individuality, the question is in what ways and to what extent affect and intimacy are (technologically) captured, exploited, and articulated into projects of authoritarianism and othering. How does affect translate into other scales and forms of power, such as the box office? And what are the inherent weaknesses, where affective vectors can constitute a "line of flight," resulting in new bonds and solidarities? Can the micropolitics of affect also become more than or less than an aggregation represented in supposedly "immediate" fashion by the sovereign leader?
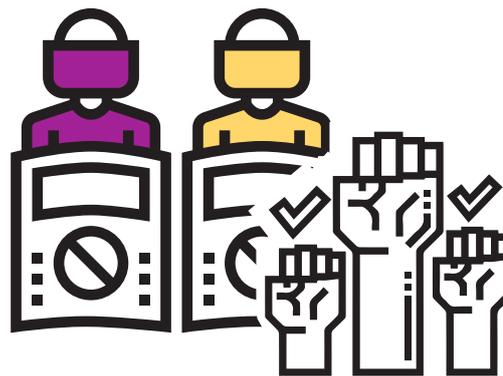

Let us reconsider intimate publics in terms of inclusivity. Gilbert (2014) argues that "What distinguishes a democratic politics from any other is the fact that it does not try to regulate the inherent complexity of human relations" (129), which Arendt calls boundless action and refers to as infinite relationality. Rather than making social relations simpler, it "strives to give expression to their full complexity and the creative possibilities which this entails" (130). Building on this, I want to propose that what makes the crowd dangerous is not its connectedness undermining liberal, "rational" subjectivity but its disconnections and erasures. Digital media play a role in creating and sustaining such disconnections through re-articulations of public/private spheres, censorship, as well as algorithmic filtering. Discussing the affective registers of networks, Wendy Chun (2018) turns to homophily (love of the same) to explore algorithmic pattern discrimination by recommendation algorithms, which leads to phenomena such as echo chambers and filter bubbles: "Homophily (love as love of the same) fuels pattern discrimination. The fact that networks perpetuate segregation should surprise no one because […] segregation in the form of homophily lies at their conceptual core" (62). From this perspective, the populist crowd is not excessively connected (i.e., undermining individualism), but rather not connected enough (i.e., homophilic in Chun's sense)!

REFERENCES

• Andrejevic, N. (2013). *Infoglut: How too much information is changing the way we think and know.* New York, NY: Routledge.

• Baldwin Philippi, J. (2018). The technological performance of populism. *New Media & Society* 1-22. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444818797591.

• Bennett, W. L., & Segerberg, A. (2012). The logic of connective action. *Information, Communication & Society* 15(5), 739-768.

• Berlant, L. (1998). *Intimacy: A Special Issue. Critical Inquiry* 24(2): 281–88.

• Chun, W.H.K. (2018). Queering Homophily. In Apprich, C., Chun, W.H.K., Cramer, F. and Steyerl, H. (eds) *Pattern discrimination,* pp. 59-98. Lüneburg: Meson Press.

• Gilbert, J. (2014). *Common Ground: Democracy and Collectivity in an Age of Individualism.* London, UK: Pluto Press.

• Hardt, M. and Negri, T. (2005). *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire.* New York: Penguin Publishers.

• Maly, I. (2018). Populism as a mediatized communicative relation: The birth of algorithmic populism. *Rapid Social and Cultural Transformation: Online & Offline.* https://www.tilburguniversity.edu/upload/78debd59-1f25-4b37-b0b7-0ce0876cd36b_TPCS_213_Maly.pdf

• O'Neill, C. (2016). *Weapons of Math Destruction: How Big Data Threatens Democracy and Increases Inequality.* New York: Crown Publishing.

• Shiftman, L. (2014). *Memes in digital culture.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

• Dijck, J. van. (2013). *The Culture of Connectivity: A Critical History of Social Media.* Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Media and the Emotional Politics of Populism

Karin Wahl-Jorgensen

I want to look at the relationship between media coverage, anger and populist politics by focusing on the case of Donald Trump. The reason I'm focusing on Donald Trump is because I've been working on questions around emotions, media and politics for a very long time. People started asking me a few years back to say things about Donald Trump and that is why I started to think about him. It's not because I think that Donald Trump is necessarily the only populist or the most important populist, but all the same I'm going to suggest today that there are some distinctive features of the discourse of emotion or the emotional politics of Donald Trump which tie into broader patterns of thinking about the role of emotion in populism.

I want to begin by briefly situating this in the context of the role of emotion in political life, which is my larger project. Then I want to focus specifically on the role of anger in political life and what I see as the distinctive nature of mediated anger or anger circulating through mediated discourses. This then allows me to further develop ideas around the emotional politics of Donald Trump as representing a distinct formation, although it's one that's related to strategies of other populist politicians.

Emotional politics of Donald Trump

Specifically, I want to develop the idea that Donald Trump embodies what I call an angry populism. I want to look at how that might represent a shift in what historian William Reddy has talked about as the "emotional regime." I want to examine this particularly with reference to one example that I've looked at, which is the coverage of Donald Trump's inauguration as compared to Barack Obama's first inauguration.

I will first briefly discuss the context of my larger project of exploring the role of emotion in mediated politics. That's the focus of my book, *Emotions, Media and Politics,* and other publications. In my

book and in other publications that I have worked on over the past decade or so, I have developed the argument that it's important and timely to understand how emotion can be both a constructive and a destructive force in political life more broadly. Also, more importantly, that it's an inescapable one. And we've already heard discussion of emotion in many of the presentations at this conference so far. For example, Ruth Wodak made the point that the appeals to fear, to hope and to shame are essential to forms of populist discourse. One of the arguments that I've made, and other scholars like Sarah Ahmed have made, is that we need to make a distinction between the range of different emotions that are articulated by groups and individuals and that circulate in the public sphere, as well as the resulting responses that they elicit.

In other words, I see emotion as both a force and a resource for political life, for better and for worse. There's always been a key structural tension in the history of political thought and particularly liberal democratic thought between, on the one hand, the need to involve citizens as rational and constructive participants in the political process and then, on the other hand, the need to control what is widely seen as irrational passions and the anger of "the common people."

One of the arguments I've made in my work is that fear of emotion in public life is often actually a fear of anger because angry people are by default understood as potentially aggressive and therefore potentially dangerous. At the same time, sociologists, social movement scholars, psychologists, and political scientists are in broad agreement that political participation is in fact motivated by emotional engagement.

As Drew Westen has argued, looking at neuropsychology, we have to look at the political brain as an emotional brain. Likewise, social movement scholars have ascertained that people participate in politics because they care or they feel passionately about an issue. Conversely we can also say that the choice of inaction --of not taking part-- also comes about as a result of affective responses.

In this sense, political participation appears to be driven in large part by impulses that run counter to the ideal of liberal democracy, the notion that citizens should be dispassionate, disembodied, unemotional and rational. Instead of being driven purely by rationality, the consensus seems to be that rationality is important to political decision making, but equally, that citizens who participate appear to be fueled by passion and by emotions that range from love to hatred and anger.

My book also has chapters that look at other emotions. But I think that anger is a particularly interesting political emotion and I'm going to briefly talk about why I think it's so important to look at anger. I should note that when I talk about anger in this way I don't mean to say that we can necessarily isolate it from other emotions--either as they circulate in our individual bodies or as they circulate in public discourse. There is a range of emotions in play and in a way it's an artificial distinction to look at just one in isolation.
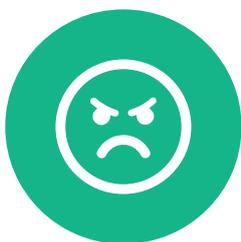
"(…)anger is a particularly interesting political emotion(…)"

Nonetheless, that's exactly what I'm going to do for the purposes of my talk. If we look at anger specifically, it tends to be recognized in social theory as a reaction to injustice and inherently relational. For example, Aristotle's *Rhetoric* defined anger as "an impulse, accompanied by pain, to a conspicuous revenge for a conspicuous light directed without justification towards what concerns oneself or towards what concerns one's friends."

It's long been recognized that although anger is in the first instance an individual emotion, it comes to matter politically when it's articulated by collectives towards a shared objective of addressing an injustice. So it's potentially a collective and therefore political emotion. But at the same time political thinking continues to be fueled by the idea that anger is normatively unjustifiable. So Martha Nussbaum, the famous philosopher of emotion, wrote a book in 2016 called *Anger and Forgiveness,* in which she argued that basically anger is a really bad thing. She suggested that "anger is not only not necessary for the pursuit of justice, but also a large impediment to the generosity and empathy that help to construct a future of justice." In trying to engage with Nussbaum's argument as part of writing about mediated anger more broadly, I have suggested that anger, as it circulates through the media (this you can also say about other emotions that circulate in the media), is a distinctive emotion from the kind of anger that circulates in individual bodies and makes people, for example, aggressive and resentful towards others, which is a kind of anger that Nussbaum talks about.
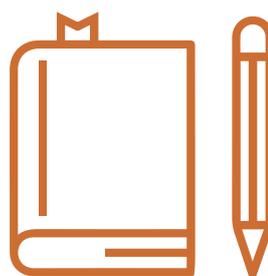
Martha Nussbaum in 2016

I carried out a study a few years ago about anger in routine coverage of protest and developed a typology of mediated anger. I argued, in an article in the *International Journal of Communication*, that mediated anger is distinctive because it's performative, it's discursively constructed through the speech of actors and it's usually collective and political. I should say that in developing this argument and other arguments, I've been heavily influenced by the work of sociologists of emotion who view emotion as partly socially constructed and distinctive from affects that circulate in individual bodies.

By describing mediated anger in this way, I mean that mediated anger is performative because it's based on the performance of anger in the public sphere. If you think about people being angry in the media, whether it's Donald Trump or protesters against him, this kind of performance is often strategic but it's inherently ideological as well. It's discursively constructed insofar as it's crafted through narratives and interpretations and it shapes the conditions of possibility for shared action because it facilitates the sharing of particular legitimate ways of talking about our feelings in public.

Finally, this performance is collective and potentially political because it's based on the articulation of shared grievances usually towards particular political ends. In other words, when we talk about mediated emotions we talk about something that is potentially political, performative and constructive, so it's different from emotions that we feel in our own bodies. With that in mind, I now want to takea look at the distinctive anger of Donald Trump as a marker of an emerging form of angry populism which represents a shift in what we might call the emotional regime.

When I talk about the notion of an emotional regime I'm drawing from the work of the historian of emotion William Reddy. He talks about an emotional regime as a "set of normative emotions, and the official rituals, practices and emotives (emotion words) that express and inculcate them are the necessary underpinning of any stable political regime.".

I argue that we see journalism as a central venue for enacting and sustaining the emotional regime. I further develop the case that the emotional regime that we're seeing in the contemporary era in the context of looking at Donald Trump is one of angry populism. Angry populism, as it's embodied by Trump, is based on a rhetoric which seeks broad appeal through the deliberate and strategic expression of anger. When it's adopted as an interpreted framework in media coverage it suggests that the anger of Trump, but also the anger of his supporters and his opponents, is both salient and relevant to political life.

This is something that fits into the context of the significant electoral and political advances of populist politicians that we've already talked about for the last few days. If we look at right wing populisms in particular, observers have pointed out that they operate through emotional appeals often associated with anti-immigration and xenophobia, widely seen as appealing to groups that feel angry and disenchanted with conventional politics.

"I argue that we see journalism as a central venue for enacting and sustaining the emotional regime."

I'm going to show you this because it's my favorite image ever. I should tell you all that I have a Putin calendar for 2019, which I opened in 2018 because I couldn't wait. Vladimir Putin, as many of you know, poses every year for the Vladimir Putin calendar, which presents him more as a superhero, sex symbol or movie star than as a conventional politician. He goes fishing without his shirt on, he hugs puppies, he does amazing workouts in the gym and he also thoughtfully sniffs what I think is a flower but what might just be a twig.
The reason why I wanted to mention Putin here was mainly to show off that picture, but also to say that he is someone who has garnered significant public support in Russia by constantly reinforcing distinctions between the Russian people and pretty much everyone else.

I don't want to rehearse in detail definitions of populism, but I want to talk about these definitions in the context of emotion in particular. We've discussed how populism tends to be premised on the mobilization of the people around an opposition of shared enemies. It depends on the cultivation of exclusionary solidarities that target resentment toward the most vulnerable members of society, including immigrants and ethnic and sexual minorities.
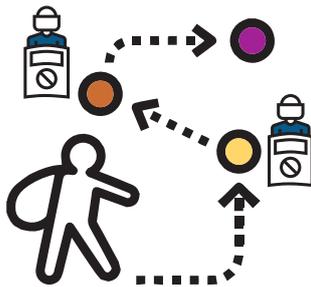
The appeal of Trump and other right-wing populists tends to be organized around a particular negative affective constellation. That represents a coalescence of longer standing practices and trends and shares many features with other forms of contemporary populism. Trump's appeal also appears to be distinctive -- and distinctively angry -- premised on the discursive construction of shared grievances.

This is something that observers have pointed out in analyzing the rise of Trump. Trump's electoral victory has been widely connected to broader patterns of economic anger. For instance, the prominent economist Ann Pettifor is one of many observers to link the election result to the economic consequences of globalization. Political scientists Fred Inglehart and Pippa Norris talked about it in terms of a cultural backlash that was a reaction by once predominant sectors of the population to progressive value change.
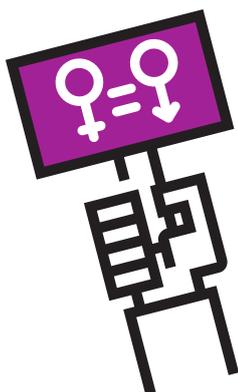
These observations tend to share, however varied their explanations are of the rise of Trump, the idea that Trump's rise can be explained in part by a kind of reactionary anger against disenchanted electorates. As others have observed this could also be linked to a broader age of anger, to use the phrase coined by Pankaj Mishra. Anger as a political and constructed emotion appears to be a resource for populist politics in general and for Trump in particular.

This could be seen to suggest a shift in the prevailing emotional regime. There is some evidence to suggest that the recent past has seen an emphasis on emotional regimes primarily associated with hope. This is something that was very much a theme in Barack Obama's presidency, as exemplified in the iconic "Hope" poster. Prior to him Bill Clinton billed himself as "the man from Hope." This was in part because he was actually from Hope - Hope, Arkansas. I remember his presidential campaign film where he talked about how this was a wonderful small town where nobody locked their doors at night and everyone went to the parade on Main Street. So he used this hometown of Hope as way of embodying a particular political emotional regime.

"(…) use of emotions in award-winning journalistic storytelling (…)"
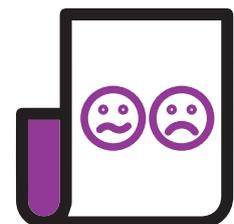
In my own longstanding research looking at the use of emotions in award-winning journalistic storytelling, what's very clear is that negative emotions tend to predominate in journalism. But actually, the most frequent positive emotion is that of hope. Hope, often against very dire predictions, is what tends to predominate in public discourse. By contrast, Trump's injunction to Make America Great Again, a slogan that does embody hope for the future and the possibility of change, has consistently been accompanied by angry rants about the present resonating with disaffected voters.

I would suggest that there is a shift to an emotional regime that tends to focus on anger. Before doing that I want to give a little caveat on the emotional politics of Donald Trump. I don't want to make the argument that this is the only form of unconventional emotional expression associated with Trump. Trump is in fact widely characterized with reference to his poor management of emotion and he is frequently compared to a toddler. So the word tantrum comes up very frequently in media coverage of Donald Trump.

In fact, Trump's outbursts and gaffes have been really too numerous to count. He has shown what sociologists of emotion would characterize as blatant disregard for emotion rules that might have terminated any other candidate at any other time. There is this kind of performance of outrageousness, which does seem to resonate with voters. Trump sailed onwards constantly emoting in these socially inappropriate ways, as in this very high profile incident where he made fun of the disabled reporter Serge Kowalski.

This kind of behavior would have terminated any other candidate at any other time. Here I'm thinking of one person in particular -- the sad case of Howard Dean. How many people remember Howard Dean? Dean was a primary candidate for the Democratic Party in the 2004 presidential election. He finished in third place in the Iowa Caucus and he gave a speech to his supporters after. At the end of his speech he did this little weird high-pitched red-faced scream. It was this one momentary lapse on his part, which ended his candidacy because observers noted that it made him look very unpresidential, precisely because it demonstrated a lack of control of his emotions.

Howard Dean,
Democratic Party,
2004

All I'm saying is that Trump would have totally gotten away with doing that. Of course, Trump's blustering performance cannot simply be understood at constructed through the discourses of mainstream media, but rather as emerging within a hybrid media system. Trump, like other populist politicians, has been highly successful at mobilizing support through Twitter.

His tweets have, in turn, attracted extensive media coverage and allowed him also to bypass a lot of the kind of scrutiny that tends to accompany coverage in the mainstream media. Obviously the increasing prominence of social media shapes not just the content of mainstream media but also some extent their emotional style. According to a number of observers, the affordances of Twitter facilitate a discursive climate, which is more extreme, more divisive and more polarized. Trump appears to be a beneficiary of the shift by crafting these very highly emotionally charged messages on Twitter in a way that then spills over into mainstream media.

Anger is the one emotion which has been used most frequently to describe both the rhetoric of Donald Trump and his appeal to disenchanted citizens, whether through his incessant Tweeting or through his behavior on the campaign trail or in the White House.

One of the things that I've looked at in my research is how often different emotion words are being used in media coverage of Trump, and I have found that anger is far more common than others like irrationality, unpredictability, unpredictable and so on. But anger is not the only prominent way

of talking about Donald Trump. According to a Gallup poll that was carried out in November 2017, the word incompetent was in fact the most common descriptor, with four percent of respondents answering with it. Other words included strong, idiot, egotistical, ignorant, great, racist, asshole and narcissistic.

The philosopher Aaron James, who holds a PhD from Harvard and is a professor at the University of California at Irvine, is a leading light in the burgeoning field of "Asshole Studies," because there is, indeed, such a thing. Aaron James recently released a new book which suggests that Trump can, in fact, best be explained on the basis of the framework of Asshole Studies. In the blurb for this book, he stated the importance of Asshole Studies for making sense of Trump. I want to read that blurb to you and see whether you find it convincing.

"That Donald Trump is an asshole is a fact widely agreed upon, even by his supporters who actually like that about him. But his startling political rise makes a question of just what sort of asshole he is and how his asshole-dom may help to explain his success one of not just a philosophical interest but of almost existential urgency."

Aaron James

Dr. James makes this compelling case here for studying Trump through the lens of Asshole Studies, but I have nonetheless stuck to my guns and have kept with looking at expressions of anger in media coverage. This is an example that I use in my book also in a brief piece in *Media, Culture and Society*. I studied the shifting emotional regimes by looking at expressions of anger in post-election and inauguration coverage of Obama's first election and inauguration in 2009, comparing that to Trump's election and inauguration in 2017.

In taking this approach, I'm following the lead of journalism historians who have looked at

changes in the coverage of recurring events over time. This includes Michael Schudson's work on the President's State of the Union Address, and Bonnie Brennen's work on coverage of Thanksgiving.

Trump, 2017

Obama, 2009
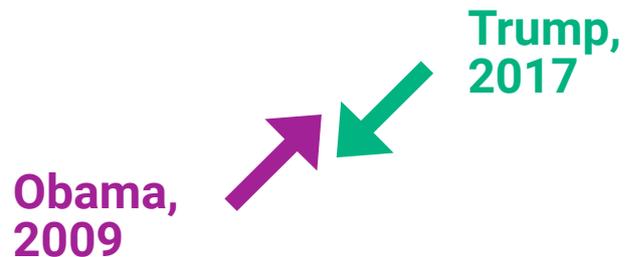
The purpose of my analysis, however, is not to offer a detailed historical explanation of emotional regimes, but rather to provide a snapshot of a particular critical moment of change represented by the election of Trump. This kind of analysis can point us toward shifts in the relative prominence of particular emotions in discourse and highlight what this tells us about horizons for public debate and for political change.

The inauguration is an interesting event to study because it frames the presidency by providing an interpretive context for understanding key debates about the president, and therefore provides a sense of the emotional regime that he or she embodies. If we look at the longer period between the election and the inauguration, that period is quite critical in both establishing and contesting the reputation, vision and public image of a new president. At the same time, inaugurations seek to cement a dominant narrative around the president. Scholars and historians who have studied inaugurations suggest that they could be seen as rituals that build consensus around the spectacle of affirming the new president and the shared values represented by them. They often represent these moments when the nation has been constructed as coming together and divisions set aside.

This makes the study of anger all the more interesting in the context of inauguration coverage, because if anger is viewed as an uncontrollable, dangerous negative emotion, it's anathema to the ideological consensus of the inauguration ritual where we might expect it to be largely suppressed or invisible.

We expect it to be a time when everyone comes together, waves a flag and everyone is happy about the new president. I studied the occurrence of the phrases "anger" and "angry" in the period between Trump's election in November 2016 and the day following the inauguration in January 2017, contrasting it with the same period following Obama's first election.
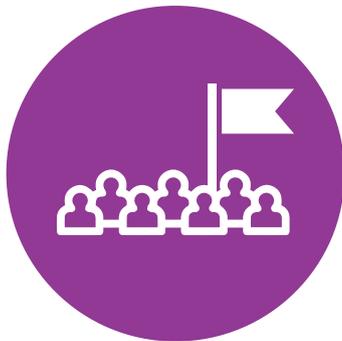
There were many more stories that mentioned anger in the context of Trump than for Obama. I looked at US newspapers and newswires. I then did a smaller qualitative and basic content analysis of a sample of the day following the inauguration for each of the two Presidents. I should say that here I'm only focusing on how the word "anger" came up in this coverage---- I'm not looking at related words like indignation, fury or frustration. I'm making this decision to maintain a clear focus on what I explicitly identified as public articulations of anger as a central political emotion.

I'm particularly interested in looking at who is represented as being angry and *what* are they angry about. What does this anger tell us about the mediated construction of political debate as well? First of all, we look at the question of who is actually angry in inauguration coverage. If we look at the Trump case we've got a very small number of different types of actors that dominate what we might call the subject of anger.

This is completely different from what the picture looked like for Obama's first inauguration. In the case of Obama's first inauguration you have a widely distributed form of anger in terms of who's actually angry. There were Kenyan diplomats who were angry, there were people angry about queuing for the inauguration, people angry about the appointment of the Attorney General, people angry about racists. All sorts of different types of actors who were angry.

In the case of Trump, his opponents actually represented the majority of those who were represented as angry in the stories. In manyof the stories on the Trump inauguration the anger of these protesters was described as energizing a new social movement and it was frequently legitimized with reference to the substance of their grievances. This also challenges conventional understandings of how anger tends to be constructed in protest coverage. In this case, people who are angry about Donald Trump are actually represented as having legitimate political opinions that needed to be heard in the public sphere.

Trump supporters, however, were also described as being angry, accounting for 13.3% of the subjects of anger. The anger of his supporters, which usually had to do with the Washington establishment as well as with a decline in economic opportunities, was used as a way of explaining their voting decisions. In other words, when Trump supporters were described as being angry, it was used as a way of explaining why they actually voted for Donald Trump.

If we look at what people are actually angry *about*, when anger was referenced in the coverage of Obama's inauguration this was almost never directed at Obama himself. Instead, the most frequent target of anger had to do with the historical experience of racism amongst African-Americans. The election of Obama was seen as an opportunity to actually overcome discrimination. By contrast, the anger expressed in coverage of Trump's inauguration overwhelmingly targeted Trump himself. This was true for more than half

of all references to anger in the sample and was based on extensive coverage of protestors gathering for the inauguration itself as well as for the women's marches on the day following the inauguration.

What is most striking about the construction of anger in stories about Trump's inauguration is the fact that a very high number of references to anger-- 20% of the-- didn't identify a target. Usually when you see media coverage of anger, there's a clear target for this anger. People are represented as being angry about something in particular. There is a kind of political aim of the anger. They want to achieve something by being angry in public. So anger requires a target for it to matter politically. This is something that I've done quite a lot of work on with my colleague Mervi Pantti over the years and appears to be consistent over time.

By contrast, in stories about Trump's inauguration, anger appeared to become newsworthy in its own right. And in the vast majority of cases this unspecified anger, this target-less anger was that of Trump himself. This is important because describing anger as having a target both explains the anger and contributes to legitimizing it. By contrast, the unspecified anger of Trump and his supporters suggests that they're angry for no particular reason or cause. The image that emerges from the media coverage is that anger is essential to their identity and their worldview. They are angry people.

This essentializing of anger is quite central to understanding the place of angry populism as the emotional regime of the Trump era. It suggests that a particular brand of exclusionary populism cultivated by Trump depends upon the performance of anger as a way of dramatizing grievances. In fact, analysts suggested that Trump appealed

to voters in large part because he saw the strategic utility of a new and angrier form of public discourse.

CNN noted this in its inauguration update: "Donald J Trump identified, long before anyone else did, the anger and desire for change that millions of Americans craved. He addressed that in frank, blunt terms that deeply resonated with millions who were fed up with Washington's political class and felt left behind in the globalizing economy." This kind of widespread emphasis on Trump's performance of anger and his appeal to an aggrieved public through this anger, alongside the interest in the anger of protest and opponents, has had a significant consequence in terms of shaping public debate over his presidency.

It suggests that there is salience to this angry populism, implying that anger is a viable interpretive framework for understanding political discourse in this performance alongside understanding the motivations of political actors. More than that, it seems that Trump's populism works precisely because of the anger it expresses.

Anger is foundational to his appeal and to his political projects, but it's also what we might call an umbrella emotion, one that covers a wide variety of grievances and disaffections. I've done another study that looked at the coverage of anger in the 100 days following his inauguration. I found that mainstream media coverage has continued to interpret his policy decisions through the lens of his anger. For example, a *Washington Post* editorial on February 3, 2017, noted: "Donald Trump's election was propelled by the wave of anti-globalization anger that is sweeping the United States and other Western advanced economies. Trump has echoed that anger in his rhetoric. And now he is responding to that anger with policy."

This has been a theme throughout his presidency. It's been used to describe everything from his trade wars, how he was angry and unglued when he started a trade war, to the constant firing rounds in the White House and beyond, and even to his response to the continued investigations into Russian interference in the US elections.

Trump's anger has become a dominant framework for understanding his presidency and understanding his brand of populism. I also want to note that these ways of talking create a climate that appears to open up for criminal action against those who have been marked out as outside the "we" group that's included in the people as imagined by populists.

For example, the FBI reported that 2016 represented a five year high in reported hate crimes, and the statistical analysis website Statista reporting a significant surge immediately following the presidential election.

I should note that we've seen very similar patterns in the U.K. after the EU referendum, where the Leave Campaign heavily relied on negative anti-immigration rhetoric and the fear and anger associated with migration. This kind of emotional regime of angry populism is worrying not just because of the anger it embodies but also because the emotional climate it creates and the actions that that facilitates.

This is not to suggest that there's a straightforward causal relationship between media discourses and racist hate crime, but rather that they form part of a climate that contributes to facilitating a view that these kinds of actions are acceptable.

I want to conclude, then, by briefly talking about some implications of this. First of all, I've argued that emotion has been historically denigrated in political thought and, as a result of that, in media and communication research. But, as media scholars, interested in politics and in populist politics in particular, we should take emotion seriously as an important political force for better and for worse.

I've tried to do this by looking at mediated anger in political life as a distinctive formation. I've proposed that we need to take a careful look at the role of such anger as a mobilizing emotion in contributing to explaining the rise of Donald Trump. I've also tried to demonstrate a shift in the emotional regime represented by media discourse as following Trump's inauguration, comparing it to coverage of Obama's first swearing in.

In particular, I have suggested that we've seen this shift towards an emotional regime of angry populism which renders anger a viable framework for interpreting political life and suggests that its performance is essential to the brand of populism represented by Trump.

I would also argue that there are a lot of complexities associated with the mediated construction of anger as a political emotion. It's not just a tool of political opportunists like Trump. The anger of Trump supporters as well as protesters against him tends to be given voice and perceived as both legitimate and pertinent.

EMOTIONS ARE A TOOL
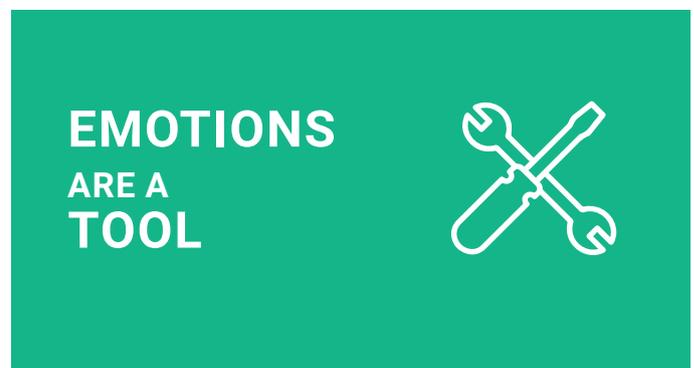
Even if anger has long been denounced as a negative and dangerous emotion, it's also important to consider the ways in which protestors against Trump view it as positive and mobilizing. Indeed, one of the most recent studies I've done looked at how Twitter discussion which dealt with the family separation policy actually mobilized an emotional community based on the anger of people who were protesting against the policy. I would also say that this alone doesn't offer a way out of angry populism. It is also important to look at cases where related populist movements have failed.

What do the two people that we see here [Geert Wilders and Marine Le Pen] have in common, apart from having really expensively styled hair? They have both lost elections. They are both right-wing populists that were defeated by appeals for more inclusive societies and against the forms of xenophobic populism that they represent. Geert Wilders, well known for his anti-Islam stance, lost the Dutch general election in 2017 even though polls predicted that his party would finish first. Marine Le Pen lost the French elections to Emmanuel Macron, though it hasn't gone too well for Macron since then. Analysts suggest that one of the reasons Macron managed to defeat Le Pen was that he appealed successfully against the strident right-wing views she represented and for a more pro-European France. These examples remind us that collective and political emotions are dynamic and ever-changing and perhaps none more so than anger. It also shows that emotional regimes can always be contested no matter how deeply embedded they may seem.

Popular Feminism and Popular Misogyny

Sarah Banet-Weiser
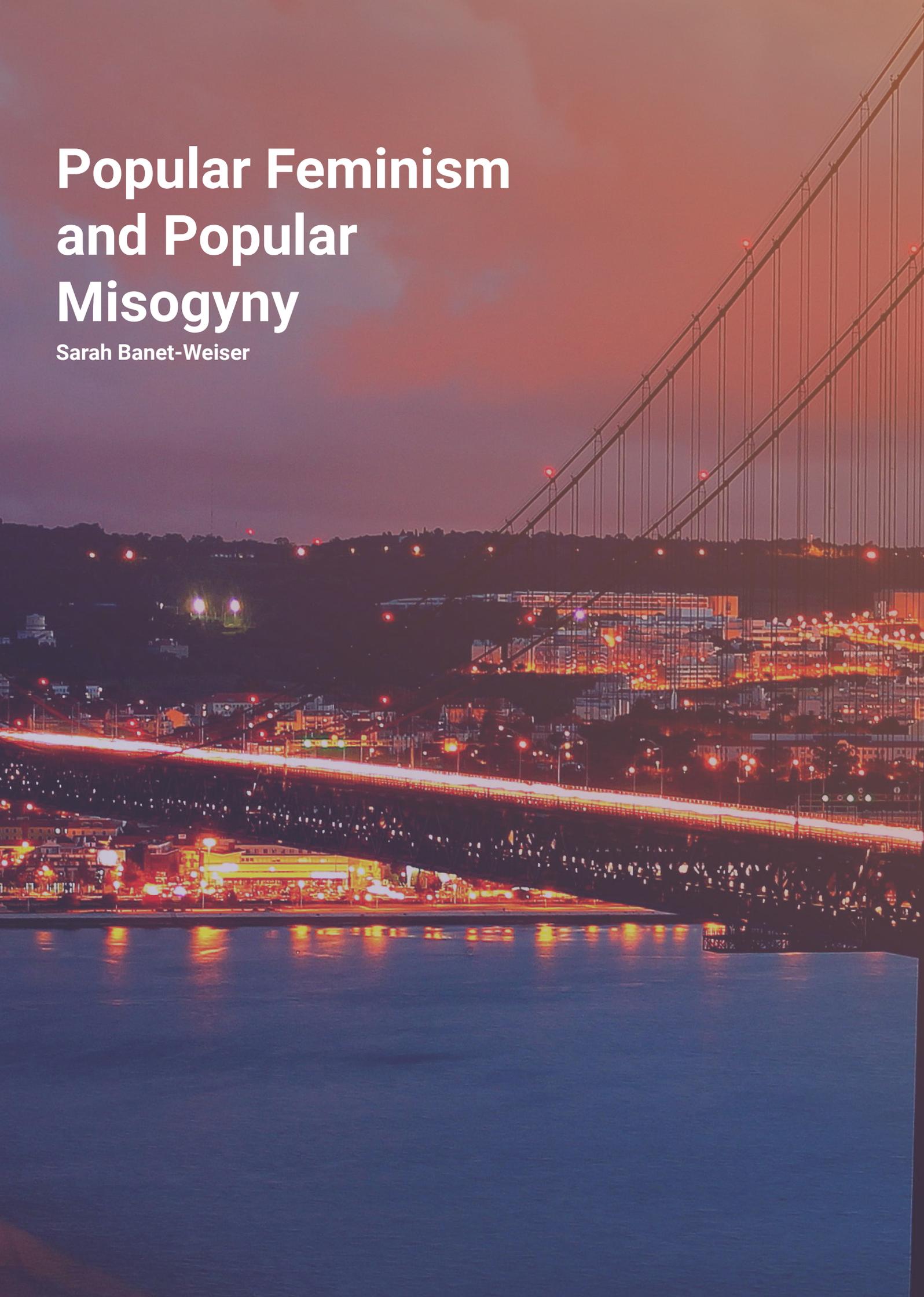
With the US government shutdown and Brexit happening where I live now, to come to Lisbon and to be part of this group and to experience these talks and intellectual conversations has been an incredible gift. So thank you for that. I am going to present today from my book, but also some new ideas that I've been thinking about, and I also really appreciate the fact that this winter school on populism has given me an opportunity to think through some of the differences and similarities between what I call the popular and populism.

As I was telling Nelson Ribeiro and Barbie Zelizer yesterday, it's very interesting to me to be thinking about populism. Lots of people have gone over definitions of populism here, so I'm not going to rehearse those in this talk. But about five years ago, when I started thinking about popular feminism and what it meant and what the popular as a terrain of intellectual inquiry means, I gave a paper at another conference on populism. And in that conference I argued that what we need to think about how we need to push "popular" forward towards populism, because it was before we started sort of equating populism with the extreme right. And so populism for me at that time was much more about a left kind of progressive movement. And I was thinking about how to push my thinking towards that direction.

Now, five years later I'm thinking, "Well, I'm just going to hold on to the popular for a while." So again, lots of people have rehearsed this definition. I've really learned from a lot of different people here about what populism is. I'm just going to take as a kind of broad given that a definition of populism is about a struggle or challenge between a group that is identified as the elite and a group that is identified as the people. But I also think that populism—and many of us have talked about this, this week—is crucially about demagoguery. It is crucially about its own elite who stokes fears and passions in the people. And so I think that when we think about populism and the way I'm thinking about popular misogyny as a populism, I'm thinking through what that means to have figures that stoke fear and resentment.

Peter Baker last week in the *Guardian* had a long article about definitions of populism. And one of the things that he said is that the word evokes the long-

simmering resentments of the everyman brought to a boil by charismatic politicians, hawking, and impossible promises. So what I want to do in this talk is talk about that, how populism is also fueled by a strong sense of victimhood and recuperation. As Baker continues, "A populous 'people' can define itself by an ethnic identity it feels is under threat, but just as easily by a shared sense of being victims of economic exploitation. What matters is that it blames a perceived class of corrupt elites; in the case of rightwing populisms, it may also heap scorn on some underclass, whether immigrants or racial minorities, whom the elites are accused of favouring with special treatment as part of their plot to keep power away from 'real people.'"
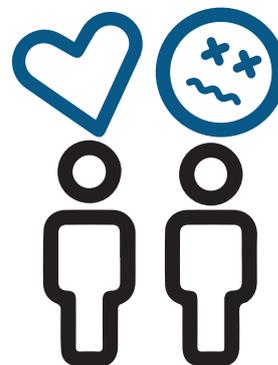
This for me forms a lot of the logic of what I'm going to talk about in terms of popular misogyny, that it's about a boiling resentment, about a feeling that women in particular received special treatment that has taken away from men, and it's about victimhood. So I'm going to talk about this in the context of my recent book as Barbie said, *Empowered*. I'm going to argue here that popular misogyny can be seen as a kind of populism because it mobilizes a particular kind of networked movement. And it is about the shared sense of being victims of special treatment, about recuperation and restoration of patriarchy. So I'm going to start off with two moments about one year apart. The first moment is one that everyone, I'm sure in this room and elsewhere,

knows quite well. It ignited in October 2017, and around then this article set it off from the *New York Times*. #MeToo began to circulate in digital and social media. *The Times* published this article detailing multiple accusations of sexual harassment against Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein. The Weinstein case mobilized hundreds of other stories about harassment in everyday life, which were manifest in the multimedia movement of #MeToo. As many have pointed out, the phrase #MeToo was actually created in 2007 by an African-American activist, Tarana Burke, a survivor of sexual assault and someone who created a movement, in particular, to help with connecting with other victims, especially women of color.

The fact that Burke, the originator of #MeToo, was largely eclipsed by the high-profile, mostly white, female celebrities who came forward in

#MeToo
New York Times
article

the Weinstein scandal is not insignificant. *Time Magazine's* person of the year in 2017 was named the silence breakers, women who have come forward to expose sexual harassers and predators. Yet Burke who created the movement was inside the pages, not featured on the cover. Although, as you will see, Taylor Swift is featured on the cover, who needless to say has an ambivalent relationship to feminism. The mainstream media has covered these #MeToo stories expansively, which is an important move, but the stories are often about the powerful men who are accused or the celebrity women who accused them.

In other words, while the public awareness of #MeToo has helped to reveal how widespread and normative sexual harassment is across all industries, it's also focused on very visible public figures. And I say this not to dismiss the accusation of those figures in any way, but I do want to point out that while #MeToo existed in the early 2000s as a mechanism for building intersectional feminist

community, it becomes highly visible only under the mediated logics of a new kind of popular feminism. The #MeToo movement that is expressed on these media platforms are those [stories] that easily lend themselves to commodification and simplification, those industries that provide platforms of visibility, things like entertainment and the news media, that are already designed and scripted for any mode of spectacular spotlight.

So this happens in October 2017; roughly about a year later, we start to see another story that surfaces and begins to supplant the #MeToo stories in terms of visibility in the mainstream media.

These are stories of white male victimhood that circulate on the same media platforms as those that are about #MeToo. And I'm arguing here that these two moments are not unrelated, that there are connections with the media visibility of #MeToo and the visibility of what I'm thinking of as a different inflection of #MeToo. In my mind, it's always said as a whine or a snark, maybe even mocking, maybe cruelly, in either Trump's or Brett Kavanaugh's voice, like a child who isn't getting enough attention rather than a mode of solidarity: "What about MeToo?" Despite the fact that misogyny has long existed as a norm and policy, in culture, economics, and the political realm, in the current moment there is an overt claim that masculinity and, more generally, patriarchy are under threat.

Popular misogyny is often expressed as a need to take something back, such as patriarchy, from the greedy hands of feminists and women.

We see this palpably in the increasing visibility

"What about MeToo?"

of the extreme right and right-wing populism across the globe. And while the racist ideologies of the extreme right have been correctly identified as white nationalism, and a lot of people talked about and have been talking about this at this conference, the extreme right has also always run on an overtly misogynistic agenda. As reporter Matthew Lyons points out, harassing and defaming women isn't just a tactic; it also serves the alt-right's broader agenda and long-term vision for society. A key logic of right populism is recuperation. Men's rights organizations in digital culture and . . . I don't know if we can still say "in real life" 'cause that doesn't really make any sense anymore, but not digital culture. The men's rights organizations are filled with proclamations about how women and feminists have not only destroyed society, but perhaps even more importantly, have emasculated it.

So I'm thinking about how and in what ways—this is my book— the rise of popular feminism has encouraged both a response and an intensification of popular misogyny. So I want to argue that you can't think about popular feminism without also thinking about, it's always the response that always comes through misogyny. And I think that there are some themes here that are picked up that characterize popular feminism, things like shame, confidence, competence, and rage, that are also taken up by popular misogyny. So the meaning of them is distorted in that taking up and deflects attention away from women and towards men and then is targeted actively against women. So in some ways we can think about popular feminism and popular misogyny as competing movements or competing populisms, but in other ways I want to suggest that they are

always engaged in an antagonistic relationship with each other that depends on its core constitutive. Each of these themes that I see—and these are just a few of them that I see—that are engaged in this relationship between feminism and misogyny are also dependent on a logic that revolves around the twinned discourses of injury and capacity. By this I mean that both popular feminism and popular misogyny tap into a neoliberal notion of individual capacity for work, for confidence, for economic success, but that also they both position injury-the capacity that overcomes-- as something that is core to its politics. So for women it's injury of sexism. For men, it's the injury of feminism and also the injury of multiculturalism, the other. And these are seen as key obstacles for realizing this capacity.

So expressions of popular misogyny often rely on the idea that men have been injured by women. Men are seen to be denied rights because women have gained them. Men are no longer

popular feminism **popular misogyny**
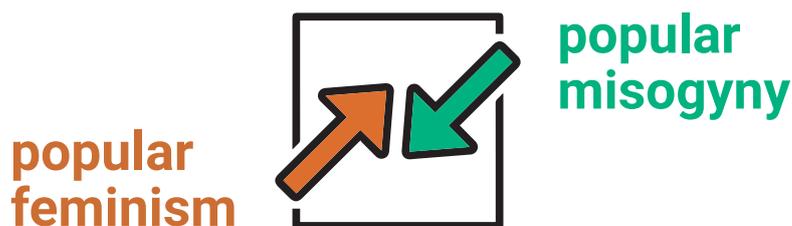
confident because women are more confident. Men have lost jobs and power because women have entered into previously male-dominated realms regardless of how slowly. Men's rights organizations and other forms of popular misogyny dedicate themselves to restoring the capacity of men, the restoration and recuperation of a traditional heteronormative masculinity and of patriarchy itself. This often is seen as a backlash to popular feminism. And surely it is a kind of backlash. It does lash back at feminism. But I also think it's more than that, because backlash implies a linear direction. Something that goes in one direction. I think popular networked misogyny lashes in all directions, finding expression in obvious and in not so obvious ways. So here victimhood is appropriated not by those who have historically suffered, but by those in positions of patriarchal power. Victimhood, in other words, is

rerouted in this relationship, and it works to retrench patriarchal gender relations rather than challenge them. Victimhood, within this relationship, within this dynamic, becomes disarticulated from those who suffer and is reallocated to the privileged, establishing a symbolic redistribution which then appropriates the moral meaning of victimhood or vulnerability itself. So these interconnected narratives of injury frame this talk, and I'm going to come back to them in the second part. But first I want to offer us some definitions about some of the concepts that I'm using here and what I mean specifically by popular feminism and popular misogyny.

It's pretty clear that in North America and Western Europe, we are living in a moment in which feminism has become sort of incredibly popular. It

feels like everywhere you turn there's an expression of feminism. It's on a T-shirt, it's on the coffee mugs that I drink coffee out of every morning, that say things like "superwoman" or "I drink male tears" or something. (Just kidding, I don't have that one. But it actually does exist.) They're in movies, they're in anthems, in inspirational Instagram posts, in awards, acceptance speeches, and lapel pins that you wear. Feminism, for me, is popular in at least three senses. I know there are many different definitions of the popular. For me, these three characterize both popular feminism and popular misogyny.

One is that feminism manifests in discourses and practices that are circulated in popular and commercial media with digital spaces like blogs,

Instagram, and Twitter, as well as broadcast media. Two, the "popular" of popular feminism signifies the condition of being liked or admired by like-minded people and groups. So the popular of popular feminism is also about popularity, which means that some feminisms are pushed to the shadows whereas others are made luminous.

And three, for me, the popular is as cultural theorist Stuart Hall said famously long ago, a terrain of struggle, a space where competing demands
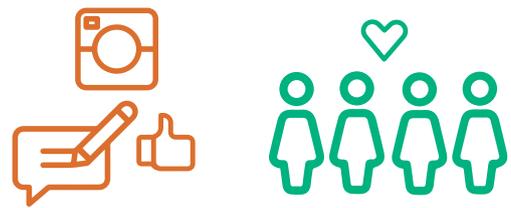
for power battle it out. So this means that there are many different feminisms that circulate in popular culture in the current moment. And some of them, again, become more visible than others.

Popular feminism is networked across all media platforms, some connecting with synergy, others struggling for priority and visibility. Popular feminism has, in many ways, allowed us to imagine a culture where feminism and its every form doesn't have to be defended. It's accessible, it's even admiring. In many ways, this is an incredibly bolstering moment for me and is exhilarating in many ways. Despite that, despite that all this feminism everywhere is bolstering, it's also given me pause to think about the social and economic conditions that define and describe popular feminism, because as I will argue, those social and economic conditions limit what feminism can be. I think it's important to critically analyze popular feminism. And I guide my analysis with some questions like, "Who can we think of as a popular

NORTH AMERICA AND WESTERN EUROPE
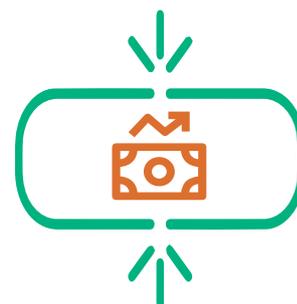
feminist? What are the goals of popular feminism?" And again, there are different versions of feminism, but here I'm going to be talking about these sets of conditions including the media and the entertainment industries that comprise a highly visible form of popular feminism. So, in part, what I mean is that popular feminism refers to practices and conditions that are accessible to a broad public. From organizing marches to #activism to commodities, it's popular, in part, because of the media forums on which it circulates. Feminist messages of gender and equality, body positivity, equal pay for equal work, the normalization of sexual harassment, self-confidence, these circulate and achieve visibility on multiple media platforms and industries.

And here these are just a very few samplings of some of the different forms of popular feminism websites. Emma Watson who has a UN campaign
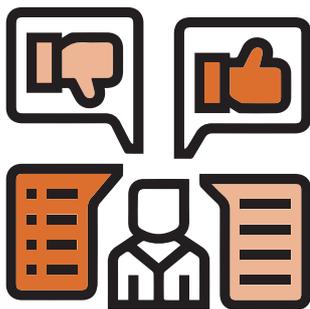
called HeForShe, Taylor Swift, again, with her ambivalence—I had to add her back on because apparently she's a feminist again, jewelry websites, how to build your online feminist hustle. I should read that every night just to make sure I know how to build my hustle! The Women's March, the corporate campaigns, and so on. And the architecture of many of these popular media platforms is, of course, capitalist and corporate. That means that the social and economic conditions for popular feminism are, in part, about those technologies and about their underpinning logics. So while I'm not collapsing media platforms with entertainment industries, I am suggesting that they have a shared supporting logic.

So, for example, as we have seen historically, these are specific messages of feminism that are often incorporated into advertising and marketing, and contemporary popular feminism is no different, with campaigns from Dove, to Chevy, to Verizon,

which churn out these emotional ad campaigns that then harness feminism as a selling point, as a way to sell products. There's a whole industry and the "love your body" discourse, especially online and in beauty apps, which implore women to be confident and to love themselves, and most of all to be entrepreneurial and self-optimizing.

I will say that part of the research in this book, i was trying to figure out as a user, how do you access all this popular feminism?

So this website, feminist hustle offered a course and sells feminists self-love, which I took for $100 and I have a certificate. So anytime I feel shitty, I just bring out my wallet with my certificate and just show it to people because that works.

So there's all sorts of different ways that popular feminism is expressed. There are hundreds of organizations, the corporate and nonprofit, that

$100 CERTIFICATE

are dedicated to teaching girls and women to code and to enter the technology industries. Learning to code has become a hot new industry in itself. Social media, as we all know, has exploded with feminist campaigns from YesAllWomen, to NotOkay, to of course #MeToo. Blogs and websites such as Black Girl, Dangerous, Feministing, Feminist Current, Crunk Feminist Collective, Jezebel, all filled with passionate defenses and celebrations of feminism and exhortations towards feminist and anti-racist activism. And we also have—certainly not least for this particular era of consumerism that we're in a sartorial feminist ideology at sea, and others offer things like feminist tank tops, buttons.

This empowers women.

Crop top is available at H&M, if you want it. Designer, Christian Dior in the 2017, 2018 runway fashion show at Fashion Week created a $710 T-shirt that proclaimed we should all be feminists, especially those who can afford a $710 T-shirt. There are other ones that are more modestly priced like the Prabal Gurung $195 T-shirt that says, "This is what a feminist looks like." So again, all this feminism has been bolstering in many ways, but it's also given me pause to think about not only the social and economic conditions that define and describe it, but also about the relationship between popular feminism and popular misogyny. So for me, it's made sense to think of these varied manifestations of popular feminism and the relationship with popular misogyny within a framework of visibility.
And it's within this framework that I think that feminism becomes particularly tangible. So this is sort of a basic dictionary definition of visibility.

Christian Dior $710   **Prabal Gurung $195**

The state of being able to see or be seen, the degree to which something has attracted general attention or prominence, right? Visibility is important for any kind of political vision to be seen. But I also think that we need to think about the mechanisms of visibility. How is a vision of feminism seen? Through what channels? And what I see with much of popular feminism is that the media economy, where it circulates as the most central, often ends up shaping and constraining the vision of feminist politics. That means that we need to think about what kind of attention we pay to popular feminism, what version is seen, what version becomes prominent. So while the rising visibility of a safely affirmative feminism is again in many ways a real progress, it also often eclipses a feminist critique of structure.

The mainstreaming of feminism often constricts its circulation as if seeing or purchasing feminism and contributing to its visibility is the same thing as changing patriarchal structures. So I'm thinking of these logics as a set of social and economic conditions for popular feminism, but I also think, in particular, in light of this conference that the implication of this logic is important to think about social movements and populism in general. These conditions have been called platform capitalism, they've been called other kinds of things, which implies the emptying and flattening out of the content on meaning, emphasizing instead the endless traffic and circulation of this content. And we talked a little bit about this already this morning.

Media and entertainment platforms are conditioning the contents, so business models often end up conditioning the kinds of expressions that we see. As we know, there's a contemporary obsession with metrics and numbers, likes and followers, and given the predominance of digital media platforms that are predicated on the accumulation of these numbers, where their business depends on them, then to make oneself visible or to express oneself as visible is also dependent on an accumulation of numbers. This is what José van Dijck has called the popularity principle, where despite differences among media platforms, they're invested, as he says, "on the same values or principles, popularity, hierarchical ranking, quick growth, large traffic volumes, fast turnovers and personalized recommendations." For me, these conditions comprise what I call an economy of visibility. An economy which can work to constrain and constrict the vision

of feminism. Feminists, media scholars, critical race scholars, media scholars, in general, cultural studies folks, communication scholars have long been invested in studying the politics of visibility. And for me the politics of visibility usually describes the process of making visible a political category such as gender, or race, or class that is and has been historically marginalized in the media, in the law, and policy and so on. This process involves what is simultaneously a category, visibility, and a qualifier, politics, that then together can hopefully articulate a political identity.

Here, the goal is that the coupling of the qualifier and visibility can be productive of something, such as social change or social justice, that exceeds the visibility itself, and so that that is where the vision of politics is. Politics then becomes a descriptor of the practices of visibility. This is often the core logic, whether or not it's practiced, of many populisms, right? That visibility can amplify the politics, visibility is the root to the politics. So the politics of visibility have long been important and continue to be for the marginalized. To demand visibility is to demand to be seen, to matter, to count, to recognize oneself in dominant culture and insistence of marginalized and disenfranchised communities, women, racial minorities, non-heteronormative communities, refugees, immigrants, the working classthe insistence on being seen has been crucial to an understanding and an expansion of rights for these communities.

Now, of course not all politics of visibility, as we know, painfully and tragically, result in social change. But the point here is that visibility

is understood as leading to something, right? As part of a political struggle, as a route to a vision. In the current media environment, however, while the politics of visibility are still important and they are still politically efficacious, I think that economies of visibility increasingly structure, not just our mediascapes, but also our cultural and economic practices in our daily lives.
In the contemporary media and digital moment, media outlets and systems can easily absorb the visualization of basically any experience. So economies of visibility fundamentally shift politics of visibility so that visibility becomes the end rather than a means to an end. Getting seen can become all there is. In this way, some political visions have transformed their very logics from the inside out, so that the visibility of these visions is what matters rather than the structural ground on and through which they are constructed.

So, for example, wearing a T-shirt that says "this is what a feminist looks like" transmutes the potential logic of what it means to be a feminist, as a political subjectivity invested in challenging gender inequities into what a feminist looks like. Her visual or his visual representation. Visibility is best structured to stop functioning as a qualifier to politics. The T-shirt is the politics. The politics are contained within the visibility, so visual representation becomes the beginning and the end of political action. I should say as a caveat, I'm not arguing that we shouldn't all be wearing this T-shirt, right? I have this T-shirt. You can well imagine I have lots of feminist T-shirts. It's not that the wearing of the T-shirt is what I'm struggling with. It's that wearing the T-shirt becomes the end in itself, but it doesn't then carry on to thinking about how to critique and challenge structure. And Herman Gray has talked about this in a beautiful way, where he argues that the identification and announcement of one's visibility is both the radical move and the end in itself.

Economies of visibility then do not describe a political process, but rather assume that visibility itself has been absorbed into politics. The absorption is the political. And the available structures for popular feminism's visibility in the

social change or social justice

current moment are usually those that are dominant centers of power. Media companies, corporations, the technology industries. In this sense, visibility often becomes synonymous with trending, whether in the mainstream news media or on social media. And to trend is a different process of visibility than to agitate to be seen in order to be granted basic rights. Trending is about recognition and about making oneself available for normalization. As [Herman] Gray has argued, the visibility that fuels trending is a demand to be recognized in an attention economy. Indeed, the fact that Merriam-Webster chose "feminism" in 2016 as the word of the year is great in many ways. But how Merriam-Webster makes that choice—does anyone know? It's number of clicks. Number of clicks on the word, right? So it doesn't necessarily imply a support of feminism. I mean, it looks at different ways in which it is expressed, but plenty of people are using

technology industries

Media companies

feminism, and the word feminism, and the concept of feminism, in ways that actually benefit misogyny rather than feminism itself. So it's this kind of visibility that I'm asking us to be cautious of.

Okay, popular misogyny. Within this context of visibility, it's also clear that feminism isn't the only popular phenomenon that we need to contend with in the current moment. Every time I began to investigate a popular feminist practice or expression, there was always an accompanying hostile rejoinder or challenge, regardless of the mediated space in which it occurred, whether that was social media, the legal realm, or corporate culture. For every Tumblr page that is dedicated to female body positivity, there were fat shaming and body shaming comments. For every confidence

organization for girls, there was yet another men's rights organization claiming that men are the real victims.

Misogyny is popular in the contemporary moment for the same reason feminism has become popular: It is expressed and practiced on multiple media platforms, it attracts other like-minded groups and

individuals, and it manifests in a terrain of struggle with competing demands for power.

So for me, popular misogyny, in some ways, follows a conventional definition of misogyny, a hatred of women. But I also want to make a more nuanced case here that it is the instrumentalization of women as objects, where women are a means to an end, a systematic devaluing and dehumanizing of women that takes place in a network and on a network. It should go without saying that I'm not equating masculinity with misogyny. Not all men are misogynists, and misogyny isn't just about men. Many women also practice misogyny.

To give you a little sense of what's up here, this is a campaign that was created by an Indian online magazine in response to a UN women's campaign. This is, of course, Jordan Peterson. It's a little hard to see these. This is Elliot Rodger. This is Anita Sarkeesian, who is a feminist commentator who has a series on YouTube. She was part of this intense misogynistic effort called Gamergate. She had a show about female representation and video games, and gamers responded with death threats and rape threats. She had to cancel a presentation because they called in a terrorist threat. And then someone just made up a game that's called Beat Up Anita Sarkeesian. All you have to do is press the space button and her face just gets more bloody. This is the Red Pill, which is a misogynist section on Reddit. Because I'm British now, I had to put in something about Love Island, right? Alex becomes an incel icon. And I'll talk about incels

76

in just a minute. So those are just a few examples of the ways in which misogyny, like popular feminism, is networked, an interconnection of nodes and all forms of media and everyday practice. It's also mobilized as a populous movement. So in the contemporary digital moment in this economy of visibility, misogyny itself is constantly moving from one node to another, emerging in different spaces with varied manifestations.

To confront popular misogyny means to confront the notion that patriarchy itself needs to be assessed differently than it ever has been before. It is not just a discrete group of organizations, or roles, or spaces, or practices, but it is a networked populism with interconnecting nodes. It finds expression and nodes ranging from social media to global meetups, to fashion, to neo-masculine boot camps. Through this dynamics, misogyny is reimagined, takes on new forms, and has a variety of effects. And this is, of course, we all know, how networks work. They allow for different spaces of expressions simultaneously, and they function through rapid and asynchronous communication. As Manuel Castells has described, they decentralize power even as they remain loyal to hegemonic institutions.

We see this network at work in many different ways, some more visible than others. We see it in the election of an unapologetic misogynist as the president of the United States, and federal policy deliberations on health care and different countries that include only male representatives, and the continued disparity in wages between women and men in all industries across different countries, not to mention wage disparities between white people and people of color. We see it in the election of Bolsonaro in Brazil. We see it in the attack on gender ideology in Hungary. We see it in the Brexit decision in the UK.

The digital context for a contemporary economy of visibility not only provides the context for popular feminism, in other words, but it's also one that enables and validates what Jack Bratich has called affective divergence—cultures of judgment, aggression and violence. As Bratich argues, "We're

in the midst of a media-fueled popularization of bullies, a convergence of micro-violence perhaps comprising a cultural will to humiliation." And in this way popular misogyny opens up spaces and opportunities for a more systematic attack on women and women's rights. It is the context of a popularization of bullies, a convergence of micro-violence, that coalesces in this kind of neutralization of antagonism. And this cultural will to humiliation is what makes contemporary popular misogyny a shifted set of discourses and practices from previous historical moments. Popular misogyny is a constellation of a popularization of bullies, present not only online, but offline as well. So that's the wider context for a networked popular misogyny. It operates as a

way to consolidate a cultural will to humiliation that holds as a promise the restoration of male privilege, prerogative, and rightful ownership of economic, cultural, and political spaces. This will to humiliation, in other words, it's about the restoration of male confidence. So now I want to turn to just briefly talk a little bit about that theme as a way to dig deeper into this logic of both feminism and misogyny. I think it's worth spending a few moments thinking about what confidence even means in this context and acknowledge some of the different manifestations of it. This is again a dictionary definition. Confidence is the feeling or belief that one can have faith in or rely on someone or something or the telling of private matters or secrets. Taking someone into your confidence.

Within popular feminism, confidence, specifically self-confidence, is seen as an individual act. One that women just need to adopt by telling themselves—ourselves—"They are beautiful. They are smart enough to code. They're worthwhile."

77

And this is important. I mean, how can you argue with that? We should all tell ourselves that we are worthwhile, right? But it also refocuses the reasons for why women aren't confident in the first place back to women themselves, rather than, I don't know, patriarchy or a context that tells you that you shouldn't be confident in the first place. And these are, again, different kind of expressions of confidence coming forward as one.

This is Kim Kardashian, the confidence issue, *Smart Woman's Guide to Self-Belief*. I choose beautiful wearing . . . confidence wear like makeup. My argument here is that, not that these are unimportant, but that they put it back on

women themselves. I need to look in the mirror every day and say, "You are confident, Sarah. You are beautiful. You can do this. You are worthwhile." And if I don't feel that way, then it's nobody's fault by my own, right? And that's the trick here, is that it is not about structure that would encourage me to feel differently in the first place. In that sense, I think that we need to think about another root of the word "confidence" and talk about the confidence game and the con artist. Con artist in contrast to confidence is someone who is adept at manipulating the truth, manipulating certainty. A confidence game is one where a person swindles or robs a person after gaining their confidence. Confidence in this moment is positioned as a commodity, and like all commodities, it receives its value from scarcity. Within popular feminism and popular misogyny, both men and women are seen to lack confidence. The lack of confidence that men

(often white, cis-gendered, heterosexual men) feel in themselves is frequently blamed on an "overconfidence" in women. As Sarah Ahmed has pointed out, this overconfidence is apparently enabled by popular feminism and then is in turn a confidence that is accessed primarily by white, cis-gendered, heterosexual women. So confidence here is positioned as a zero sum game. If women have it, that ownership somehow comes at the expense of men, and the goal is to take it back from women, right? So it's this kind of way in which you can see that confidence is something that can be taken away from men if women have it.

Has anyone seen this new ad, this Gillette ad?

Yeah.

The razor ad that is . . . yeah. So it's getting a ton of attention. It's an ad that calls out toxic masculinity. It basically says we should teach men and boys to be more decent, right? It also uses feminism. There's a shot of #MeToo. There's a shot of the Women's March, and the backlash has been swift and vicious, with people boycotting the company, memes being created—the number of likes versus dislikes, if you want to go back to those metrics, is really disproportionate. I mean, the huge discrepancy between those who actually like the ad and those who don't. And one of the reasons why I think that it's caused such an uproar is because of not this idea that you should be teaching your sons to be good humans if you're a man, but rather the presence of feminism.

That what's happening as feminism is taking something away and that something is confidence, male confidence, self-assurance, self-esteem. And so you can see these are different kinds of blog posts and messages about the taking away of male confidence. Okay. So a few months ago, a man shot and killed two women, and injured three other women, a man at a yoga studio in Tallahassee, Florida, in the United States. According to the reports, the man identified as an incel, a member in an online community of men united by their inability to convince women to have sex with them. Incel stands for involuntarily celibate. The shooter was also a self-proclaimed misogynist. He actually said he wanted something called misogynism

to take over. A little late for that, I think.

Over the summer again, in the United States, there was yet another school mass shooting. And like so many other shootings in the United States, the student who shot and killed 10 people apparently did so because the girl he liked rejected him and embarrassed him in front of his classmates. In a news story, after that shooting, which was at Santa Fe High School, in Texas, the shooter's father said to the news that his son was the real victim here because he was embarrassed by this girl who didn't like him. A few weeks before that, in April, last April in Toronto, a man named Alek Minassian killed 10 people and injured 16. Prior to doing so, he wrote on Facebook, "The incel rebellion has already begun." Minassian went on his rampage, apparently because he identified as an incel.
Minassian as well as many others have held up Elliot Rodger as an example, who killed six people and wounded 14 others in Santa Barbara, California, in 2014. Rodger justified his actions in his manifesto, which he posted on YouTube. And

In Santa Barbara, 2014

US, mass shooting

he said they were a retaliation against women as a group for refusing to provide him with the sex he felt he was owed. There've been at least five mass killings in the last two years that have been explicitly claimed by incels. So while we can't conflate incels with someone like Brett Kavanaugh, they are both enabled by a sense of the loss of white heterosexual male confidence that similarly revolves around women and what women are apparently taking away from men.
If anyone saw the Supreme Court hearings, Brett Kavanaugh was a Supreme Court nominee, has since been confirmed and was accused by Christine Blasey Ford of sexually assaulting her in high school. And during those hearings, Kavanaugh

cried. He screamed. He claimed the mantle of a victim. Senator Lindsey Graham during that same hearing too had an outburst as well and said that Christine Blasey Ford was ruining Kavanaugh's life. Brett Kavanaugh, who then later was confirmed as a Supreme Court justice. The sexual rejection by women, the #MeToo movement, the disruption of jobs and status by global economic recession and a subsequent loss of employment for many men are seen as injuries to men and they are, right? But they are caused most often by women as well as others like people of color, immigrants, refugees, and so on.

So to come back to the point with which I began this talk, white male victimhood is rerouted and appropriated from those who have historically suffered to those in positions of patriarchal power. Those who often have inflicted the suffering in the first place. Here we can see empowerment as a discursive response to victimhood. The empowering discourse of popular feminism is both symbolically and concretely redistributed, and the moral meaning of vulnerability and victimhood itself is appropriated. This redistribution takes place in part within an economy of visibility where what is invisible is often more important than what is visible.
And this is how the mirroring of popular feminism and popular misogyny works. But it is a fun house mirror when that distorts and transmutes the tropes of injury and capacity. So for popular feminism, these twinned discourses of injury capacity that

form its core logic. I'm arguing here that the injury itself is structural. It is centuries of patriarchy, of sexism, of racism, of gendered violence and control and discipline. But the capacity to overcome that structural injury is individual. Just be confident, work on your power poses, come forward, right? Tell yourself you can do it. So the capacity to overcome structural injury is individual. In this fun house mirror dynamic and for popular misogyny, the injury itself is individual. There is no structural injury that cuts across for white men in the way that sexism does. The structure is patriarchy and white supremacy.

It's privileging a particular demographic. So the injury is individual. It is Kevin Spacey, an individual who was accused. It is Louis C K, it is Harvey Weinstein, right? It is Brett Kavanaugh. The injury is individual, but the capacity—and that's why I think this is dangerous, and this is where populism comes in. The capacity to overcome those individual industry injuries by individual men is structural. There are presidents, and heads of state, and the Supreme Court, there is what I've called the comeback economy where you just wait after sexually harassing someone for a small time for people to forget in this economy of visibility and then you have a comeback. We see this in manifest in extreme movements around the world. So the economy of visibility and the affordances of technology contribute to a misogyny that is both networked and popular. And a focus on these particular facets as the problem of misogyny blinds us, I think a bit, to the larger problem of misogyny itself. When we seek to understand popular misogyny and see it as a manifestation of digital culture, as online comments, as haters

going to hate—we can then just write it off as merely a negative effect of technology. Instead, I want to argue that we need to see it for what it is, a manifestation of a crisis in neoliberalism, a consolidation of its failed logic to fulfill its promises. Neoliberalism and popular misogyny are deeply interconnected despite a general mediated discourse that positions popular misogyny as an outlier, a deviation from the culturally acceptable norms of traditional masculinity. The crisis of neoliberalism, however, produces not only via ideology, but also produces violence. And it is a structuring force that is both popular and networked. It also produces a populism that finds coherence and a shared sense of victimhood. The goal of this populism, I think, is recuperation and restoration of dominant masculinity, of patriarchy, and of whiteness. That was a bit grim. Sorry.

Why Journalism Needs to Change*

Barbie Zelizer

Today's populism is an entity born of late modernity. Proliferating in a way that the *New York Times'* correspondent Roger Cohen calls an insult to "the differences through which democracy thrives," populism posits that "the liberal democratic rules-based consensus prevailing since… the Cold War" doesn't work. And it doesn't work "for the simple reason that it has not delivered… economically, socially or culturally."

What this means is that today's populism by definition (as much as we can define it) is an entity responding to a plan gone wrong, to unrealized rhetoric. This linkage between what is and is not readily manifest, what is known and experienced and what is imagined and unmarked lies at the core of why journalism in an era of populism, and particularly authoritarian populism, needs to change.

I'll make my argument by building three points for discussion:

1 | Contemporary populism and its reliance on the media took shape in response to the Cold War

2 | Contemporary journalism remains steeped in the same Cold War mindset that populism was responding to

3 | Journalism thus ends up a priori unresponsive, if not oblivious, to populist convention, even when it has an authoritarian bent. Journalism thereby legitimates populist skepticism and critique through its very activity of newsmaking. Specifically, journalism's Cold War mindset has made the autocratic dimensions of populism difficult, if not impossible, for the US media to act upon.

A few caveats on what I'm about to say: I am speaking only about US populism and its autocratic version, and only contemporary US populism as it emerged in the post WWII era and is sustained today. That's not to suggest that there might not be parallels with journalisms elsewhere or at other times, only that I can't vouch for them.

INTRODUCTION HOW CONTEMPORARY POPULISM CAME TO BE

I'll start with a well-known quote from the American critic Christopher Lasch, who maintained in the early 1990s that populism is "the authentic voice of democracy."

At the time, Lasch's sentiments about the distrust in democracy's institutions, elites and traditions challenged a longstanding liberal disregard for populism as a nostalgic, backward yearning for a simpler life. A remnant of 1950s and 60s modernization theory which developed on the back of Cold War sentiments, thinkers like Hofstadter, Lipset and Bell had given populism little attention because it upset the clean dichotomy between capitalism and communism that fueled Cold War ideology.

But as the Cold War faded, populism invited more nuanced discussion that continues today, one that links it to backsliding in democratic regimes. Urbinati, for instance, writes that "populism takes advantage of government by opinion and makes it the expression of an opinion that belongs only to one public," while Muller speaks about democracy's "shadows," Bobbio of broken promises and Arditi of internal peripheries. All wrestle with what that connection between populism and democracy means.
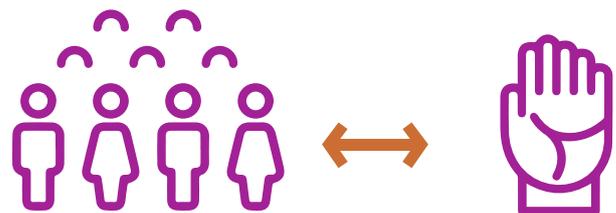
Few scholars, however, have gotten far in elucidating what contemporary populism is, other than to say that it has no consensual essence. As Roger Cohen continued to argue, "in nearly every case, there is a better, more precise way to describe a current political phenomenon than the word "populist."

This, of course, is what Cas Mudde calls a "thin ideology," one that borrows from thicker ideologies to make sense. So I'd like to tackle the oblique character of the tie between populism and democracy by addressing how contemporary populism and authoritarianism evolved together, and what that did to one of democracy's stalwart supports—journalism.

Here I'm drawing largely from Federico Finchelstein, who argues that democracy and contemporary populism became linked when fascism turned untenable after WWII. As fascism came to be regarded as antithetical to post-war recovery, populism absorbed many of its features. What ensued was an authoritarian form of democracy, which depended on a charismatic leader, anti-pluralist view of popular representation, anti-elitism and institutionalism, and an apocalyptic view of the future. This positioned populism as a counter point to the Enlightenment and to liberalism and as an underside to Cold War thinking.

The odd blend that resulted is what we call today illiberal democracy, autocratic democracy or soft authoritarianism (though some differences remain), and it transformed the failed state of prefascist populist movements into the real thing. According to Finchelstein: "Before fascism, populism had been an authoritarian political style for opposition movements. After fascism, the political field was clear and populism became complete, a fully

fledged authoritarian political paradigm—namely, an influential way of dominating the state in the absence of fascist powers."

This makes the Cold War a formative backdrop against which contemporary authoritarian populism has flourished, seeking a middle ground between the Cold War's offering of liberal-democratic forms of capitalism, on the one hand, and Soviet style communism, on the other. What Finchelstein labeled a desire to "escape the newly established bipolar world" is what made populism soar from the Cold War era till today. It is also what made it so amorphous and internally contradictory, an ideological pendulum that incessantly swings between left and right, letting it then create a middle space between democratic capitalism and communism and more recently what helps it to thrive amidst the inconsistencies of neoliberalism.

LIBERAL-DEMOCRATIC FORMS OF CAPITALISM

SOVIET STYLE COMMUNISM

Contemporary populism pulls together aspects of both representative democracy (electoral convention, the rule of law, checks and balances) and autocratic rule (unity before pluralism or diversity, denunciation of elites and institutions, an unmediated link with the public). In between— and this is key-- lots of traits tend to work for both sides: a charismatic leader, an appeal to 'the people," an emphasis on celebrity culture, slogans and sensation, tensions with independent media, a folkloric political style, popular political engagement, strong degrees of nationalism. This formation now prevails in many places as an authoritarian answer to the limitations of formal democracy, taking the form of what Mudde calls "an illiberal democratic response to undemocratic liberalism." In this light emerged two of the most recent US populist enterprises -- the Tea Party

and Occupy. Neither evolved into a regime but both laid the ground for Trump's ascent.

This evolution is centrally important for the news. Not only is populism conscious of and systematic about its corruption of the institutional foundations of democracy, but its core introduction of autocratic mechanisms into democratic settings impacts all proximate institutions, including journalism. And this is despite, or perhaps because of, these institutions' inability to shed themselves of a mindset ill-equipped to recognize, much less contest, what is happening.

Journalism is relevant here because populism, authoritarian or not, simultaneously despises and feeds on the media. On one hand, populism has contempt for any intermediate institutions separating leaders from "the people." In Muller's words, populists "always want to cut out the middleman…, to be done with journalists," and they aim to both delegitimate independent media through punitive measures and transform state media into governmental mouthpieces. This means that making the media into an enemy of the people is not a shocking happenstance, as most US journalists have told it in the age of Trump, but one of the most predictable outcomes of a populist regime.

On the other hand, populism needs the media. Gianpietro Mazzoleni and his colleagues speak of "mediated populism," where populist sentiment must build on media dynamics to survive, while Ruth Wodak talks of "performance strategies" made possible by modern media democracies. We know that populism projects uniformity that is widely disseminated by the media, that there

is often marked investment in sensationalism and emotions, that populist leaders tend to be skilled media manipulators who drive messages of fear, anger, resentment and frustration. By often unmindfully feeding populism the nutrients it needs to grow—allowing its distorted, exaggerated or false information to propel a reactive news cycle, accommodating its moralizing sentiments, providing a stage for its rhetoric, parroting the simplicity of its logic — journalism is thus complicit with populism's rise, even when it sees it as problematic. What Thomas Frank in 2017 described as "a parade of the aghast," where "all the skills of the journalist are reduced to a performance of perturbation and disgust" doesn't do much to combat populism or explain how it works. Instead, the media get coopted into the cycle, where just about everything they do further entrenches populism's hold.

POPULISM NEEDS THE MEDIA

Because our knowledge of populism and the media remains uneven, we haven't laid as much responsibility on the media as is perhaps deserved. Most academic discussions tend to argue either that pronouncedly partisan media (from left and right) knowingly advance populism or that tabloid media unknowingly foster its entrenchment via their favored forms of relay. Meanwhile, the elite, mainstream or legacy media are thought less impacted by populist sentiment because their striving for fair and unbiased reporting makes them, in Mazzolenni et al's words, "less ready to echo populist claims." This means that the platforms, entities and organizations closest to the core of democratic aspiration which supposedly provide resistance to authoritarian creep are left outside of most discussions of populism and the media.

That neglect is a problem. Not only does it inject a greater presumption of binaries than is actually the case, missing the ongoing and often unrecognizable blending of democratic and autocratic, old and new, punitive and celebratory, legacy and digital, but it enables the notion that populism is somehow stifled by the occupational orientation among elite or mainstream journalists, buoying the assumption that legacy journalistic response can right the wrongs inflicted by populism. This helps explain why current authoritarian populism is not well understood by most US journalists, who continue to act as if pure forms of government, media and publics are the main given in their political surround.

But what if the same play to binaries and the same occupational mindset among legacy, elite and mainstream journalists is exacerbating the problem?

This possibility deserves more attention. For it's these journalists who continue to set the tone about US populism, even though they are not doing enough to notice, explain or contest its emergence.

HOW JOURNALISM BECAME ENTRENCHED IN A COLD WAR MINDSET

There are many interconnected reasons for journalism's failure to understand current authoritarian populism, but I want to focus on one: a Cold War mindset that was set in place in the early years of the war—1947-1952—and under which US journalists continue to operate today.

I'd like to take a step back and talk a bit about how this Cold War mindset-- which I'm writing a book about-- took hold and why it persists.
When the Cold War was said to have ended in 1989, the mindset driving American institutions for almost

five decades did not disappear. Instead, it went underground, continuing to ensure that Americans viewed otherwise incomprehensible events and issues through an ideological frame left over from the Cold War.

Cold War mindedness was born in a perfect storm. Politically the US had left WWII not only relatively unscathed but filled with an American exceptionalism that aggressively pushed its version of democracy everywhere. Corporatism and consumer capitalism met fast-paced technological change, and the rise of TV and local radio, driven by a focus on advertising, privileged a singular voice and complicated the ability to speak independently. Socially, conformity, homogeneity and restraint prevailed—in family life, gender roles, popular culture, government structure, and acquiescent and hostile politics.

COLD WAR MINDSET

Against this backdrop, a culture developed across most US institutions that was elitist, symbioti and myopic. This culture was associated with militarism, secrecy, image management and fear as a mode of control, and it gave different institutions different ways of falling in line behind what quickly became a uniform narrative for an American population fielding large degrees of uncertainty.

For journalists, becoming Cold War navigators involved developing practices of care -- conventions that could facilitate simultaneous support of Cold War objectives while upholding or minimally disrupting occupational identity and professional aspiration. This untenable relationship between two fundamentally dissonant journalistic goals--

practicing craft independently versus living in a Cold War reality—meant that already in 1948 when the trade journal *Editor and Publisher* observed that "American newspapermen are Americans first, newspapermen second," there weren't many who disagreed.

The news thus rode on compliance, deception, stereotypy, black-and-white thinking, polarization, demonization, deindividualization, guilt projection, distrust and simplification, all used to manage the image of the US and serve as a breeding ground for Cold War thinking. News relays became briefer, simpler, less nuanced, more conflict oriented and more formulaic, as deep background, historical context, varieties of communism or democracy and national histories all disappeared or receded from the record. Sourcing practices collapsed the distance with officials, making journalists eager spokespeople for those in power. Tactics that allowed reporters to fade into the crowd were the rule: deference and moderation (and the false equivalences they fostered), euphemism and understatement, qualified observations of what they saw. Most of all, an allegiance to news from nowhere: the idea that journalists could and should fall in line behind impartiality and balance, objectivity and neutrality. Journalistic perspectives on the world thus became thin and predictable, exacerbated at times by loyalty oaths, special favors in exchange for sympathetic coverage, subtle censorship and red line edits on news copy.


Dichotomous thinking was central here, where it helped shape the patterns of enemy formation key to the ideological conflict: an Us versus Them that Kenneth Boulding called "the last stronghold of unsophistication." Constructing an enemy meant looking with disdain at the other side.

Enemy formation required clarity and simplicity to be understood, anxiety to invite clear perceptions of threat and a sense of imminence to foster aggressive behavior.
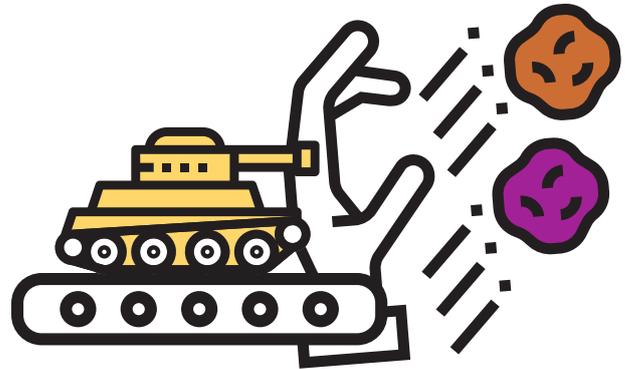
Dichotomies offered a way to put whole populations, regimes, policies and objectives in oppositional categories to each other. This helped reduce complex and often indecipherable realities into a manageable either/or polarity separating friend and foe. We know that Cold War enmity built on longstanding tensions between the two emerging superpowers--Russia and America—but the mirror image of the two and the impassable divide between them became a model for contemplating difference. Such dichotomies were spun via affective convention that left little room for alternative interpretation. Although Tocqueville had been among the first to predict hostility between the East and West and foresaw already in the late 1800s a race between democracy and authoritarianism, the enmity he predicted made even better sense during the Cold War. In Ulrich Beck's view, it turned "established values upside down" with "the otherwise forbidden" newly encouraged. Intolerable behavior suddenly became okay, as enmity turned into an incubator for all sorts of projections common to populist formations: among them, ethnic prejudice, political intolerance, religious fundamentalism.

This clear separation between good and bad produced a detailed repository of dichotomous values: good/evil, right/wrong, moral/immoral, and over time more specific differences: progressive/backward, democratic/communist, incorrupt/corrupt, free/oppressed, peaceloving/aggressive, moderate/extreme. Both groups were portrayed in simplistic, uniform and internally consistent ways: Each saw the other
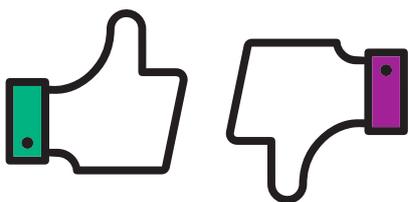
as an untrustworthy aggressor, the other's government as exploitative, the other's public as ill served.

By the same token, sameness and conformity became a code of honor, with consensus politics and culture deemed necessary to uphold what "us" meant. Dissident, alien and non-uniform elements in American life were systematically excluded from public view, and neutrality disappeared, as did all the blended or hybrid forms that went with it. Those who dared to question were penalized, jobs lost, lives ruined.

Yet most journalists hopped on board, convinced in one view that "rooting for 'our side' [was] a legitimate news practice" and recognizing that banding behind dichotomous thinking, deference and moderation, objectivity and impartiality was their saving grace. It wasn't just a question of helping the Cold War effort but, as we see here, of driving its dissemination. To seek the truth became wrapped up in defending national security. Without journalists' complicity, there would have been no Cold War.

What resulted—what I call a deep memory of Cold War mindedness—prevailed as a way of easing occupational dissonance, offering journalists a way to predicate their professionalism on a heartfelt opposition to communism. Though this mindset raised challenges for free-minded journalists, piggy-backing on it assuaged their discomfort at becoming Cold War navigators. They thus repaired to Cold War mindedness to make sense of the times, doing so without confronting lingering ideological inconsistencies or noticing how the very tenets of liberal democracy were crumbling at their feet.

WHY JOURNALISTS FAIL TO RECOGNIZE POPULISM

So what does journalism's reliance on the Cold War mindset have to do with contemporary populism in the US?

Enter Donald Trump.

There is little doubt that Trump replicates the profile of a charismatic populist leader so necessary to populist formations

(remember that charismatic doesn't mean you love the leader, only that he or she draws you to them). What observers are still on the fence about is the degree to which the Trump regime is authoritarian. To be fair, this echoes much existing knowledge of authoritarianism, which tends to focus more on a priori authoritarian systems or authoritarian personalities, but less on the practices by which democracies turn autocratic.

Nonetheless, from the beginning Trump's candidacy prompted analogies with Hitler and Mussolini. The parallel, however, never really went further than that. And it's via this "treatment lite" of authoritarianism – what the Guardian called "more metaphor than mood"-- that I believe the mainstream media's coverage of Trump can most productively be evaluated.

I say this because everything about the Cold War mindset helps explain why US legacy journalists fail to address the authoritarian nature of contemporary US populism. It is no accident that the moment at which contemporary authoritarian populism began to rise coincides with the moment that US journalism, if not journalisms elsewhere, began to stagnate.

A few words first about US populist sentiment today. We know that authoritarian populist leaders use the same institutions that exist in democratic regimes for anti-democratic purposes—via what one legal scholar described as "cloak[ing] repressive measures under the mask of law, imbu[ing] them with the veneer of legitimacy, and render[ing] authoritarian practices more difficult to detect and eliminate." Such regimes rely on unseen devices—measures, effects and platforms that ensure that autocratic populist rule slips undetected through the weakest links in otherwise supposedly democratic environments. Rarely visible and almost always subtle, then, authoritarian populist rule gets its way by forcing action from the public eye—via acts of coercion, censure, exclusion, insult, manipulation, closure, repudiation, intimidation and disregard.

The authoritarian populism of the Trump regime is alarming, because, as is becoming increasingly clear, most Americans don't even recognize it. To borrow from a recent Vox summation of the prevalent understanding of authoritarianism (in this case, in Malaysia), Americans tend to have a far more brutish, less nuanced understanding of what authoritarian rule looks like. For most, it is both fantastical and cartoonish, replete with thugs and dictators, hardship, uber-controlled activity and the punitive murder or disappearance of opponents. Such an image is drawn from mythmaking and a kind of imaginary othering "in which the opposite of democracy is the absence of everything that characterizes the one democracy that one knows."

dichotomous thinking, an orientation to deference and a repair to news from nowhere – and show how they converge in US coverage of Trump. What I'm focusing on are the mainstream, elite and legacy media, because even in this digital age, I contend that they bear much responsibility for the current state of coverage.

Dichotomous thinking, first. Dichotomies make it hard to recognize authoritarian populism for what it is, as its blended nature is unfamiliar to journalists. With dichotomies long used to separate praiseworthy democracy from problem-ridden authoritarianism, their blending disrupts journalism's default evaluative skills. When coupled with the fact that journalists make news judgements all the time in challenging circumstances, dichotomization becomes difficult to shed because of its simplicity, availability, familiarity and entrenched nature.

Dichotomization shapes just about everything in the news: military conflict, security, politics, culture, education, the law and social welfare. Though the terrain changes, clear separations between left/right, secular/religious, strong/weak, insider/outsider, global/nationalist, moderate/radical, modern/fundamentalist, democratic/authoritarian – and the underlying moral judgment of right/wrong -- remain the default setting for how the media explain the world, even when they're no longer the case. And we all know what that does to the institutions at stake.

All of this is also drawn from the media.

So with that thought, I want to bring together the three interlocking pieces of Cold War mindedness that I've been discussing –

In the age of Trump, journalists' embrace of dichotomies may seem odd, because they drive his belittlement of the media. Via power dynamics dependent on neutralizing existing institutions, he defends what he calls the people's true identity by detailing how elites and institutions have wronged them. Hence, the media are "the enemy of the people," journalism a "failing institution," and news that critiques him all "fake." Scrutiny, to paraphrase political scientist Kirk Hawkins, has been recoded as opposition.

Yet a reliance on dichotomous thinking has significantly impacted coverage. On one hand, it's fostered an inability for journalists to see what they're looking at. As Trump began flattening nuance into a statement of friendship or hostility while undoing the ordinary connectors between media and government (briefings, pools, conferences), Reuters issued a missive to its US-based reporters, telling them that they knew how to cover the administration because they had covered it everywhere else in the world where autocratic governments prevailed—Thailand, Syria, Malaysia and China, among others. That was in January of 2017. Since then, movement on this fundamental question—is the Trump regime authoritarian, and more important, what do journalists do about it?—hasn't gotten far.

On the other hand, as Trump ups the ante---moving from ridiculing all media to singling out particular news outlets or reporters—we've seen not solidarity but journalists acting like they're under siege, tackling just about everything on Trump that's thrown their way, without ranking, reflection or pause. *The Detroit News* observed that "We are not only giving him more scrutiny — rightly so — but we are making more mistakes in our haste to discredit him." It's hard to be a safeguard against autocratic tendencies when one doesn't have the mindset to see things in shades of grey. So that neither response incorporates nuance into the binary separating democracy from authoritarianism.

Dichotomous thinking also affects what journalists deem important. To put it bluntly, legacy journalism focuses so intently on its back and forth volleys with Trump that it hasn't done a good job of covering anything else. As US writer Corey Robin noted in *The Guardian*, the media "focus more on the rhetoric of an abusive man than the infrastructure of an oppressive state, more on the erosion of norms than the material instruments of repression." And that's to say nothing of other stories that have disappeared altogether— like Yemen or climate change.

All of this suggests that though we have different players and a terrain of a different symbolic order, all the traits I mentioned earlier that go into dichotomies continue to render one side good, the other evil. No nuanced contextual or structural explanations, no grey areas. What we see instead, just like during the Cold War, is a focus on an enhanced good side winning against a demonized other, without recognizing that neither good nor bad bears much resemblance to reality.
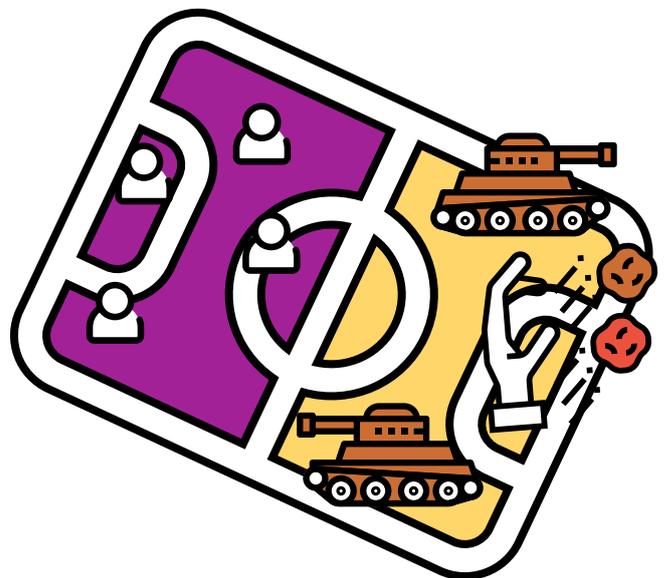
A second issue is the **deference and moderation** of US journalists that make it difficult to process any recognition of authoritarianism should it occur. Taking shape in practices like euphemism, understatement and qualified observation,

89

deference and moderation protect journalists from feeling that they've gone over the line into unprofessional behavior. So when Trump belittles a reporter at a press conference, the response is not to ask the question a different way, but simply to stop asking.

We need only think about CNN reporter Jim Acosta being castigated by Trump at a press conference in November, after persisting aggressively at posing his question. Predictably, Trump responded by denying him further access to White House briefings. Less predictably, but more tellingly given the argument here, many mainstream outlets responded by critiquing not only Trump but also the reporter, calling his behavior "rude grandstanding" and "unprofessional."

"rude grandstanding"

"unprofessional."

The nod to deference, coming at the expense of solidarity, finds its way too in the still-persistent reluctance that mainstream US journalism displays regarding the fact of Trump's lying. Though the number of lies Trump has told in public now stands at 8k (a figure which I'm sure needs updating), his lies still become directly reported headlines. To be fair, the media are wrestling with responses – counting lies, finding patterns in the lies. But this is deeply reactive and not enough. *Esquire* went on record last week calling on the media to do better at "calling out Trump's shit," saying "In the light of a brand new year, I have one simple wish: Big news organizations need to do a better job treating the President like the liar that he is."

Not all of this has gone unnoticed. This past October, Common Dreams called on journalists to "stop stifling their outrage" toward Trump. Labelling deference a "grave disservice to their audiences and to country," Dan Froomkin argued

that a lack of outrage is eroding democratic institutions, sending "the message that what is going on is within the realm of the normal, when it is not." It was not a surprise, he concluded, that Trump "had played the mainstream media for fools. He knew political journalists would be paralyzed into stenography by their phobia of appearing politically biased. He knew — he still knows — that every time he makes a preposterous statement, they'll give him a megaphone, rather than a dunce cap."
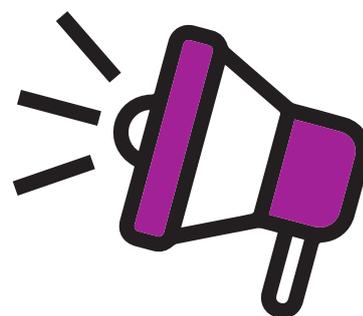
All of this shows that deference and moderation are not well-suited to handling current circumstances. When one part of an institutional environment behaves tyrannically, moderation and deference only exacerbate its power.

This brings us to **news from nowhere**, a third dimension of the Cold War mindset that reflects journalists' core adherence to objectivity, balance, impartiality and neutrality. This repeatedly invoked stance pushes perspective to the side of the picture and justifies for journalists the decision to withhold recognition of authoritarianism. As mainstream journalists take refuge in news from nowhere, we get lengthy discussions of rhetorical devices like false equivalences or vulgar language but very little address to the more substantive issues behind them—like cronyism, pandering, impunity, power-sharing, corruption, institutional complicity. Not only does this show how difficult it is for journalists to part with default values and the tools by which they're realized, but it suggests little change moving forward. As the *Washington Post's* Margaret Sullivan noted, the "traditions of newsgathering and presentation run deep. Most journalists — among them the very best — believe that if they keep presenting the facts and countering the spin that that will be enough."

90

As is clear with this nod to Sullivan, calls to journalism to up its game rang clear already from the beginning in the mainstream media. In July of 2016, right after Trump received the GOP nomination, the *Washington Post* queried "whether it was time to revisit journalism's ethical responsibilities." The following month *New York Times* columnist Jim Rutenberg wrote a column titled: "Trump is Testing the Norms of Objectivity in Journalism," where he argued: "if you're a working journalist and you believe Donald Trump is a demagogue, you have to throw out the textbook that American journalism has been using for the better part of the past half-century, if not longer."

That was then. Such calls have continued over the long haul of Trump's presidency but other than singular mainstream journalists who keep on the mark—Margaret Sullivan is at the top of the list—such commentary now comes mostly from non-mainstream media critics.
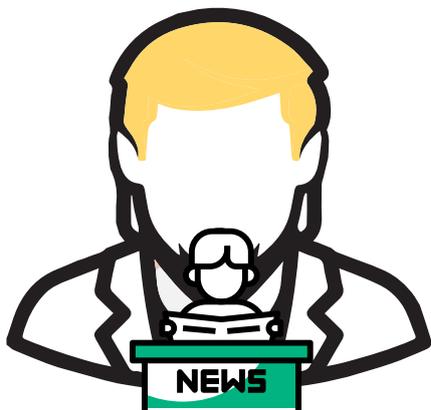
And they've been vocal. Jay Rosen famously called on news organizations to stop attending White House briefings and to send in the interns instead. George Lakoff suggested that reporters begin to use "truth sandwiches: reality, Trump spin, reality." *The Wrap* contemplated what would happen if journalists turned voluntarily into activists. *The Nation* criticized the mainstream media for their bias, insularity, groupthink, and condescension. In August of 2018, multiple news organizations—mainstream and not—simultaneously published editorials contesting Trump's repeated moniker of the media as enemy of the people. But isolated responses like these don't last in any meaningful fashion. Journalists *have* become more skeptical. But not enough, not all the time, and not with productive effect.

It should be clear why all of this is problematic. As the terrific Mann and Ornstein book *It's Even Worse Than It Looks* said, a balanced treatment of an unbalanced phenomenon distorts reality. The stakes right now are higher than ever.

CONCLUSION

So to conclude. It is easy to say that journalists need to find a different stance, a position that is less defensive, reactive, deferent, dichotomized, objective and impartial—in short, a position that's less Cold War-ish. But what we haven't figured out is why it is taking journalists so long to change.

You're looking here at a clip from the McCarthy Hearings of 1954, one of the lowest points in American press history. I've argued that one reason journalists remain so resistant to change is because an unmarked mind-set that entrenches and naturalizes a non-critical and compliant response to authoritarian power dynamics keeps them unable to recognize or contest contemporary authoritarian trends. As *Vox* founder Ezra Klein recently noted, journalists are "being used to fracture American democracy, and I don't think we know how to stop it."

The incremental nature of change applies to authoritarianism itself. Where scholars are pretty much agreed is that if authoritarianism were to come to a country as diverse and complex as the US, it will be slow, legal and gradual. There won't be one cataclysmic moment when we can say it arrived.

This offers journalists an opportunity—to understand now more fully how authoritarianism is invading the institutional landscape. As *The Nation's* Michael Massing noted, "Trump is both the product and the servant of an entrenched system—one that news organizations generally shrink from challenging."

And "Why is that?", he asked. "Because writing about the way things really work would endanger journalists' access to sources? Because it would provoke an outcry from powerful people? Because it wouldn't produce enough traffic? Or is it a result of the "Trump effect"?"

The probability that it is all of the above should remind us how entrenched institutional mindsets can be. And how destructive their impact. Why do the top journalism watchdogs—CNN's Reliable Sources, the Poynter Institute or the *Columbia Journalism Review*, for instance—"rarely go after the elite press"? While the *New York Times* adopted a new slogan that heralds the day differently—"The Truth Demands Our Attention"—at the same time it eliminated its public editor position. There are too many examples like these.

New York Times
"The Truth Demands Our Attention"

!

This opportunity for journalists to pay more attention involves going beyond institutional culture, particularly to the political impulses not yet covered enough by mainstream media. As Jay Rosen noted, the core of Trump supporters disbelieve the mainstream media "because they've been instructed to do that" by a well-developed conservative movement that triangulates across Trump, activists, trolls and right wing news outlets. The result, he says, is that for one third of the population, "Trump is the major source of news about Trump. Which means that for this portion of the American public, an authoritarian news system is already up and running."

Here you may have noticed, we have two liberal critics making the very points that Trump has been using to attack the media. I mention this because it shows how little we understand of the ways in which Trump manipulates the deep structure of elite US news to his own advantage. With so much of today's populism reacting to unrealized rhetoric, critical oversight of what's gone wrong is way overdue.

And yet, the opportunity for change may be closing. For the perfect storm that engendered Cold War thinking is still with us. And the particulars of that storm continue to motivate and shape what mainstream journalism does today, regardless of its topic of coverage.

Populist passions erupt when something is not quite right with democratic function. The need for a critical journalistic voice grows with populism's entrenchment. Though many argue that the current media moment leaves leaders more exposed and less able to maneouever in secrecy than ever before, that presumes that there is a journalism out there, waiting on the sidelines, one that knows how to capitalize on the opportunity created for intervention.

US legacy journalists are not yet that journalism. They do not yet recognize that an opportunity to act exists, that it will be short-lived and that they have to change to make it happen.

In November of 2018, *Newsday* published a piece titled "Who Will We Be When the Trump Era Ends?" It's a question we might ask ourselves about the media moving forward.
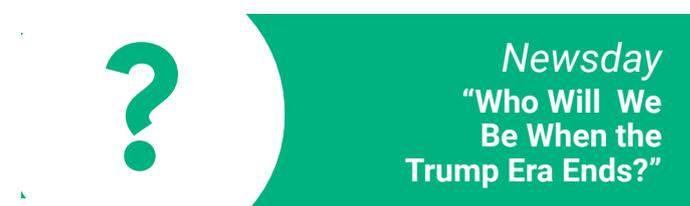
?

Newsday
"Who Will We Be When the Trump Era Ends?"

Ideas for Comparative Studies of Populism, Media and Communication

Silvio Waisbord

I'm going to talk about "Ideas for Comparative Studies of Populism, Media and Communication." A quick warning: We should leave optimism for a better moment. It's not the theme of the presentation, but it runs through everything that I want to say.

Inevitably, we run into the problem that populism remains frustratingly ambiguous and we will never settle that conceptual definition. People have been wrestling with what populism is for a long time and I don't see how that debate can be settled. So we're better off moving beyond that and being very clear in the way we understand populism rather than trying to come up with a consensus, especially because the concept is so widely used across a variety of disciplines and in popular commentary. Therefore I don't foresee that that could be settled.

What do we need? We need much of what has been presented in this conference: a variety of case studies in different settings that help us have a comparative approach that is rigorous and clear about the relationship between media and populism--the two key words of this conference. In the past, my work was on populism in Latin
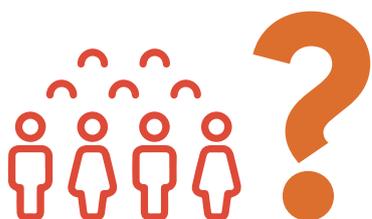
America. I published a book in 2014 and I thought that I was done with populism. It [the book] was about media and left-wing populism in Latin America. Of course, I never thought that I was going to use ideas that I thought were only relevant to the Latin American context trying to understand a global phenomenon. But here we are.

I will be clear in the way that I understand populism. To me, one way of understanding populism is that it's a binary view of politics—the "us" versus "them" that many of you already talked about. But that to me is more of a rhetorical device rather than the way that populism practices politics. We should not confuse the populist discourse with what actually happens in reality.

Real politics, at least in the cases that I know better, is different from this grand notion that everything is about the "people" versus the "elites" or "us" versus "them." The interesting thing about this binary view of politics is not who the actors are, because populist leaders always adapt to whatever the particular interests are. [The interesting thing] is a question that politics is all about conflict. Politics is the skill of distinguishing friend from enemy. I'm not the one who says this; this was said by the master jurist of the Nazi regime, Carl Schmitt, who was very influential in celebratory ideas of populism. In the sense that Schmitt said, "A collectivity is a political body only to the degree that it has enemies. If a part of the population declares that it's no longer enemies, then it joins their side and aids them."

Politics is all about permanent conflict. And populism subscribes to the notion that in democracy, consensus is contrary to political interest. That's why populism needs to demonize the other-- whoever the other is depending on specific political junctures. The other cannot be recognized as an actor with equal political rights. The other needs to be stigmatized.

To me, what is unique about populism is the idea driven by this question of anti-consensus politics. Consensus assumes that you recognize the other as an *opponent* rather than as an *enemy*. This is why many political scientists believe that populism is always on the edge of democracy. It's not necessarily authoritarian—it can evolve into authoritarianism, but is on the edge of democracy because it doesn't recognize one of the fundamental notions of democracy: diversity of opinions, diversity of interest and the diversity of conditions.

OPPONENT ≠ ENEMY

This is why populism easily, in the philosophical sense, becomes antiliberal democracy. That is why it has no patience for a critical journalism, a

94

critical media or a critical opposition. This leads to populism basically having no need for what we call the public sphere or the communication commons. If we look at theories of the public sphere, more often liberal persuasion or progressive persuasion is characterized by facticity, by reason, by tolerance, by diversity, all kinds of arguments that actually don't fit the populist view of the political world.

Basically everything that most of us in this room defended or promoted for the last 20, 30 years is exactly the opposite of what populism stands for. [That is] Because the theory of the public sphere assumes that the difference is intrinsic to public life as opposed to something that needs to be eliminated. In that way, there are actually some celebratory notions of populism that believe that politics à la Schmitt is all about conflict--intrinsic conflict that will never be settled. Something that we need to discuss further is that in this way populism diverges from neoliberalism. That something that many of the presentations made me think about trying to understand the continuities and the breaks between neoliberalism and populism.

What do we need given this populist view of public life and the media? There are two big questions. One is of the causes of populism, which pretty much every presentation here talked about. The other question is the alternatives—how to get out of populism, how to overcome some of the problems of populism.

I have some ideas of how to go about doing this. I don't think I have the answers… it's more the questions that I have. I know it sounds like a cop-out but actually it is true. First question: the issue of the causes, what drives populism? Can we or should we as communication media scholars propose a streamlined parsimonious explanation for populism? Why populism now? Populism in many ways is not unique as to this particular moment.

How is populism connected to ongoing developments in public communication and the media? Of course, populism is not only the outgrowth of what has been happening in public communication. There are all kinds of economic, political and social forces as well as arguments explaining this populist moment in different parts around the world. From neoliberalism to economic transformations to globalization to migration, I acknowledge that. The question is within the debate trying to explain, why populism now? What is our original contribution to that debate as communication media scholars?

There is one line of argument that says there is something about media performance that facilitates, promotes and supports populism. Let's go into this question. I think this is probably the reason why I thought that Barbie Zelizer's presentation was excellent because it helped us figure out what is wrong with journalism in ways that one could understand. It was in some ways what, even willingly, journalism contributes to populism.

Journalism, and Populism contributes to populism

The critique of journalistic objectivity, the critique of the "both sides" of journalism. The critique of journalism driven by entertainment, by commercialism. The fact that journalism is focused on elites—on big primary definers. The personalism. All that has been said for a long time in some ways, how is that conducive?

There are certain ways that journalism does its job that basically tills the ground for populism. I want to say yes, that is right. But is that a sufficient condition? Because what we have around the world is populism in very different media systems and different political regimes. It's hard to say that one kind of commercially driven, elite-driven, objectivity-bounded journalism only leads to the phenomenon that we call populism.

We can say it might be this kind of journalism in addition to something else. Or let me ask the question: If we didn't have this kind of journalism, would populism emerge anyway? I know it's difficult to investigate, but it's a way of testing our proposition that there is something in the way that commercial elites center entertainment-driven journalism that contributes to populism.

This is why we need comparative studies—when we look at journalism with populism in places where journalism works differently, places where the media system is not the same, to determine this. But it's also true that in pretty much all the cases that I know about journalism, populism was supported by a sympathetic media, bipartisan media and by a mainstream media that actually helped to normalize certain ideas that once upon a time were more on the margins of society and suddenly populism becomes something that is in the mainstream.

Even though I agree with that, I think there is something deeper going on. It's not just about specific kinds of journalistic performance or specific media systems. The populist movement in the last decade or so coincides with unprecedented changes in public communication. Let's call it high-choice media environments. I'm not crazy about that concept, but I think that it is widely used to describe the new realities of public communication.

Where is the elective affinity between the rise of populism and what has been going on in public communication around the world? Some people are already trying to find a commonality or some affinity. And some people will mention the work by Paolo Gerbaudo about the affinity between social media and populism, which I think is an interesting argument to be tested. It's a very appealing argument because one could say that probably there is no coincidence between both developments.
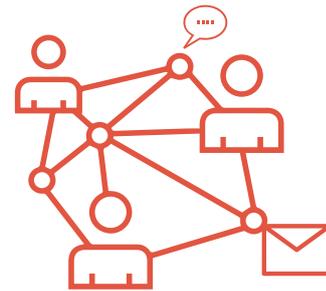
It's funny that I'm old enough to remember when social media was hailed as something that would save democracy and all kinds of good things only ten years ago, and now everybody including the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* are blaming social media for everything that is going on. Not only populism but everything that is going wrong; social media is in some ways an easy target.

In the part of the world that I come from, people have been using that argument to say social media and populism go together, most recently in the case of Brazil and the way that the Bolsonaro campaign used certain social media platforms during the campaign. But to me the argument is deeper. It's not just about social media as a set of platforms or set of companies, but is basically about new forms of disinformation.

We're talking about something bigger than social media affinity with populism [We're talking about] a situation that in my mind can be described as post-truth politics. Post-truth in the sense that there is no communication commons anymore. There are no common ways of understanding the nuts and bolts of what the politics of truth-telling demands, which is facticity and certain methods of apprehending reality.

When there is no commonality around these ideas (the way that we define what is real and what is not, what is a fact and what is not), then virtually anything goes. That is the situation of post-truth politics. Not because there is no truth; it is

because there is no truth as a communal collective endeavor. The breakdown of the public commons or whatever was left of that actually enhances this situation.

This leads to new forms of disinformation and misinformation. The breakdown of whatever was left of this notion of the public commons is the erasure of the borderline between culture and empirical reality. Probably you've heard this expression already; it is not mine. The erasure of the borderline between culture and empirical reality. Who said that? [Theodor] Adorno in the context of totalitarianism. Totalitarianism grows out of the blurring or the erasure of anything that is about culture or ways of knowing reality and what empirical reality is.

Unfortunately, this is the situation we are in, if we were ever out of it. That is a big assumption.

Populism loves narratives, because narratives are a way of overcoming facts because facts are inconvenient. That's why populism sticks to narratives. It sticks to the narratives of "us" versus "them." We would be doing a disservice to "us" if we believe of the populist narrative that it is only "us" versus "them." Because that's extremely flexible, depending on what the leader decides to do according to very concrete political interests.

US
vs
THEM

Basically populism says the old line, "would you believe me, or your lying eyes?" It's the position of the narrative of the storyteller over facts. Let me commit the sin of modernism for a few minutes here: something that we can document, something that we can test, something that we can prove, something that I just think that's the way it is.

When we have the breakdown of a seeming consensus—we can call it an elite consensus—to produce assessments of reality through news, through media, through all kinds of mediated content because they are no longer shared norms of how knowledge is produced, then that paves a way for populism. I'm not making a direct concession, but in some ways it makes sense because it syncs with the way populism thinks about reality and about politics: the blurring of boundaries between what is knowledge and what is reality or what is news and what is not.

The problem is that much of our views about democratic communication are premised on the notion that facts at the end succeed. That reason at the end triumphs. That if there's something that we can associate with ways of documenting reality, it's that it's true and cannot be denied. That is grounded in core principles of science. And what populism shows is that this principle of liberalism—but I will say certain kinds of progressivism as well—the notion that citizens are capable of revisiting changes the conception of reality according to evidence, according to rationality, according to debate. This is what populism challenges.

In our literature, we have many more solid arguments to explain why people believe things that fit what many of you already talked about, motivated reasoning, partisan reasoning , etc., rather than this idea of changing your mind in the light of facts. Why do I mention this? Because this is a core principle of democratic communication in very different interpretations. If this suffers, the entire edifice of the public sphere suffers as well. And that's why we're in a very tough spot.

Related to this, another problem that populism shows and another limitation of the public sphere model is the fact that we have a hyper-rationalistic model of citizenship. And that's why the role of emotional politics is central to our understanding, particularly the current situation. Karin Wahl-Jorgensen's presentation was great because it said what we need to pay attention to, right? I will build off that and say, yes.

YES!

When you read a hyper-rationalistic model of the public sphere, you might as well be reading fabulous fiction. Because it's not a roadmap. It's a normative argument whether understanding or figuring out how to get that kind of reasoned debate. The question is, if it is about emotional politics—something that is long overdue and we're understanding the prospects for anything that we can call democratic communication based in the principles of tolerance understanding, diversity, facticity—the question is the following: Why does populism seem to monopolize anger? Why does anger become populism? Especially the right-wing kind.

What other emotions find weight in populism? That's a conversation that we had after Karin's presentation. Is it really anger or is it more like hatred or contempt—the complete flat-out rejection of the other as opposed to only anger? It seems to me that populism condenses different kinds of emotions that become articulated in these political projects. Furthermore, it's about our anxieties—about fear, it's about the lack of compassion, the lack of sympathy—that is what is at the core of populism rather than only as Karin correctly argued, anger.

How can we build any form of democratic communication when these emotions either are so strong or are so easily wiped out? I'm not sure what needs to be done. The flip side of this is that we also don't know much, or at least we have very limited evidence, on how to promote the kind of emotions that populism negates, emotions such as empathy or understanding or tolerance or acceptance of diversity.

We have small-scale studies and experiments on how this is done rather than thinking about this on a large scale through a variety of media content, news or fiction. There is much more that needs to be done because it can show a way out of this situation. To me populism is a reminder that we need to move the analysis of emotion and media to the center of the analysis and to understand better, beyond very specific case studies, the possibility for what we can call pro-public, other-oriented emotions.
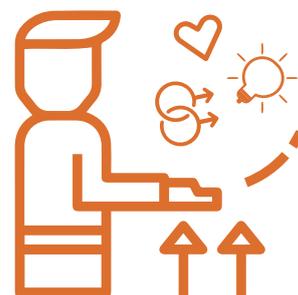
Especially when we're dealing with chaotic high-choice media environments, which is not the situation of most lab experiments in which you see people in front of a documentary or piece of news that try to elicit sympathy with "the other." How do we do that in a context in which it is very difficult to figure out how people traverse these very complicated multilayer media environments?

98

Are you sad yet? It gets worse because now we're saying "good-bye" to the pyramidal model of gate-keeping. Now we have something that has been described in multiple ways, multi-level gate-keeping. We have more opportunities for public expression, right? In principle, without the limitations and the problems that many of you discussed. There are more opportunities for public expression if you follow the liberal canon. The mythical idea of a marketplace of ideas that will lead to virtuous outcomes. From John Stuart Mill to Oliver Wendell Holmes and everybody in the liberal framework who believed in the marketplace of ideas and believed that good things will come out of that, that it would be the backbone of liberal democracy.

What we have is better conditions for hate speech--different forms of hate speech (racism, misogyny, homophobia, the list goes on and on and on). What do we do with that? How do we rethink the question of public expression in light of the fact that more expression deals with the kind of communication envisioned by many theories of the public sphere, whether from a moral persuasion or more progressive and even radical persuasion?

I'm saying this because right-wing populism in particular embodies this movement—this breaking down or removal of certain barriers for public expression. In what way? All these forms of hate speech are reactionary. They are conservative in the sense that many people, political philosophers, define what conservativism is about. It's a reaction against a person. It's trying to take things back to what they were. And to me, right-wing populism represents exactly a reaction against rights-based politics. These forms of racism, misogyny, homophobia are a reaction against the gradual, limited yet relevant advances in rights-based politics in different parts of the world.

In spite of the limitations, in spite of the dream of human rights seven years later, we have to understand new conditions for public expression that are very different and much more complex than what liberal thinkers thought for the last 150 years about what more speech would lead to.

It is no coincidence that the right-wing populism most of us have been talking about here syncs so well with anti-immigration movements, anti-minority movements, anti-women's rights movements, anti-science movements, homophobia and the anti-PC discourse--which is seen as the regulation of speech. Suddenly right-wing populism has hijacked the notion of free speech and sees that any form of regulation either by law or by social norms is contrary to public speech, including social media companies that regulate speech in many different ways. To understand the cause, we need to ground populism in these new conditions for public communication and for public speech.

Let me quickly move on to the other big question. What to do about it? What are the options? How do we get out of here? Are we forever condemned to do this? In many ways, to be honest with you, I don't think that we really know how that is possible. I don't think we have a solid body of evidence to make a categorical argument that certain kind of communicative actions at scale, not in specific case studies, will lead to these kind of virtues or democratic communication that many of us have argued for a long time. Or that those virtues for communication will address the communication dystopias that are articulated around populism.

Can journalism change? That was Barbie's question, and I had it here before. It's exactly that. Can journalism change? Can journalism help not only

to undermine the causes driving populism, but envision a kind of communication that contradicts these forces that are driving journalism? On its best day, journalism does fact-checking. This is the weapon that we have, the tool that we have, is to fact-check those populists or autocrats and say, "You are wrong. That is not right." It seems very limited, right? Even if it worked---and the evidence I know is very ambivalent about this. Really? In journalism as a whole, the best we can do is to fact-check someone who has said 8,000 thousand lies in two years? Is that the best that journalism can do?

Or is it because journalism is so, as Barbie said, so locked in its own conviction about what it does that it cannot do anything better or differently than that? Can journalism promote the kind of emotional politics that will counter the negative emotional politics that are driving populism?

Perhaps. Can it do it as a whole? It's much more difficult precisely because we're talking about journalism now at a time of different forms of journalism.

What if journalism dials back hate? The kind of press that actually constantly, every single day, is fueling hate, different type of hate politics? That could help. How can they be convinced to do that? Persuaded to do that? Honestly, I don't know.

8,000 thousand lies in two years?

How to fight hate speech? Zooming out beyond journalism. How do you do that? We're in the middle of that debate. The traditional options are limited at best if you're thinking about options such as regulation (I'm not going to get into that, I know it's a huge issue), or education or persuasion. Those are the three sorts of ways we think about how to combat hate speech without falling into violating essential aspects of free speech.

The same thing goes for fighting disinformation. We're also in the middle of that debate. We talk about media literacies here or other different kinds of literacies. The presentation about information literacy to me was very interesting because it's exactly that---What can we learn from this body of evidence about information literacy? Can media literacy be applied—I'm sorry, not in third grade--- but in society at large? I know we have to start somewhere, we start with young citizens, I understand that. But the house is burning. Right?

As communication scholars, we should be able to answer this. Every time that I'm talking to non-communications scholars about this, journalists and those from other fields, the question is how do we get out of here? What does communications research say about how to promote the kind of virtues and democratic values that populism flatly rejects?

It seems to me that we understand the problem better than the alternative. I know that I'm exaggerating a bit here, but it seems that we have a better grasp on what is driving populism, or the force of populism, rather than understanding the alternatives. And this is what I think should be on our to-do-list.

I think that we should understand the alternatives too, because really society at large doesn't have a good clue about what could be done. We understand, in some ways, what is driving populism, and increasingly I think we have more like a fine-grained view of this, and this is why the comparative status of populism makes sense. But we also need to understand what cases can overcome the forces that drive populism as well as what populism represents.

I didn't want to leave you all sad and depressed, because in some ways what we need to do as socially responsible scholars is to not only take a perspective or a sense of historical dimension, but also try to figure out what sort of steps societies can take to beat these forces. On the one hand, I would like to end with two quotes. One is Kafka's famous quote, "There is hope but not for us."

At the same time there is this one that I like from James Joyce's *Ulysses* who says, "We were always loyal to lost causes, the professor said."

Sponsor:

FCT Fundação
para a Ciência
e a Tecnologia

1st LISBON
WINTER
SCHOOL
FOR THE STUDY OF COMMUNICATION

MEDIA
AND
POPULISM