

# ABSTRACT BOOK

## HELSINKI CONFERENCE ON EMOTIONS, POPULISM AND POLARISATION

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#HEPP3



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## **Alexander Alekseev**

### **(Changing) Democracy in (Transforming) PRR Discourses: The Case of the PiS**

The paper explores the transformation(s) of the concept of democracy in political discourses of the populist radical right in government and in opposition. It identifies discursive mechanisms employed to construct this concept and highlights the changes in the use of the word democracy over time. The research resides on a diachronic comparative analysis of the case of the Polish party of Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (Law and Justice, PiS) between 2007 and 2019. By looking at electoral speeches given by the PiS leaders while in government (in 2005 – 2007 and since 2015) and in opposition (in 2007–2015), I distinguish a set of techniques that they use when manipulating the concept of democracy in the electoral context. The research design allows to analyse the link between (transforming) party discourses and their (changing) access to power. By relying on the methodology of critical discourse analysis, I examine the texts with the help of a combination the discourse-historical analysis and the discourse-conceptual analysis. While the DHA allows to reconstruct the content of the concept of democracy, the DCA helps place it in a wider semantic field. The research shows that rather than simply adhering to liberal democratic interpretations of democracy, the PRR has creatively redefined it as an ideological complex. This has allowed the PRR not only to (re)define democracy in line with its ideological core of nativism, authoritarianism, and populism, but also normalise and mainstream its (marginal and radical) views and positions.

Keywords: democracy, populism, radical right, populist radical right, discourse shift

## **Bianca Alighieri Luz Monteiro and Hande Eslen-Ziya**

### **The saviour, the bad boy and the myth – A study about Bolsonaro's dynamic hegemonic masculinity**

In the past decade, digital media become an essential platform for political figures who find themselves silenced by the mainstream media, especially populist politicians which use them to disseminate ideologies on topics such as gender mainstreaming and migration. In doing so, they create a sense of fear and terror, reinforcing the well-known feature of populist strategy, the polarized agenda of “them” vs “us”. In this paper by studying Brazilian president Bolsonaro's Twitter posts, we aim to unveil the discursive dimension he creates about migration and gender using Venezuelan refugee women as the target of his narrative. The paper will apply gender and populist theories to answer the following research questions: How refugee women are constructed? How is their situation used for populist purposes to create a narrative that stress the stereotypes of women and migrants? We will argue that Bolsonaro uses gender and refugee stereotypes as a discursive strategy to be re-elected. We will show that he uses gender framing to depict women as victims and himself as the saviour. He does this along with the populist rhetoric that sees women as the second sex and men as the protectors. Our analysis will be based on the tweets from Bolsonaro's official Twitter. Trackmyhashtag will be used to capture tweets between April - October 2021. These tweets will be analysed and the videos in those tweets will be followed. Once all the videos and the tweets are analysed other related videos will also be included in the dataset.

Keywords: gender, hegemonic masculinity, refugees, populism, conservative agenda, digital media

## **Hettyey András**

### **'Hungarian Narcissism': The Emotional Basis of Hungary's Kin-state Policy**

While much light has been shed on Hungarian domestic and foreign policy under Orbán Viktor's populist governments, a key shortcoming of the literature has been its almost exclusive use of rational approaches. This paper aims to enhance our understanding of the foreign policy of populist governments by looking at the emotional underpinnings of Hungary's kin-state policy since 2010. Inspired by the 'emotional turn' in social sciences in general, and IR in particular, I argue that Hungarian foreign policy cannot be understood without incorporating emotions. This is especially true for the kin-state policy of Hungary, which aims to help and support the app. 2,2 million Hungarians living in neighboring countries. To establish the emotions with which the Hungarian right turns toward its neighbors, I analyzed the official government strategies, parts of the pro-government media as well as app. 66 hours of footage of a TV program ('Hazajáró' – Homecoming) running on the staunchly pro-government Hungarian state television. Overall, I find that anger is the master emotion of both the TV program and the Hungarian kin-state policy. This is partly necessitated by the constant frame of 'fighting': for the Hungarian right, it is unquestionable that the Hungarian minorities abroad have to fight for their survival. All this leads to an emotional regime, which can only be characterized as narcissist: an emotional investment in an unrealistic belief about the exceptionality of the ingroup and concomitant outgroup negativity.

Keywords: Hungary, Orbán Viktor, foreign policy, emotional regime, narcissism

## **Oliver Arellano-Padilla**

### **Populist America; Branding, Typography, and Graphic Design through the Lens of Political Theory.**

In the context of my dissertation research, Populist Design, on the logic of identity formations through visual and material cultures in political processes. I explore the relevance of visual and object design as part of ongoing political processes beyond voting. Through ethnographic research conducted during fall 2017, I observed how visual systems anchored in objects, such as First Game Attendance Certificates given to families gratis at Yankee Stadium, or Donald Trump's iconic cap, produced communities and identities which are constantly re-articulated. I suggest that Visual Design has the capacity to objectify the metaphysics of identitarian formations, to materialize in cultural objects — images— a not-yet fully constituted community of political actors like voters, rally participants, etc. What is the impact of these cultural objects within a democratic system in which populism as a logic creates political identities both for industries and traditional political actors? Under a liberal democratic governmental regime, in which citizens are considered consumers, design —particularly visual communication design— can be seen as a site in which power relations configure. To what extent does the visual design of political projects and businesses —as a form of representation— constitute regimes of truth that give a public voice to distinct communities under an identitarian formation? Or to put it inversely, is the visual design of a given project productive —part and parcel— of a not yet fully articulated political community that will come to be under this new mediated visual identity?

Keywords: design, objects, typography, language, materiality, identity

## **Uğur Baloğlu**

### **Neoconservative Politics and Cultural Polarization: Constructing ‘the People’ Against ‘Elites’ in Turkey**

In its early years, The AK Party, which came to power alone in 2002, portrayed a party image that preserved Islamic traditions, defended conservative thinking, but synthesized this with Western modernization. In this context, the AK Party, with its moderate Islamic policy, had the opportunity to strengthen its own existence and construct a bloc against the Kemalist cultural hegemony by polarized discourse. In the twenty-year period of power, the economic capital has changed hands and shifted towards the conservative bloc and economic hegemony has been established. Besides, the government trying to build cultural hegemony uses polarizing language, especially within the framework of neoconservative discourse. This work explores the relationship between cultural populism and media in Turkey by focusing on cultural polarization discourse of political authority. The research relies on a descriptive analysis of populism that has been used by political authority, dividing the society between ‘the people’ and ‘the elites’. The study claims that since 2011, when the government started to become authoritarian in Turkey, it has tried to build its cultural hegemony and to do this within the framework of the polarization of the people and the elite. The study examines how polarization discourses are instrumentalized by media tools using the descriptive analysis method within the framework of the Gramscian concept of cultural hegemony.

Keywords: cultural polarization, neoconservative, cultural hegemony, cultural populism

## **Gwenaëlle Bauvois**

### **Eric Zemmour’s Presidential Campaign or the Spectacularization of France’s Grand Replacement**

In May 2022, France will elect its new president and in the array of candidates emerged a new populist figure: the extreme right pundit, author, television celebrity and political journalist Eric Zemmour. His surprise candidacy changed the configuration of this crucial election and within a short period of time he managed to mobilize constituencies on the preserve of Marine Le pen with his highly polarized vision of the country. Zemmour announced his candidacy in a ten minutes YouTube video on 30 November 2021, an unusual move in French politics accustomed to more traditional campaign launches. In this presentation, we analyze Zemmour’s candidacy video as a case in point of a “performance of crisis” (Moffitt, 2016), seen as an internal core feature of populism. This performance of crisis allows Zemmour to present himself as the only candidate not corrupted by politics and as the legitimate leader able to save France from its enemies, namely immigration and Islam. We argue that Zemmour’s campaign launch video exemplifies perfectly how the candidate is actively participating in - and capitalizing on - the spectacularization of France’s failure through a carefully curated articulation of the “Grand replacement”. This conspiracy theory that Zemmour has contributed along the years to mainstream in the legacy media, is now one of the buzzwords of the 2022 French presidential elections.

Keywords: France, grand remplacement, extreme-right, performance, immigration, Islam

## **Daniel Beck**

### **Parodic Humour in Populist Communication**

This paper examines the role of parodic humour in populist communication. Populist parties and politicians increasingly draw funny connections to films, memes and entertainment in their communication which gets more and more professional. However, despite the increasing research on populism, humorous political communication is not yet in the centre of populism research. Therefore, here the specific understanding of populism as discursive style is used which will take up specifically parodic humour into the repertoire. Political humour has a clear connection to Popular Culture and thereby integrates an aesthetic perspective into the research on populism. The paper shows how professionally designed humour can dominate discourses and brings immense amounts of media attention to specific details while distracting attention from other political issues. At the same time humour's ambiguity brings the possibility of different readings of messages. Suitably, the argument of the paper is illustrated through humour in an emotional campaign of the British PM Boris Johnson who among other examples compared himself during the Brexit negotiations with Marvel's Hulk, a parody that echoed through the news media. In the paper an approach inspired by the Discourse Historical Approach(DHA) is applied to populists' humour in order to uncover their discursive strategies and their specific references to create emotional messages. Overall, the paper provides a new and different insight for how populists use humour in their communication.

Keywords: humour, parody, populist communication, populist discourse

## **Morgane Belhadi**

### **Postmodern Populism and Visuality in French Politics**

Historically formed by the Russian cultural, intellectual sphere of the 19th century before moving to the political arena, today's populism has broaden worldwide. As we put it, it reconnects with its cultural grassroots and combines them with its political claims of representing the "pure" people as opposed to a well-established "elite" (Laclau 2005, Mudde 2020). Including the far-right and far-left movements, but also, gradually, civil society and non-professional politicians, populism is now shifted by a highly mediatized, spectacularized, polarized context (Mazzoleni 2008, Dakhli 2015), correlated with crisis of all sorts: political, economic, social, sanitary. The success of this new kind of populism lies in its mediatized, affective essence, and its will to be visible, which entails to use visual artefacts, and various media from the traditional to the new ones. Consequently, the main research objectives of this communication will be to explore two aspects: how visual images (Bleiker 2018) produced by populist parties trigger spontaneous emotions through a fashion of proximity, unmediated feelings (Moffitt 2016) related to anger, injustice, abandonment and so on; and how, based on these visual images, a new aesthetic can be distinguished, depicting a sort of postmodern populism, using hybrid (Chadwick 2013), ideologically-mixed features and cultural heritage or common sense. We will do so by focusing on the French case, more specifically on the National rally (former National front) and France unbowed. We will see how, through their posters campaign and derivatives online, they managed to mingle hybrid media, distinct ideologies on national and international scales.

Keywords: hybridity, cultural populism, visuality, France unbowed, the National rally

## **Márton Bene and Zsolt Boda**

### **A Safety Net Against Populism? An Investigation of the Interaction Effect of Political Efficacy and Democratic Capacities on Populist Attitudes**

The paper interprets populism as a symptom of mismatch between how the democratic polity operates and how citizens conceive their own aspirations, needs and identities vis-à-vis the polity. However, democracy requests certain attitudes, skills, and investments from citizens: political engagement, a reflective attitude, scrutiny of the power holders and balancing trust-based cooperation with critical reactions towards political authorities. In line with this, we investigate how external and internal political efficacy are associated with populist attitudes in case of people who have and who do not have certain democratic capacities. Our findings drawing upon an original international survey covering 15 European countries show that higher internal political efficacy is associated with more populist attitudes in case of people with incomplete democratic capacities, but complete democratic capacities yield a 'safety net' against this effect. However, the negative relationship between external political efficacy and populist attitudes does not depend on these capacities: stronger dissatisfaction with the responsiveness of political elites leads to more populist attitudes irrespective of people's democratic background. Nonetheless, our findings implies that a stronger emphasis on certain democratic practices and values in political socialization or civic education could prevent that stronger political confidence would turn into populist views about politics.

Keywords: populism, populist attitudes, political efficacy, democratic capacities

## **Emre Metin Bilginer**

### **The Instrumentalization of Music by Populist Parties**

THE INSTRUMENTALIZATION OF MUSIC BY POPULIST PARTIES: DONALD TRUMP'S UNAUTHORIZED USE OF POPULAR SONGS IN PRE-ELECTION RALLIES Music has always been a significant component of political rallies worldwide, especially in 50 years. Political parties and their leaders have been using popular songs in their rallies. On many occasions, the political parties do not hesitate to use popular songs without the artist's consent. This paper intends to cover the reason for the unauthorized use of popular songs in populist political rallies by explicitly focusing on the U.S. pre-election rallies of the Republican candidate Donald Trump in 2016 and 2020. Trump used popular songs of Queen, the Rolling Stones, Tom Petty, Elton John, etc. In his rallies, this sparked the debate on the legitimacy of the unauthorized use after many artists' complaints. Although those artists repeatedly stated that they were completely against Trump's ethos, the Republican Party did not stop using those songs. Why did Donald Trump need to use a song written by an artist who supports his opponent? Was there any political goal behind the song selections in Trump's rallies? How did Trump instrumentalize unauthorized popular songs for his discourses during the pre-election periods? In order to answer those questions, this paper will focus on Trump's pre-election playlists. Also, the artists' reactions play a significant role in comprehending the background of the selected songs.

Keywords: populism, music, election campaign,

## **Tereza Capelos, Mikko Salmela and Gabija Krisciunaite**

### **Grievance Politics: An Empirical Analysis of Anger through Ressentiment**

In this article we undertake an empirical examination of the psychology of what is often called ‘the angry citizen’, focusing on the emotional mechanism of resentment. A key element of the ‘anti-social triad of grievance politics’ (Capelos et al., 2021), resentment transmutes grievances felt as deprivation of opportunity, injustice, humiliation, lack of political efficacy, to emotional expressions of socially righteous indignation, destructive anger, hatred and rage. Focusing on anger as the output of negative politics can obfuscate the complex psychological footprint of resentment. To highlight the important differences between anger-proper and resentment, we use an original dataset with 164 excerpts from interviews with US ‘angry’ citizens available in *Angry White Men: American Masculinity at the End of an Era* by Michael Kimmel, *Strangers in their Own Land* by Arlie Russell Hochschild and *Stiffed: The Roots of Modern Male Rage* by Susan Faludi. Employing qualitative and quantitative content analysis of the ‘angry citizens’ excerpts, we find evidence of envy, shame and inefficacious anger which fit the psychological footprint of resentment. Moreover, excerpts scoring high on resentment contain high frequency of reactionary anti-preferences and collective narcissism, pointing to the close relationship between the elements of the ‘anti-social triad of grievance politics’. This article engages with contemporary debates on negative politics, advances our theoretical understanding of the psychology of anger, and highlights the role of resentment as the emotional mechanism of grievance politics. Our findings have significant implications for understanding the political psychology of far right support and extremist movements in contemporary democracies.

Keywords: anger, resentment, political psychology, populism, grievance politics

## **Rebecca Carr**

### **Between the Seat and the Screen: The Interplay between Spectator-Subjects and Myths**

What propels the dynamic between art imitating life and life imitating art, and what are the ramifications for both? This exploration proposes a fusion of Gustave Le Bon’s “affirmation, repetition, and contagion” and Nidesh Lawtoo’s mimetic theory comprising subjects, myths and figures to understand how behaviours get remixed and reinforced in popular entertainment and society. It contributes to a theoretical understanding of the interplay between the filmic spectacle, its audience, and the circulation of ideas. A first step is to consider the characteristics of a far-right, populist supporter, which Thomas Pettigrew identified (2017), and films in which the corresponding behaviours are favourably reinforced. This paper argues that the subject-as-viewer encounters myths as both narratives and values that articulate and repeat contagions-as-ideas through figures-as-characters, which get carried into everyday life and affirmed again when again reflected in films. It is hypothesised that the subject believes a myth on two levels; by suspending disbelief to observe the diegetic world and considering the contagion embodied by a figure. The degree to which the subject identifies with the figure may influence how much the subject integrates and repeats the contagion. Given the topic’s illusory essence, it is evidence-based speculation at this point and will perhaps remain so. Nevertheless, as we search for ourselves amidst an increasingly polarised spectrum of examples, continually engaging with the mechanics governing films, viewers, identity and ideas is a necessary exercise.

Keywords: contagion, behaviour, film, mimesis, myth

## **Marie Cazes**

### **The Finns Party and the Dual Discourse on Gender Equality**

Even if populist radical right parties are often considered as men parties (Mudde 2007), putting the question of gender to attention, many scholars (Spierings et al. 2015) have underlined the fact that the relationship between gender and populism is underrepresented in research, Nordic countries have the reputation to be role model in the policies of gender equality, but these policies also face the critics from the populist radical right (Ylä-Anttila and Luhtakallio, 2017). This presentation will focus on the representation of gender by the Finns Party's manifestos from the late 1990's to nowadays. Based on critical discourse analysis I will show the role of gender and how it is represented in the Finns Party's discourse. The analyse will especially focus on how the gender issues have evolved to a dual discourse in the past decade. By dual discourse I mean the combination used by the Finns Party of femonationalism (Farris 2021) to defend their antimigration policies, and of gender populism (Saresma) to criticise progressist gender equality policies. The aim of the presentation is to enlarge the research on gender in radical right populism by bringing a focus on the Finnish case. Sara Farris "Femonationalism and the "Regular" Army of Labor Called Migrant Women" in *History of the Present*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (2012), pp. 184-199. Cas Mudde, *Populist radical-right parties in Europe*, Cambridge university press, Cambridge, 2007. Tuija Saresma (2014) "Sukupuolipopulismi ja stand-point-empirismi". *Sukupuolentutkimus – Genusforskning* 27:2. Niels Spierings, Andrej Zaslove, Liza M. Mügge & Sarah L. de Lange (2015) *Gender and populist radical-right politics: an introduction*, *Patterns of Prejudice*, 49:1-2, 3-15. Tuukka Ylä-Anttila and Eeva Luhtakallio, "Contesting Gender Equality Politics in Finland: The Finns Party Effect" in *Gender and Far Right Politics in Europe*, Köttig et al. (dir), Palgrave, 2017, p29-48.

Keywords: populism, gender, nationalism, Finland, discourse

## **Ionut Chiruta**

### **Rituals of Rebellion and Counter-hegemonic Discourse during COVID-19 in Romania**

This research investigates the rhetorical structure, symbolism, and iconography of the anti-COVID-19 protests from Romania in 2020-2021. This paper aims to contribute to the literature of anthropological theories of social change and the growing body of far-right nationalist protest movements from Eastern Europe. This research applies the works of Max Gluckman's work on "rituals of rebellion" and Jan Kubik's adaptation of Gramscian theory of hegemony and counter-hegemony in the new case of AUR (the Alliance for the Union of Romania), the new right-wing nationalist and Eurosceptic party from Romania. In 2020 – 2021, AUR, alongside other far-right movements like the New Right and Romanian Heart Union, participated in more than 50 anti-COVID-19 measures and vaccines protests. Using a wide array of symbols and iconography representative of the Romanian Orthodox Church, AUR manufactured a new rhetoric, borderline conspiracy theories, that positioned the authorities in a sacred conflict against the idea of Romanianness. Methodologically, this study combines virtual ethnography and semiotic analysis for more than 50 protests and more than 300 Facebook posts of AUR leaders (e.g., George Simion, Simona Sosoaca). The results of the virtual ethnography and semiotic analysis reveal that the symbols and iconography employed by AUR during protest expressed new rituals of rebellion against the authorities' decisions to restrict the movement of the people. Likewise, the on-the-ground discourse of AUR conveyed new counter-hegemonic attitudes towards the neo-liberal ideal of the EU. Moreover, the analysis reveals that the mechanics used during demonstrations against the government reveal striking thematic similarities with the January 6 Insurrection from the United States.

Keywords: far-right, protests, counter-hegemony, rituals, Romania

## **Ionut Chiruta**

### **Right-wing Mobilization Strategies and Diaspora Politics: the Rise of AUR**

This study investigates how the interrelation between Romania's large diaspora from Italy and Spain propelled A.U.R. to be the fourth largest party. Taking a cue from the literature on national populism and diaspora studies, this study seeks to explain how the diaspora turned to right-wing movements. Overall, this study's contribution is on understanding the mechanisms and dynamics of mobilization of electoral support by right-wing movements in C.E.E. This study conducted 30 semi-structured interviews with people from the Italian and Spanish diaspora. This paper employed a thematic analysis to analyze the data. There are three findings. First, the profile of A.U.R.'s electorates from Spain and Italy are similar in their demands. Both samples include lower-class workers with secondary education, and both samples are somewhat connected at different levels (e.g., kinship, social media groups, or acquaintances). Second, the choice for A.U.R. in the diaspora was determined by a combination of endogenous and exogenous factors linked by the message of national unity. On the one hand, the forceful departure of many from Romania caused by the political and economic instability turned the people to right-wing movements. On the other hand, the exploitation of many Romanians by Italian and Spanish companies increased the feelings of humiliation, which, in turn, radicalized communities and embraced the nationalist-populist messages of A.U.R. Third, Facebook groups acted as a catalyst for disseminating A.U.R.'s political platform in echo-chambers that conveyed diaspora's growing dissatisfaction with the mainstream parties.

Keywords: far-right parties, populism, nationalism, diaspora, Romania

## **Valerio Coladonato and Dominic Holdaway**

### **Neither National Nor Popular: The Methodological Challenges of Studying European Populisms through Films and TV series**

Narrative work is a crucial element of populist mobilization, especially through the lens of specific emotional discourses (pride, rage, fear), yet the role of audiovisual fiction – films and TV series in particular – in these processes remains to be fully explored. Indeed, while scholarship has focused increasingly on informative and digital media, the role of a more elusive narrative fiction is somewhat unclear. Part of the difficulty lies in the interdisciplinary nature of the object: while the discipline of film and media studies has developed models for analyzing emotion and reception, studies of political ideologies and contemporary populisms in Europe rarely explore the impact of these audiovisual products. Our paper aims to sketch out the methodological challenges of a larger project titled "Screening European Populisms (2008-2020): Audiovisual Fiction, Social Media, and Political Affect", supported by the Constructive Advanced Thinking (CAT) initiative of the Network of European Institutes for Advanced Study. This project focuses on a comparative analysis across five countries: Italy, France, Spain, Germany, the UK. The authors, both coming from the field of film studies, will reflect on what conceptual and methodological tools they can borrow from political theory and history, in order (i) to build an appropriate corpus of audiovisual products from these countries and (ii) define a rigorous method of analysis of the products themselves, accounting for the problematics of representation, circulation and reception.

Keywords: populist narratives, emotion, film, television series, reception

## **Paolo Cossarini**

### **The People and the Nation. Discourses of Sovereign Communities in Left- and Right-wing Politics in France**

This paper explores the discourses of popular and national sovereignty, taking France as a case study. In the run up to the 2022 presidential election, French political environment is characterised by increasing polarization, fostered among other causes by the flamboyant candidacy of Éric Zemmour and his far-right party 'Reconquête!'. How do 'the people' and 'the nation' relate to each other in contemporary French politics? How does the idea of sovereignty connect to the discourse of popular and national community? Drawing on a multimodality approach, this paper focuses on the discursive repertoires of populist and nationalist politics by offering insights on how the ideas of popular and national sovereignty are framed by left-wing (Mélançon) and far-right leaders (Zemmour, Le Pen). Building on the central role of both textual and visual dimensions in politics, discourse analysis will be applied to different sources, such as social media, key speeches, and electoral programmes and publications. Specifically, this paper explores the different geographical and affective imaginaries used by these political leaders, and it investigates whether and how these shape "exclusionary" and "inclusionary" types of political discourse.

Keywords: France, populism, nationalism, sovereignty, discours

## **Elena Cossu**

### **The Effects of Populism on Economic Growth**

The literature on the growth effects of populism remains inconclusive. This is due to severe methodological difficulties mostly driven by country heterogeneity and because of the difficulty in conceptualising populism. In this paper, we try to overcome the limitation by looking at the Hungarian example, chosen as a representative example of right-wing populist rhetoric in Europe with consistent data availability. The paper approaches this problem in two parts, following some of the most recent trends in policy evaluation. In the first part, it quantitatively analyses Hungary's Prime Minister's public speeches and different Eurostat indicators. The analysis shows a disconnection between implemented policymaking and logical economic and political threats. Overall, we see that the Hungarian democratic transition is impeded by societal fears and by some real problems in knowing the policies that would fully foster this transition. This creates in turn a sense of urgency that is compensated by a strong leader that uses it to foster cronyism and neo-feudalism. In the second and deductive part, the paper uses the Synthetic Control Method (SCM) of Abadie et al. (2010) to give quantitative substance to this hypothesis. It constructs a counterfactual for Hungary between 2010 and 2019 with countries with similar political and economic characteristics. We find that growth effects from populist rhetoric are negative. We estimate that without populist rhetoric and policymaking, per capita incomes would have been, on average, approximately 10% higher over the selected period.

Keywords: populism, rhetoric, economic growth, synthetic control, policymaking

## **Cora Cuenca and Sara Rebollo-Bueno**

### **From Fear to Conspiracy Theories: Far-right Propaganda During the COVID-19**

Fear is a natural mechanism of social control. In fact, human capacity to survive is deeply linked with it, and it certainly is an emotion that makes us behave in ways that would be unknown to us if

it didn't exist. It's constant political and mediatic presence during the Covid-19 pandemic has made societies immerse themselves even more in this so-called culture of fear. This new virus, along with its consequences -from the death rate to the new "ways of living" or "nueva normalidad", as the Spanish government has called it- has facilitated the breeding of a new ground for the creation and diffusion of hoaxes, giving wings to the harmful phenomenon of Fake News. Conspiracy theories are also part of the problem, as we have seen how these Covid-related experiences have been linked to the alleged manipulations of certain people -George Soros, Bill Gates, the Chinese government...-. According to the groups involved in the diffusion of conspiracy theories, these people are behind the pandemic, and are using the virus to control men and women all over the world. In addition, far-right parties are making the most -electorally- of this complex scenario that involves political instrumentalization of fear and confusion. Assuming that conspiracy techniques are intertwined with propaganda techniques, this investigation is aimed to study if far-right propagandistic discourses of Spanish political parties have encouraged conspiracy theories during the Covid-19 pandemic. In order to do that, we have applied a Critical Discourse Analysis technique to VOX' populist takes on the actions undertaken by the Spanish government to reduce and control the contagion peaks of the SARS-CoV-2 virus during the pandemic.

Keywords: conspiracy theories, propaganda, politics, fear, populism, far-right, COVID-19

## **Cora Cuenca**

### **Demographic Populism in Spanish Press: Ideology, Politics and Malthusianism**

Introduction. Demographic issues are common in the press, amplifying its presence with the establishment of the online press as the main generator of information and opinion. In this diversity of journalistic pieces on demographic issues, it is common to resort to various sources and the assessment, opinion, or analysis of supposed experts in demographics. The objective of this communication is to analyze information and opinion pieces containing demographic information in four generalist online media, to cover different editorial policies, ideological positions, and (s)election of sources. The aim is to study a) the presence of demographic populism, b) the profile of the actors consulted, and c) the discourses that underlie the advice. Eventually, we want to know the relationship between media features and their political intentions (in the broad sense), and ideological alignment. Methods. We analyze pieces from ABC, El Mundo, El País, and eldiario.es published between January 2017, the date of creation of the Commissioner for the Demographic Challenge in the Government of Spain, until June 2021, when the Demographic Challenge is part of a Vice-Presidency and has its own General Secretariat in the Government. The analysis strategy follows the qualitative sequential discourse procedure in two phases: conceptual coding and categorization based on the content of the news. In addition, we perform content and relational analysis of those categories. Results. Preliminary results show a relationship between the ideological position of the media and a) the political inclination of experts, b) the presence of demographic populism, and c) the political intentionality of the piece. Conclusions. The language, the demographic narrative, and the type of experts consulted are defined by the editorial policy and ideology of each media. Conservative media tend to opt for a populist, conservative, moralistic, and close to religion policy, resorting to non-demographic expert sources; while progressive media opt for consulting people close to demographics and for a more focused discourse closer to demographic reality.

Keywords: populism, demography, press, ideology, informants, content analysis

**Democratic and Radical Capacities of Populist Politics**

Populism may be an expansionist strategy for the status quo, which means the populist leader or party uses it as a political strategy to consolidate and expand its support base. At the same time the politics of populism may be used to overthrow the existing hegemonic order and establish a new one. In the case of West Bengal, a left-wing populist government led by the Left Front came to power opposing the hegemony of an upper-class & upper-caste dominated Indian National Congress. It was successful in ushering in radical social change through its transformative policies like abolishing the feudal land-owning zamindari system, distribution of land to landless peasantries and the decentralization of power and grassroots empowerment through the Panchayati Raj institutions. These reformatory policies paved the way for the upliftment of the oppressed and underprivileged peoples. However, by the end of its nearly thirty-four-year rule, the Left faced the repercussions of concentration of unfulfilled democratic demands in the form of agrarian movements, anti-industrial capital protests and opposition to government – big capital lobby. A large section of these protesters formed the popular support base for the Trinamool Congress which articulated the interests of the unorganized sector and farmers unwilling to give away their land for industrial projects, it opposed the expansion of foreign capital, arbitrary acquisition of land, and the Trinamool in turn consolidated its populist base with rhetoric's of anti-establishment, anti-corporate capital and pro-people agenda's, with slogans of Paribartan(change) which were empty signifiers. Although this anti-capitalist rhetoric's do not have the radical capacity to transform the nature of capitalist reproduction, they do provide a democratic anti-establishment outlet for the articulation and incorporation of the demands of the people. This paper examines the capacities of Populism to provide for a radical movement against the established order, as well as a harbinger of democratic change in the social and economic life of the people, through a case study of populist politics in Bengal.

Keywords: populism, anti-establishment, left front, trinamool congress, west Bengal

**Deniz Demir**

**Collective Memory in the Post-Truth Era: Digital Counter-Memory Archives from Turkey**

The last decade has seen a return to what has been called the post-truth era, characterized by objective facts being less effective in shaping public opinion than appealing to emotions and personal beliefs. The effects of this process were also seriously reflected in memory studies, which examine the individual and social processes of remembering and forgetting in the most general sense (Neyzi, 2020). In the post-truth era, the collective memory seems to have lost touch with historical facts. Although the concept of post-truth seems to be a relatively new concept, in fact, in 1992, philosopher Jeff Malpas predicted that post-modernism would bring along a post-truth era while discussing the complex relationship between modernity and reality (Malpas, 1992). The relationship of the concept of collective memory to reality has always been a complicated relationship, as it acts on the basis of subjectivity and is in opposition to history. Moreover, because the construction of collective memory relies not only on the transformation of historical knowledge but also on people's actual experiences of the past, it makes a particularly interesting field of study in a world where personal experiences and emotions take precedence over objective facts and expertise. In this paper, first of all, the roots of social memory and its relationship with history will be mentioned, then the concepts of strong and weak memory will be discussed. By emphasizing the relationship between digital media and social memory, the concept of counter-memory and some counter-memory archives in Turkey and its potential to be a truth policy in the post-truth era will be examined.

Keywords: collective memory, counter memory, post truth, social polarization

## **Carnivalization of War in Ukrainian and Yugoslav Wartime Music, Comparative Aspect**

Since the beginning of the Russian invasion there appeared numerous folk songs and visual art works in Ukraine, dedicated to the ongoing conflict. The present article aims to compare the role of humour in the war songs of the present war in Ukraine and those of the Yugoslav wars from the 90s. The author particularly concentrates on the compositions that became a part of the official state propaganda. The article does not attach any negative connotation to the word “propaganda”. Instead, the term is understood as «targeted spreading of ideas or information for the purpose of helping or injuring an institution, a cause, or a person». In the case of the present Ukrainian war, the musical propaganda borrows quite a lot from folklore. Every war produces a certain amount of songs that are not considered propaganda while being sung locally by soldiers or civilians. But when and if such songs are spread in mass media – on TV, and especially on the internet, they become a powerful instrument for propagating ideas and spreading certain messages. In the present article the author analyses and compares some of the most popular wartime songs from the Yugoslav wars period and from the present day Ukraine. The questions which are also asked in the article are why certain cultures turn to humour and comic elements in their wartime propaganda while the others don't? What does that choice depend on and can it possibly have any connections with the cultural background and national identity?

Keywords: Ukrainian war, humor, propaganda, carnivalesque, Yugoslav war

## **Tuğçe Erçetin and Pınar Uyan Semerci**

### **Affective Polarization: A Type of Othering?**

With traditional media tools and social media platforms strengthening group-based differentiation, polarization becomes more visible. Individuals increasingly live in echo-chambers where their opinions are amplified, and the opposite views are not seen. In other words, citizens share and follow opinions with others who have similarities that create echo-chambers. Living in these totally different worlds creates strong negative emotions, such as disgust, while encountering differences. This situation most indicates societal and political clashes rather than a consensus over issues, deepening the distance among different party supporters and eroding pluralist democracy. We have been working on affective polarization that depicts supporters of different political party supporters disliking and feeling emotionally distant. We propose a more comprehensive definition that includes othering, a dimension that is generally ignored. We argue that a combination of three pillars-the social distance between the political party supporters, the moral superiority for individuals' political party supporters, and the political intolerance against supporters of other political parties- define affective polarization. We conducted our research in December 2020 through face-to-face interviews with 4.006 respondents representing the adult population of Turkey at 500 sample points in 29 provinces. Following our data set, we seek to understand how polarization is associated with othering, scrutinizing the above three pillars. Our findings on social distance indicate that the majority of respondents do not want to do business or to be neighbors with a supporter of the political party which they feel the most distant. Similarly, as the social distance perspective shows, they are also against their child marrying or playing with others. The second pillar is the moral superiority factor facilitates discussing how individuals attribute positive and negative adjectives or against whom individuals use negative ones. Lastly, political tolerance, we evaluate the acceptance of equal rights to investigate whether individuals deprive other party supporters of some freedoms which are seen as rights for their own, equal right bearers.

Keywords: polarization, othering, moral superiority, political tolerance, social distance

## **Tuğçe Erçetin, Pınar Uyan Semerci and Emre Erdoğan**

### **How to Mitigate Polarization: An Example of Good Practice from Turkey**

Polarization has been a widespread phenomenon that becomes more visible through the reproduction of different channels, such as political discourse, populist performance, traditional and social media. During crises, the existence of polarization constructs group-based discussions with respect to demands and interests. This situation indicates societal and political clashes rather than a consensus, deepening the distance among individuals over the “us and them” division. Accordingly, boundaries among political party supporters display various consequences regarding electoral competitions, formative changes, and continuous referendums that expectedly produce “losers” and “winners” in Turkey. An increasing level of polarization endangers the qualification of democracy and living together, paving the way for non-pluralist politics with differences. In this sense, we conducted a Project entitled “Strategies and Tools for Mitigating Polarization in Turkey” in order to raise awareness in Turkish society about polarization and the harm it is doing and to equip individuals with tools for mitigating polarization to contribute to a new ecosystem of social harmony, human rights, and respect towards differences. Hence, we conducted an elite survey and working group with international experts on polarization; a survey on polarization in Turkey that involved 4,000 respondents representing Turkey’s adult population; and developed a gamified online intervention tool. The intervention tool includes six main courses (polarization; identity formation; othering; formation of reality; contact and encounters; needs, rights, and capabilities) with short videos, interviews with experts and football team supporters, quizzes, reading lists, and links that lead to podcasts or relevant videos. From this perspective, we would like to share our findings based on our experiences as one of the good practices to mitigate polarization. With the aim of developing a curriculum to mitigate polarization in different country contexts, we demonstrate and evaluate how the intervention affected participants.

Keywords: polarization, mitigation, intervention tool, good practice

## **Xénia Farkas and Márton Bene**

### **Just like Us, yet More than You: The Visual and Verbal Populist Style of Viktor Orbán on Facebook**

This project aims to contribute to the fields of populism and visual politics through the design and testing of a multimodal coding instrument that could be used to assess populist leadership styles worldwide. Conceptual inspiration for this project was derived from Moffitt’s (2016) work on the populist style of political communication. Although populism is associated with increased academic interest, there are still a number of research gaps. How populist leaders perform nonverbally, the processes of constructing enemies and allies, and their management of a complicated persona that appears both ordinary and extraordinary are still obscure. To that end, this paper describes the multimodal aspects of the populist communication style by designing and testing an instrument of systematic visual and textual measurement based on Moffitt’s (2016) theorizing of the populist leadership style. The coding instrument is tested on the Facebook image posts (N=492) of the Hungarian Prime Minister, Viktor Orbán over a three-year period (2018-2020) that stretches across three distinct news content cycles: the COVID-19 pandemic; local, national, and EP election periods; and a number of months of slow news – or cucumber time as it is known in the news industry. To identify the most prominently applied dimensions of populist style, the differences in the periods, and the redundancy across the image and textual messages, a deductive multimodal quantitative content analysis was applied. Moving the study of populism into the visual realm adds a layer of understanding on how the populist leadership style has gained a foothold in global politics.

Keywords: visual politics, populism, multimodality, Facebook, content analysis

## **Oscar Garcia Agustin**

### **Spatial Polarization. Nationalized Localism against Globalism in Denmark**

In Denmark two parties have utilized the uneven geographical distribution to promote different right populist projects. Both share the anti-migration and nationalist project but differ in their spatial strategy. The Danish People's Party (DF) was capable of spatializing the political divide through its discourse on 'outlying Denmark' (udkantsdanmark). With strong support in Southern Jutland, DF succeeded in promoting decentralization and connecting geography with socioeconomic identities emerging from increasing unemployment, lack of social services, and depopulation of rural areas. Without establishing a frontal antagonism with the cities, they proposed to 'nationalize' the capital in opposition to the role attributed to the global cities (cosmopolitan and without national belonging). The emergence of New Right (NB) in 2015 challenged the position of DF as right populist and anti-migrant party. The party is rooted in the rich area of North Zealand and has a neoliberal agenda. However, they forged a spatial polarization by reproducing the dichotomy between centralized power (symbolized by Christiansborg, the Parliament, in Copenhagen) and decentralized power (people's and civil society's power without control and interference). Thus, NB rejects the global agenda on climate by opposing the interests of the elites against the interests of the local producers and industries. The objective of this paper is to show how spatialized divides are used by right populist parties in Denmark to defend national values and identities through localism and opposition towards international and global powers.

Keywords: spatial politics, populist right, polarization, localism, globalism

## **Tamta Gelashvili**

### **Political Opportunities for Far-right Mobilization in Ukraine**

Shortly after the Russo-Ukrainian war broke out in 2014, Ukraine attracted a lot of media attention as foreign fighters coming from extremist milieus travelled to eastern Ukraine to participate in the conflict. In addition, Ukraine was portrayed as a hotspot for far-right tourism: extremists from all around the world travelled to Kiev to attend Asgardsrei, a National Socialist black metal festival. But does this media frenzy accurately reflect the dynamics of far-right mobilization in Ukraine? This article takes a closer look at the far-right movement in Ukraine, its mobilization and repertoires of action, as well as contextual factors that help explain the evolution of the movement over time and its mobilization patterns. The article applies a structural approach within social movement theory that places the far-right movement into its wider environment. It relies on semi-structured expert interviews and an original database of far-right protest events from the onset of the Orange Revolution in 2004 to 2020. The article first looks at how the legal, political, and social context has changed over time, providing varying opportunities for mobilization. Then, it examines how these changes affect far-right protest, defined broadly to include various forms of contentious action, from press conferences to violent attacks. Thus, the article sheds light on how changing opportunities affect protest and its main characteristics, such as frequency, size, target, and level of violence. The paper thus contributes to an emerging literature that studies the far right as a social movement. The aim is to expand scholarship on social movements, which has traditionally focused on left-wing, progressive movements, to include nativist and authoritarian movements. It also aims to expand the literature on the far right, which remains largely party-centred, to include extra-parliamentary actors. In addition, the paper aims to contribute to the study of the far right outside of Western European, consolidated

democracies and shed light on mobilization in hybrid regimes, as well as the distinctive context of post-Soviet transition to liberal democracy and market capitalism.

Keywords: far right, protest, mobilization, social movements, nationalism

## **Marton Gera**

### **Social Categorization Processes in Viktor Orbán's Anti-LGBTQ Campaign**

In recent years, the rise and effects of populism in Hungary have gained increasing attention from scholars in the field of political science, sociology, and public policy. Considerable attention has been given to the nature and style of leadership, regime change, and the political rhetoric of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and his Fidesz party. In the bulk of studies, there is a notable emphasis on the rhetorical strategies of Orbán and how the latter involves certain categorization and exclusion processes. To date, however, much less is known about how exactly these categorization processes take place and get formulated. Focusing on Fidesz's most recent anti-LGBTQ campaign, this study uses discourse analysis to gain an understanding of how Orbán uses social categorization to establish a new political campaign. By analyzing political speeches and interviews, the paper shows that the anti-LGBTQ campaign resonates well with the previous political campaigns (such as the anti-immigrant and the anti-European Union campaigns) of Orbán and Fidesz. It also explores how social categorization enables Orbán to create a distinctive narrative that differentiates his politics and voters from other groups. By doing so, this paper aims to contribute to the discussion and literature on populist rhetoric and social categorization in politics.

Keywords: populism, Hungary, Viktor Orbán, social categorization, exclusion

## **Vivian Gerrand**

### **Understanding Militant Wellness in an Age of Polarisation**

Right-wing extremist movements and elements within Western wellness communities have begun to intersect in novel ways, drawing on a longer history of enmeshment between discourses of moral and spiritual virtue, white supremacy, ideological purity and bodily health. Built around a shared propensity to conspiracism (particularly belief in conspiracies around pandemic responses), distrust in institutions and government, pseudoscience, rejection of the biomedical model, and Darwinian notions of survival of the fittest, they represent an urgent yet understudied phenomenon within scholarship on extremist movements. In particular, the introduction of the QAnon conspiracy – a divisive social movement advocating resistance to so-called 'global elites', seen as manipulating populations for their own ends – into wellness communities through prominent lifestyle influencers has led some to radicalise on 'conspiritual' trajectories of militancy including recruitment into violent extremism. The messaging of militant wellness influencers responds to perceived threats and harms associated with government responses to the COVID-19 pandemic but does so in ways that pose threats and harms to others. Of critical concern to democracy and public health strategies, militant wellness undermines such strategies while paradoxically including some elements that may be useful to public health. Through a multimodal analysis of the online narratives and networks of three wellness influencers that have turned to militancy in the pandemic, this paper presents preliminary findings of an investigation into the phenomenon of militant wellness, focusing on its relationship to public health in a context of polarisation, and exploring the extent to which it may foster antagonism, including violence.

Keywords: polarisation, conspirituality, militant wellness, far right, radicalisation

## **Cristiano Gianolla**

### **The Narrative and Emotional Structure of Populist Mythology**

Political mythologies provide signification and originate action among people, they are generated by sets of myths that provide explanation for the present social issues and identify solutions. Political mythologies are significant for their capacity to mobilize people regardless of the different relationships that their myths entail with truth; they provide a social, cultural and political narrative which is self-fulfilling. They generate identification through rational and emotional arguments defining and polarizing the relationship of different social groups. Populism enact mythologies in which the intergroup polarization is high and based on strong negative emotions for 'them', the outgroup, but also positive emotions for the 'us', the ingroup. This creates a narrative structure based on negative and positive emotions that jointly support the production of cognitive and affective signification and call to action. While the literature has explored the narrative structure of distinct emotions, populist mythology articulates a narrative of various emotion that provide a sense of belonging and commitment. This implies that the narrative dimension has to be identified not only within discrete emotions but also between them. This paper aims to provide a theoretical account of how existing literature on political myth and emotion can contribute to analyzing this structure and reveal new concepts to understand how populism work, which in turn benefits democratic theory at large.

Keywords: values, discourse, framing, political mythology, identification, storytelling

## **Yuliya Grishina**

### **Denying Domestic Violence — Through the Use of Sexuality in Popular Media?**

Despite actively embracing new media, a significant proportion of Russian citizens rely on the traditional source of television for both news and entertainment. Out of the wide variety of choices, scripted television shows, both sitcoms, and melodramas, remain popular year after year, with locally produced material often attracting large audiences. While the topic of domestic violence against women remains a taboo, a few Russian primetime shows of the last decade, such as *Boiling Point* (2010) and *The Perfect Victim* (2015), addressed it. My study argues that post-Soviet Russia, despite the publicly declared progress in the sphere of sexuality and human rights, in the last ten years has been reverting to a traditional societal model, with the patriarchal distribution of gender roles, dominant masculinity, and misogyny. These anti-gender tendencies are tacitly supported by the government, and primarily promoted by mass media. My research is focused on critically assessing the choices their creators made while approaching this topic and how the audiences interpret these depictions. Russia-1, the TV channel that produced the shows considered in the presentation, could make an impact should it choose to portray domestic abuse; instead, it sexualizes violence. My presentation is based on numbers from research lately conducted in the context of my PhD.

Keywords: violence sexualisation, domestic violence against women, Russian television

## **Niko Hatakka and Judith Sijstermans**

### **Social Media and PRRP Organisation in Finland and Belgium**

The party organisation literature has yet to profoundly engage with the increasing societal role of social media. Whereas "digital parties" and grassroots online political movements have been investigated, little attention has been paid on how social media affect parties with more conventional organisational structures. The study analyses and compares populist radical right party (PRRP)

discourses regarding the role of social media for the organisation of the Finns Party and Vlaams Belang. The two selected parties represent European established PRRPs that have established organisational structures similar to those of the traditional mass party model. Theoretically, the study discusses how social media intertwines with traditional forms of political participation. The study is based on narrative analysis of 100 semi-structured thematic interviews conducted with party elites and activists in the years 2020 and 2021. Empirically, we discuss how social media practically and ideationally contribute to PRR party organisation: how do party representatives and activists perceive the value of digital communication platforms and their effects on the party's activities, communication, and public image? As commercial social media platforms are increasingly intertwined with also traditional forms of PRRP organisation (like we empirically show), we additionally investigate how have discussions pertaining to platform governance (and actual changes in e.g. content moderation) affected how PRRPs discuss social media as political tools and how has it affected their actions in practice.

Keywords: populist radical right, social media, party organisation, PS, VB

## **Vlastimil Havlík, Alena Kluknavská and Jozef Kunc**

### **I Hate You, but I Love You! Post-truth Claims on Media by Populist Radical Right**

Journalists have in recent years faced increasing hostility, accusations of untruthfulness, or even open verbal attacks by politicians and populist radical right (PRR) actors in particular. Yet, populist actors maintain a friend-foe relationship with the media, using the media also for their functions to reach the audiences and having an affinity with the media formats that give rise to disinformation. This article examines the interaction between PRR and journalists by analysing how populist radical right positions itself with regard to interactions with different media formats. By combining the approaches from media and political communication studies, it considers the relationship of populist actors and journalists beyond straightforward anti-media discourses. It investigates claims on the media that capture both the functions and positive or negative evaluations of the media, including post-truth accusations. To do so, we focus on the communication by the leader of the Czech populist radical right party Freedom and Direct Democracy (SPD) Tomio Okamura on Facebook between 2013 and 2020. Applying the claims analysis (n=1740), we expect the claims-making on the media to contrast the functional and anti-elite approach, presenting the media as the information source, communication arena, and evil enemy, emotionally questioning the media truthfulness and credibility. Our analysis contributes to the understanding of the dual use of the different journalistic formats by PRR, which utilizes familiar media formats for their functions, while simultaneously engaging in populist and post-truth accusations and verbal attacks towards legacy media journalists, increasing distrust towards media institutions and amplifying societal polarization.

Keywords: populist radical right, political communication, media, post-truth, emotions

## **Kun He And Scott A. Eldridge**

### **The discursive logics of online populism: social media as “pressure valve” of public debate in China**

Offering an in-depth analysis of the relationship between online bottom-up populism and censorship mechanism in China, this research asks what discursive logics are followed in online bottom-up populist dynamic articulation of the antagonism between the people and the elite. What's the impact of populist dynamic articulation and censorship to Chinese society, a challenge, risk, or other? By

analyzing the posts and hashtags of an online populist case #DrivingIntoThePalaceMuseum, three discursive logics were identified through computational grounded theory. Antagonism logic refers to the articulation of social-cultural embedded gaps between the “pure” people” and the “corrupt” elite. The polarization logic is to broaden and deepen the antagonistic gaps in the “people-elite” relationship through connective “human fresh search”, or dissemination of fake news and disinformation. Protest as the third discursive logic refers to seeking common solutions on key social issues through “crowd-enabled connective action” on digital platforms, enabling coordination, organization, mobilization and protest. However, populist discourse polarization is a pseudo-polarization, as it faces the censorship mechanism from the government, turning internet protest to a nonresistant protest. As a result, bottom-up populist dynamic articulation, together with the censorship mechanism of Chinese media environment function as a “valve”, releasing the pressure of “social volcano”.

Keywords: populism, Chinese populism, discursive logic, bottom-up, computational grounded

## **Juha Herkman and Joonas Koivukoski**

### **It Was just a Joke! Right-wing Populist Humor Scandals in Finland**

The paper discusses the idea of humor scandal as part of mediatized politics in the 21st century and explores the incidence of these scandals in polarizing Finnish public sphere in 1990-2020. A special attention is paid here to the humor scandals linked to the party members of the right-wing populist Finns Party during the 2010s. The overall exploration of the humor scandals in Finland reveals that the number of scandals increased simultaneously with other political scandals in the 2000s, but especially after the striking success of Finns Party in the Finnish parliamentary election 2011 the majority of humor scandals was linked to the party in 2011-2015. In our paper, three of these scandals are analyzed in more detail, caused by 1) a sarcastic FB-post by an MP Jussi Halla-aho who suggested a military junta to Greece because of Euro crisis in 2011, 2) Nazi salutes made in Finnish parliament by a guest invited by an MP James Hirvisaari in 2013, and 3) a Finns Party’s animated film that presented the Prime Minister Jyrki Katainen (National Coalition) as a gangster collecting protection money. The increasing role of social media in political communication is essentially connected to the rise of (populist) humor scandals that diminished in the latter part of the 2010s. However, it seems that the number of humor scandals linked to Finns Party increased again in 2019-2020 because of their provocative campaigns in parliamentary and EU elections of 2019 and because of struggles between various radical groups around the party.

Keywords: humor, scandal, populism, Finns Party, hybrid media

## **Ana Maria Hojbota and Cristina Maria Tofan**

### **he many faces of authenticity and emotions in populist rhetoric. The case of legitimizing war actions**

Some scholars describe the rhetoric of authenticity as the core of populism (e.g. Fieschi, 2019). When framed as authentic, even aggressive, dishonest, deceptive, or otherwise abhorrent behavior can appear as inherently moral, psychologically healthy or politically inspiring, especially when mobilized against malicious opponents. We believe perceived leadership authenticity, along with emotions can play a role for legitimizing war actions (i.e. the current war in Ukraine) in the public perception. Drawing on existing psychological research on the correlates of populism (i.e. manichean outlook, people-centrism), and on decision-making accounts such as the affect-as-information model, we explore several heuristic functions of the authenticity rhetoric in political perception and

behavior: signaling the commitment to certain sets of political goals and values, endorsing claims regarding membership to certain social categories (i.e. legitimation and social exclusion), creating a sense of belongingness to a marked group through identification with a “true” leader (authenticity as identity source), mitigating reputational costs of norm violations etc. We discuss theoretical guidelines and test empirical implications of these functions, and hypothesize that specific understandings or facets of authenticity will be associated with higher endorsement of political targets and political identification, and will differentially reflect upon the valence and intensity of affective reactions to norm violations, conducted either by the targets or by their political opponents. Across a series of preliminary studies, we aim to test the responses to variations of authenticity frames.

Keywords: populism, authenticity, judgment, political perception

## **Sonia Horonziak**

### **Can a Polarized Society Remain Democratic? Political Polarization and the Theory of Democracy - Findings on the Example of Poland**

Polarization is a political tool. It is often analyzed through the prism of a political dispute on the electoral scene. However its consequences go beyond mere political quarrel. Political polarization is the process of creating a political reality by a given socio-political group, based mainly on the principle of opposition and presentation of a strictly defined vision of the world, according to a once (arbitrarily) established order. If one is to assume that the political scene in 21st century Europe is polarized, how does this situation affects European values and democratic principles? Is polarized state a country where citizens can fully enjoy the benefits of democracy? Can the rule of law be compatible with polarization rules? Does polarization only have a negative influence on society? The aim of this paper is to analyze the phenomenon of political polarization in theoretical terms and relate it to the democratic principles, both classical ones and those of the contemporary liberal democracies. Then, the analysis results will be referenced to the current political situation in Poland, where the phenomenon of polarization is increasingly identified by both scientific and media representatives. The article will end with an attempt to answer the question if changes in Polish politics is a natural consequence of the maturation of democracy, or is the polarization introducing a new non-democratic form of social order in the country. Certain trends can already be identified and will be presented in this paper.

Keywords: political polarization, human rights, hate speech, democracy, elections

## **Anu Kantola**

### **The Great Squeeze: The Politics of Economic Transformations**

The ongoing economic transformations – globalisation, technological development, job polarization and creative destruction – widen societal divisions and increase tensions among socioeconomic groups. Drawing from a large empirical study of socioeconomic groups in Finland, this paper explores the political consequences of these transformations in the context of the Nordic welfare state. Nordic welfare societies have been built on robust redistributive policies and universal public services, such as healthcare, social benefits and education. These measures have been sustained by a sentiment of solidarity and empathy for others whom we do not know but for whom we feel an affinity. This paper uses interview data to explore the emotional experiences of groups affected by economic restructuring in Finland, focusing on a comparison between upper middle class business executives and lower middle class small-income entrepreneurs. The results suggest that, in

both groups, ongoing economic transformations create a sense of great squeeze that affects people's self-identity and their relation to other social groups. Politically this strain often goes against traditional political cleavages. For the business elites, economic pressures often incite feelings of empathy and demonstrate the need for national solidarity; for the small business owners, the strain often results in criticism of the welfare system. Thus, the economic transformations seem to incite political shifts whereby the high-income executives are supportive of traditional left-wing ideas while the small-income entrepreneurs often favour right-wing populism.

Keywords: emotions, populism, upper class, middle class, entrepreneurs

## **Ruta Kazlauskaite**

### **Bringing the Past to Life: Right-wing Politics of History and Prosthetic Memories in the Age of Immersive Media**

The history of Poland is marked by suffering lending itself to a narrative that capitalizes on victimhood, injustice, betrayal, but also heroism and perseverance. Poland's ruling populist Law and Justice (PiS) party has exploited these feelings in its historical policy by emphasizing Polish suffering during the Second World War and downplaying shame-inducing Polish participation in the Holocaust. Museum exhibitions dealing with historical topics that may evoke feelings of powerless victimhood, shame and inferiority, such as the Museum of the Second World War in Gdańsk, Poland, thus, acquire strategic importance in the PiS agenda. The PiS government not only took control of the leadership of the Museum of the Second World War, but also attempted to align its exhibition with the PiS vision of Polish history. The resultant changes in the exhibition indicate the underlying presence of resentment, which has been recently identified as an affective driver of right-wing populism and which transforms the powerless victimhood, shame and inferiority into a morally superior, dignified and empowered victimhood position in relation to a difficult past. In this paper, I take a closer look at "A Postcard from the Uprising" (Kartka z Powstania), a virtual reality (VR) experience of the 1944 Warsaw Uprising that is on display at the Museum of the Second World War. I propose that this VR experience functions as an emotion training device that engages the emotional bodies of visitors in order to prescribe and enact the contours of a national emotional regime. The VR experience enables museum visitors to embody, from a first-person point of view, a thrilling and empowering story of victimhood, sacrifice and heroism.

Keywords: memory politics, emotions, virtual reality, Poland

## **Reid Kleinberg**

### **The Firebrand's Echo: How Media Spectacles and Fantasy Undermine Nationalist Left-Populist Movements**

This paper theorizes that radical left-wing populist movements attempting to attract support away from the radical right by articulating symbols of nationality through media 'spectacles' will counter-productively entrench xenophobic nationalism amongst its constituents. The paper focuses on the 2017 Jean-Luc Mélenchon campaign in France, considered a radical-left populist, and republican-nationalist movement. Mélenchon's nationalism can be considered 'neo-republican' (Chabal 2015) a strand of French political comparable to top-down civic nationalism that stresses integration and the 'universality' of French identity and culture. To disseminate its message, the campaign conducted a series of high-profile 'hologram rallies' that duplicated a live Mélenchon across multiple venues. I treat these rallies as 'spectacles', for Kellner, "media constructs that present events which

disrupt ordinary and habitual flows of information, and which become popular stories which capture the attention of the media and the public..." (Kellner 2017, 75). Despite Mélenchon stressing the nation in his discourse, far-right voters, who valued these concepts, were unlikely to switch parties (Hewlett 2017, 389). I theorize this is in part due to a counterproductive 'interpolation' effect that was produced by Mélenchon's rallies. To develop this point, I theorize the relationship between 'interpolation', 'fantasy', 'spectacle', 'rhetoric', and nationalism as an 'ideology' drawing from the Essex School of Discourse Analysis and political and psychoanalytic theories of media. I analyze a selection of the video recordings and transcripts of these rallies and assess how their symbolic and rhetorical expressions could have unintentionally activated an embedded ideological fantasy of nationality that benefited the far-right.

Keywords: left vs. right populism, affects of nationality, media spectacles, French populis

## **Alena Kluknavská, Martina Novotná and Olga Eisele**

### **Emotional Responses to Uncivil Communication, Post-truth and Crisis on Facebook**

The antagonistic discourse and lack of communicative truthfulness, prominent aspects of contemporary politics in many European countries, have become especially salient during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis given the increased political polarization of societies. Extant research has brought important insights into the effects of hostile politics on people's attitudes, showing how populist conflictive messages fuel strong reactions like love or anger. However, less work has been done on emotional reactions caused by polarized political communication. This study focuses on the effects of incivility and post-truth accusations in political leaders' social media communication on emotional reactions of users responding to those posts during a crisis. Building upon concepts from populist communication and polarization, we go beyond studying the quantity of responses to elite discourse and investigate the content and contextual characteristics affecting more qualitative reactions. We analyse the communication of the Czech political party leaders on Facebook during the COVID-19 pandemic (March 2020 and March 2021). Applying the manual claims analysis (2549 posts), we expect the use of uncivil language and the presence of truth evaluations will increase the number of emotional responses of social media users. We also expect the emotional reactions will be more pronounced under populist (vs. unpopulist) posts and will also differ according to the crisis developments (different pandemic waves, emphasized issues). The article has important implications for the study of how negativity, incivility and attacks on truthfulness in elite communication may help delegitimise political opponents as well as increase societal polarization and public distrust towards democratic institutions.

Keywords: political communication, incivility, Covid-19, populism, emotions

## **Joonas Koivukoski**

### **Political Aspects of Humor in the Hybrid Media Environment**

This presentation brings together established and emerging ways of assessing the political aspects of humor in the hybrid media environment. So far, these kinds of studies are scattered across different disciplines, and thus the proposed framework aims to synthesize and clarify the state-of-the-art in political humor research. Based on my dissertation, currently in review, I posit that we can analyze the political nature of selected humor instances in the hybrid media environment through four aspects—content, style, identity, and circulation—which are further divided into more specific sub-aspects and questions. The point of this framework is to provide tools for analyzing how the political

aspects of humor come together in selected data and whether some of them are more prominent. A single study can arguably never consider all of the aspects thoroughly; thus, this framework serves more as a heuristic mapping or a checklist rather than a precise methodological toolkit. Nevertheless, I argue that the framework addresses some of the fundamental questions about the modern mediated politics of humor.

Keywords: humor, satire, democracy, populism, activism

## **Svitlana Kot**

### **War Diaries: Time-space Compression in Facebook Users' Blogs about the War**

The Russian war of aggression in Ukraine is not only leading to major shifts in the geopolitical space of Europe but also causing massive widespread disruptions in personal geographies and personal histories of people within Ukraine and abroad. At the outbreak of the war and as it is spreading social media have been at the forefront of its coverage not only giving users the possibility to exchange ideas and opinions but also emerging as powerful platforms for various forms of expression and a tool for preserving memories of the ambiance. Such a genre as a personal war blog called by the users "A War Diary" has recently become one of the most widely used forms of Facebook posts in Ukraine and has been extensively used for conveying personal narratives of wartime. Facebook War Diaries play a critical role in the maintenance of the world that is falling into radical disintegration and transformation. Thus the major breaches of the mental map caused by the war reflect themselves through these personal narratives which all focus a lot on the before and after. To critically engage in the mediatization of the war this paper aims at studying the main spatial and temporal concepts and also the time-space transformation and compression in the war diaries which shed light on personal geographies and personal histories of the Ukrainians at the time of the war.

Keywords: Facebook, War Diary, temporality, spatiality, Ukraine

## **Patrycja Koziel**

### **Emotions, Humour & Cultural Populism in COVID Cartoons. The Case Study of Nigeria**

Satirical cartoons are a symbolic opinion-forming medium, they reflect and (re)shape the views of society, provoking the audience to think about cultural changes. The study analyses the type of cultural meaning that is produced and embedded in the selected Nigerian cartoons published in Nigerian press magazines and social media (e.g. The Guardian, The Punch, Daily Trust, Twitter, Facebook) since the start of pandemics in 2020. Rich visual repertoire, being an extensive corpus of data with diverse themes, specifically contributes to our understanding of over a dozen cartoons as an emotion-sensitive, communicative, socio-cultural, and cognitive tool, that resonates with codes of emotions and humoresque messages. The need for rethinking the perception of this phenomenon is explained by several research questions. How do cartoons, which are a visual source, relate to pandemics, quickly grabbing attention and evoking the same negative or positive emotions in the audience as real global events? Are local cartoonists (such as Mustapha Bulama or Kingsley Mba Kalu) explicitly expressing them for the sole purpose of identifying issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic? Are satirical cartoons, as notable iconographic praxis, used as populist statements in assessing the information about all hidden challenges that the Nigerian society faces? Thus, do these works bear the hallmarks of an indirect tool for social polarisation and effective manipulation? For the interdisciplinary research, I used analytical categories such as dimensions of emotions, the notion of recalling, and social sharing.

Keywords: Nigeria, cultural populism, popular cultures, cartoons, COVID-19

## **Maximilian Kreter**

### **Pandemic, Populism and Conspiracy Beliefs in Germanophone Far Right Music**

Pandemic, populism and conspiracy beliefs in Germanophone Far Right Music: Ideological and musical productivity during the Covid-19 pandemic The Covid-19 pandemic has brought public life, political movements – except for the so-called “Querdenken” movement – and the music industry almost to a complete standstill. In contrast to the previous major crises of the last 15 years, the restrictions in the “corona crisis” affect(ed) almost everybody. In times of crisis, conspiracy-believing explanations offered by radical and extremist movements – which are an integral part of the corresponding ideologies – spread faster than in “normal times”. They supposedly offer patterns of explanation and immediate possibilities of reaction to these crises. Thereby they always include a bridge to the respective ideological reference spectra on the left-right dimension. This paper focuses on the crisis narratives of those bands of the center right – who often label themselves as “apolitical” – and of the extreme right, which are based on a conspiracy beliefs. For this purpose, the culturally and politically instrumentalizable medium music was chosen – with two current examples: White Power Music and the “grey zone”. Taking the bands “Zillertaler Virenjäger” and “Frei.Wild” as examples, the structure and functioning of the spreading of conspiracy beliefs with particular references to the Covid-19 pandemic will be explained. Subsequently, the connective elements that form the bridge to the ideology of right-wing extremism, the accompanying conspiracy narratives as well as the populist and extremist structural features will be made visible. Finally, the overarching conspiracy narratives – such as the “Zionistic Occupied Government” – and their constant transformations from “euro crisis” to “refugee crisis” to the “corona crisis” will be (re)traced within the ideology.

Keywords: Covid-19, (white power) music, far-right, querdenken, populism, extremism

## **Christian Lamour**

### **Circulating Emotions during Commemorations: the Multi-faceted Attitude of Right**

Right-wing populism as a discourse is characterized by the circulation of negative emotions involving a disfranchised /threatened people, corrupt/incompetent elite, and dangerous/profitting minority “others”. Nostalgia and the reference to a golden age are also powerful elements in right-wing populist rhetoric to justify the idea of “taking back control”. One can also notice that right-wing populist parties in Europe tend to have shared trans-national negative emotions involving their state-bordered resentful nations against scapegoated European elites and extra-European “others”. Commemorations can be moments to investigate the ability of right-wing populist parties to promote a trans-national populism. However, what are the emotions circulated by right-wing populist parties in the European Union during commemoration of past conflicts involving their nations and other European national groups? It is hypothesized that right-wing populist politicians will circulate emotions revealing their unwillingness to oppose directly European peoples; emotions oscillating between the equivocal celebration of their people’s national heroes and the non-equivocal mourning of victims belonging to different nations. The research is based on the discourse analysis of narratives produced by the right-wing populist coalition of the Italian city of Trieste during two commemorations of past conflicts in borderlands Istria: The 2019 centenary commemoration of the post-WWI occupation of the nearby Croatian city of Rijeka/Fiume by Gabriele D’Annunzio and the 2020 commemoration of Italian and Slovenian victims of (post-)WWII; a commemoration associated to the restitution of a place of memory to a Slovene minority of Trieste burnt by Italian fascists in 1920, the Narodni Dom.

Keywords: right-wing populism, commemorations, Europe, borders, discourse analysis

**Paulina Lenik**

### **Comparative Analysis of Neo-feudal and Communist Legacies in the CE**

Historically, feudal production was by far the longest functioning across Europe, stretching from at least 15 century till mid-18 century (Sau, 1979; Sweezy et al., 1976). That makes European capitalism a relative newcomer, with identifiable residues of its feudal predecessor (Kula, 1970). The economic literature on agrarian modes of production was particularly abundant in 1970s, with debates between two competing camps - Marxists and Capitalists. However, the economic circumstance of today has intertwined the two (Dean, 2020). One may pose the following question: is the recent return to economic chauvinism (Keskinen, Norocel, & Jeffirgensen, 2016) a residue of feudal socio-economic system of production? I reiterate here what (Dean, 2020) has recently argued, that is, we seem to deal with a gradual neo-feudalization of capitalism. Therefore, this study takes a closer look on the case of CEE, which communist past is often argued to shape (1) social separatism (Eyal et al., 1998) and (2) the public expectation for welfare policy (Pop-Eleches, Tucker, & Tucker, 2017). These are also commonly identified as features of the populist rhetoric. The study uses individual level survey data from the European Social Survey (Consortium, 2017) and attempts to identify the attitudinal gap by mean decomposition (Jann, 2008). That will allow to see whether, post-communist publics have any greater degree of variability with regards their economic-policy expectations. Secondly, the identified difference is explained by two potential theories, (1) the neo-feudal residues (Dean, 2020) and (2) the communist legacies (Djankov et al., 2021; Pop-Eleches et al., 2017; Stanley, 2017). The theoretical benchmark of the argument comes from the idea of 'periodisation' (Davis, 2012) which assumes that socio-economic consciousness transpires to political expectations of today.

Keywords: populism, neo-feudalism, economic chauvinism, CEE, survey analysis

**Katinka Linnamäki and Laura-Elena Sibinescu**

### **Anti-LGBTQ+ Referenda in Hungary and Romania**

Familialism is well researched within the European Union. Research focuses on family policies, successfully pointing out how female reproductive and work rights are often contrasted with the interest of the family, as examples for the individualism vs. familialism understanding of ideological familialism. In this article we examine a scarcely researched aspect: how familialism is used to illegitimate non-heterosexual and queer rights. To move away from researching family policies, we focus on another understanding of familialism, that compares the social institution of family with other social institutions. This novel angle enables us to offer a comparative study between ideological familialisms in Hungary and Romania, filling a gap within comparative literature on Central- and Eastern Europe. In both cases, our focus is on the rhetorical use of family to legitimize anti-LGBTQ sentiments. In Romania we look at the recent civic mobilization around the 2018 constitutional referendum demanding the re-definition of marriage (and by extension, family) in strictly heterosexual terms. In Hungary we examine the "Child Protective Referendum" initiated by the Fidesz-KDNP government, instrumentalizing anti-LGBTQ+ sentiments to polarize electorate during the Parliamentary elections in 2022. The theoretical background to our comparative study of public discourse in the two countries is based on Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's rhetorical understanding of politics. According to their antagonistic definition of the discursive field, we consider a separation between the illiberal 'us' and the liberal 'them' where family and in particular, heterosexuality function

as means of exclusion, leading to a new model of illiberal familialism in the first meaning of the term.

Keywords: anti-LGBTQA+, Hungary, Romania, referendum, mobilization, anti-gender

## **Siarhei Liubimau**

### **Platforms and Infrastructures of Political Populism in 2020s Belarus**

This paper aims to contribute to conversation on coincidence and co-dependence of the rise of populist politics with the rise of digital communication platforms (Finlayson 2020, 2022). My case study is unfinished democratic revolution and authoritarian counterrevolution in 2020-2022 Belarus, where enabled by digital platforms populist political discourse, was an opportunity to emancipate and to challenge infrastructures of consolidated authoritarianism. I interpret this spectacular liberating change and the following deterioration as a breakdown and reconfiguration of the “epistemic infrastructure” (Boyer 2018) of Belarusian politics. From this perspective, the digital communication platforms are unpacked as enablers of certain mode of relations between new notions and practices of spatiality on one hand and new notions and practices of demos on the other hand. The power of the rapidly emerging new modes of collective action in Belarus in 2020 laid in its location off the grid in relation to the long-established inertial material statehood consolidated by Alexander Lukashenko from the 1990s, 2000s and 2010s, and in relation to the long-established oppositional structures and practices. Lukashenko’s key challengers designed their strategies as deliberately viral. The new tools of empowerment were essentially memetic – relying on visualization and replication rather than on deliberation and representation. At the same time, the counterrevolution has left the society with an unprecedented scale of destruction of civil society organizations, criminalization of many civic modes of digital presence, precarious consequences of the interplay between anonymization and de-anonymization, and unprecedented fragility of public expressions of civic stances.

Keywords: digital platforms, infrastructures, epistemic infrastructure, spatiality, virality

## **Ekaterina Lytkina and Tim Reeskens**

### **I Can’t Change It, but I’ll Punish You! Emotions and Populism in COVID-19 Times**

Recent studies have untangled that the coronavirus pandemic might not only increase support for incumbent politicians but foster right-wing populism. The coronavirus pandemic has significantly affected individuals’ control over their goals and important life outcomes, which often followed by heavy emotional reactions. We assume that people’s self-efficacy beliefs play an important role in shaping the way they respond to the pandemic, including such political outcomes as populism. We make use of a novel data set, collected as part of the LISS Panel Survey for the Netherlands. Our study shows that self-efficacy is significantly albeit inversely related with populism: people who perceive they exert control over their life are less accepting of populist orientations. Emotions characterized by low coping potential (fear, sadness) decrease populist attitudes. Anger is positively associated with populist tendencies, whereas disgust is unrelated to them. At the same time, we find that efficacious people experiencing anger are more likely to prefer populist parties and less likely –opposition parties. We interpret our findings in relation to research on populism and emotions and hint at some policy implications in the light of the coronavirus pandemic.

Keywords: emotions, populism, coronavirus pandemic, self-efficacy

## **Eoin Micheál McNamara**

### **A Baltic Storm in a Teacup? EKRE's Populist Geopolitics in Government in Estonia**

The Conservative People's Party of Estonia's (EKRE) entry into a governing coalition after Estonia's March 2019 General Election was a disruptive landmark in the country's post-Cold War political development. With far-right, populist and nationalist credentials, EKRE's participation in a three-party coalition caused profound concern among Estonia's liberal and centre-right elements that had led a successful transition to liberal democracy after restoration of independence in 1991. Between 1991 and 2019, Estonia's foreign policy was determined by a strong Euro-Atlantic consensus, seeking to "never again" be alone without allies, and emphasizing EU and NATO membership as vital security aims. With these aims met in 2004, Estonian governments sought to transform the country from a peripheral Western newcomer to a society at the liberal democratic core of the Euro-Atlantic security community. Many commentators claimed during EKRE's two years in government that this progress was being dismantled by the party's populist geopolitics. Driven by populist-nationalist ideology, EKRE politicians provoked multiple international controversies: insulting some of Estonia's important partner governments (e.g. Finland, Germany, Lithuania); expressing affinity with illiberal governments in Hungary and Poland; and questioning the functionality of NATO's security guarantees. This paper revisits these events at a 1-2 year distance, arguing that EKRE's term in government confirms existing theories on populist foreign policy: these parties make many controversial statements, but they ultimately achieve little tangible to restructure their state's foreign policy, a pattern experienced in Estonia when EKRE departed government in 2019 and the succeeding Liberal-Centre coalition reemphasized the Euro-Atlantic status quo.

Keywords: Estonia; EKRE; populism; security; geopolitics

## **Sebastián Moreno Barreneche**

### **Hopes and Fears. Populist Political Actors' Use of Music in Meaning-making**

The presentation draws on the thesis put forward in my upcoming book *The Social Semiotics of Populism* (Bloomsbury, 2022), which poses that populism is a discursive practice that uses a specific narrative structure for meaning-making. The Populist Narrative Structure establishes an antagonistic relationship between the collective identity 'the People' and an Other that is defined logically as 'not-the-People'. This virtual narrative structure is brought to life by populist political actors in their discourses and performances: it is them who actualize the virtual structure by filling it with context-dependent contents that are of a figurative nature (as opposed to abstract). The presentation examines a number of audiovisual products by right-wing and left-wing populists to map how these two varieties of populism use music as a semiotic resource to position the populist leader within the political populist narrative. As is argued, while left-wing populist actors (Podemos, Bernie Sanders, Evo Morales) and parties normally convey hope in their uses of music, right-wing populists (Marine Le Pen, Donald Trump) prefer to create an effect of sense of fear linked to a threat.

Keywords: populism, semiotics, music, meaning-making, discourse

## **Alina Mozolevska**

### **Post-Soviet Nostalgia and Memory War in Contemporary Ukrainian Political Communication**

Nowadays it is impossible to talk about Eastern European politics without mentioning the terms "soviet" or "post-soviet" that are still a part of political and critical debate. The soviet past is still impact-

ing the present of some countries that due to the transitional period of their socio-political systems, continue to experience the political, economic and security effects of URSS rule and still zigzagging between democracy and authoritarianism. This paper is concerned with the investigation of the possible intersections between Ukrainian political present and Soviet past. In this paper we would like to focus on role of post-soviet nostalgia in the digital communication. We will study the main discursive strategies of symbolic reconstruction of idealistic image of soviet state and the ways of manipulation of the sense of disappointment in the power institutions and the distrust in the present political system. Following questions will be explored: What are the main narratives that are used to build the antagonism between the reality and the soviet past? How are the borders between the present and past being constructed? How soviet and Ukrainian identity related? How is the sense of belonging to a state/nation verbalized? What is the role of personal soviet experience in the verbalization of post-soviet nostalgia? What are the main means of articulation of nostalgia?

Keywords: nostalgia, Ukraine, Post-Soviet nostalgia, digital communication, counter-discourse

## **Alina Mozolevska**

### **Laughter through Tears: Role of Humor in Ukrainian Resistance Against Russian Agression**

Russia's invasion of Ukraine that started on February 24, 2022 leads not only to the shift of real and mental borders in Europe, drives profound changes of geopolitical visions of the contemporary world and provokes important evolution of understanding of Ukrainian mentality and Ukrainian national identity. This paper seeks to define the role of humor in the shaping the image of the enemy, Ukrainian army and Ukrainian nation. Humor as an important element of national spirit is expressed by several narratives of war and expresses the main contradictions between Ukrainian and Russian culture, history, present and future. The data set is composed of more than 1000 caricatures and memes produced between February 24 and April 1.

Keywords: Ukraine, Russian aggression, humor, national identity, narrative of war

## **Matias Muuronen**

### **Memory Laws and Nationalistic Fervour: a "Nazi" Threat in Putin's Regime**

This essay is centered on the idea of a "Nazi" threat, evoked in Putin's rhetorics in the context of the Ukrainian conflict. Arguably, the portrayal of the Ukrainian and Western countries as Nazi's is linked to the emergence of memory politics, in which states such as Russia have used the space of collective memories for the sake of nationalistic goals. The study seeks to answer the following question: how is the Great Patriotic War myth used in Putin's narrative on attacking Ukraine? Through a content analysis of Putin's addresses in the days prior to the open war in Ukraine, two themes emerge in particular. First, legislation on the memory of the Great Patriotic War (GPW) emphasizes Russia's special role in protecting its space, therefore framing it as a victim of aggression. Secondly, by basing the GPW on proper conceptualisations, Putin's regime manages to obscure the opposition's rhetoric of fighting a fascist regime within Russian territory. This study seeks to enhance conceptual clarity around the use of collective memory in Russia by pointing out the ways in which earlier studies have not taken into consideration the distinction between general and proper framings of memory. Through clear differentiations further research would be better capable of examining different strategies for mobilizations between the narratives of the state and the ones used by pro-state mobilizations groups.

Keywords: Russia, Nazi's, collective memory, political history, Ukraine

## **Michał Nawrocki**

### **‘Populist Securitization’ of Climate Change: Vilification of EU Climate Policies**

While populist politicians and their supporters are often climate change sceptics or outright deniers, populist attitudes themselves do not necessarily determine the stance towards climate crisis. Indeed, populist parties in Europe are varied both in their climate change discourses and responses (Schaller, Carius 2019). Climate change, as a crisis caused by a non-human actor, is often addressed ambiguously or ignored all-together by populists, because populism itself is usually focused around social actors and social conflicts. Populist discourses commonly use cognitive frames (Aslanidis 2016, 2020) that identify involved social actors, attribute blame and offer proposed actions. Because of that crises caused by non-human actors (impersonal, with diffused causes and consequences) may be hard to address. However, through a process of social mediation, in which non-human actors are tied to specific social actors, they may be introduced or even weaponised in those discourses. This social mediation may result in a ‘populist securitization’ in which crises of non-human origins, tied to a specific social actor, e.g. the EU, are framed as a threat to national identity or sovereignty. In my paper I would like to discuss an example of such securitization – the vilification of EU climate policies in social media communication of two influential Polish right-wing populist politicians – Patryk Jaki and Sebastian Kaleta. Both from the Solidary Poland party, the most Eurosceptic and radical part of the ruling right-wing populist government, they are particularly outspoken critics of EU policies, so their statements would provide an adequate example of populist securitization of climate change.

Keywords: populism, climate change, securitization, EU, discourse analysis

## **Marcus Nicolson**

### **Macro-Narratives of Scottish Distinctiveness and Migrant Experiences**

Scotland has long-portrayed itself as a welcoming, tolerant and progressive country which is inclusive towards migrant groups, often drawing on comparisons with other parts of the UK. However, this macro-level civic narrative often contrasts greatly with the micro-level lived experiences of migrants. This discord between narrative and lived-experience takes centre stage in my qualitative study of young adult migrants living in Glasgow. Adopting a case study based on the lived experiences of young adults of mixed ethnic background, I explore their identity negotiation processes and everyday life. These micro-level insights will be complimented by macro-level interviews with politicians in Scotland in order to understand how macro-level narratives of Scottish distinctiveness are shared and audiences are constructed. Thereafter, I will examine how (populist) macro-narratives become the foundation upon which minority groups interpret everyday events and formulate their own identities. A theoretical framework which builds upon ontological security theory (OST) will be used to analyse how the study participants attempt to establish security through a variety of coping mechanisms (Giddens 1991). The analysis will explore how migrant individuals employ self-securitising measures and adopt nationalist political behaviours in order to adapt to the macro-narrative in the host society. Ultimately, my study will analyse the deliberation process of young adults who are trying to meet the expectations placed upon them by a powerful macro-level narrative in the specific context of Scotland. The study also has important considerations for research being conducted on migrants and minority groups across international settings and sub-state nationalist contexts.

Keywords: migration, narrative, discourse, immigration, Scotland

## **Dayei Oh**

### **Making of Abortion Culture War Thesis: How False Polarisation is Discursively Constructed in Cultural Populist Moments**

James Hunter's 1991 book *The American Culture Wars* anticipated that cultural issues such as religion, abortion, and family values, become the forefront of American domestic political conflicts. In the 2020s, the rise of cultural populism extends this trend where cultural backlash and polarisation locates at the core of political conflicts and clashes. Abortion in particular is often characterised as a culture war which involves deep antagonism between two communities with fundamentally different conceptions of moral authority where there can be no compromise. However, many sociological and discourse studies challenge the abortion culture war thesis, arguing that pro-life and pro-choice sides share numerous cultural themes and values. Rather, abortion discourse is discursively constructed as a culture war thesis through the false polarisation of the masses. Through qualitative content analysis, this paper explores the Irish (2018) and U.S. (2020) abortion discussions on Twitter to identify the rhetorical tactics and repertoires which propel such false polarisation in abortion discourse. The paper highlights mainly two repertoires of abortion culture war thesis in cultural populist moments: (1) moralisation of politics and (2) post-truth conspiratorial communications.

Keywords: cultural populism, culture war, false polarisation, abortion

## **Ozge Ozduzen, Bogdan Ianosev and Nelli Ferenczi**

### **A Passport to Freedom: What Roles Marginalisation and Discrimination Play in reactions to Vaccine Mandates**

The COVID-19 pandemic has deepened populist anti-establishment attitudes by adding another layer of social grievance resting on perceptions and lived-experience of social inequalities, on top of prevalent anxieties related to the political mainstream. In this period, moral outrage has galvanised citizens online and offline on a global scale towards populist social movements, challenging the political establishment on the grounds of protecting 'freedom'. This paper presents findings from our ongoing research on the emotions, motivations, ideologies, historical anxieties, and reasoning behind vaccine hesitancy (including the anti-vaccine passport protests) in the United Kingdom (UK) and United States (US). Drawing on interviews and focus groups with minoritised communities that are vaccine hesitant in the UK and US and social media conversations on the COVID-19 vaccine, our paper investigates vaccine populism at the intersection of (1) historical and contemporary social injustices and medical discrimination of minoritised communities, (2) the moral psychology of freedom, (3) online sources of information and official health communication, (4) reasonable suspicions over the side-effects of the COVID-19 vaccine and (5) communication barriers between patients and physicians partly related to present mistrust over historical and contemporary forms of discrimination.

Keywords: vaccine mandate, vaccine populism, social inequalities, marginalisation

## **Dolors Palau-Sampio**

### **Disinformation Strategies: Clickbait Patterns and Polarization**

In the last few years, the hybrid media context (Chadwick, 2017) has fostered the emergence of an ecosystem of digital pseudo-media sites (Rathnayake, 2018; Palau-Sampio, 2021), outlets that mimic compositional forms and styles used by mainstream journalists (Rathnayake, 2018), while

infringing journalistic conventions and mixing information, commentary, and ideology (Del-Fresno-García, 2019). This concept is also consistent with research that highlights the blended nature of such texts that combine sensationalism, disinformation, and partisanship to provide antiestablishment narratives (Mourão and Robertson, 2019). This article combines qualitative and quantitative methodology to analyze the characteristics of the disinformation disseminated by seven Spanish pseudo-media sites, with the aim to identify the strategies and patterns in the content published. Three main issues have been selected: politics, pandemic and social issues with great relevance (i.e., migration, gender equality, LGTBI rights). Data gathering (N=1,395) has been carried out from March 2020 to December 2021. This research tries to answer the next questions: RQ1) Which are the expressive resources invested in the headlines?; RQ2) What are the narrative structure and sources quoted?; RQ3) Which journalistic conventions (i.e., data collection, quotes, context) employ these outlets to mimic conventional media and how are they mocked? The preliminary conclusions show three main complementary strategies: a polarized speech, based on abusive expressions to discredit; clickbait patterns are present in headlines characterized by its expressiveness, appeals to the reader, and colloquial language; and the mimicry of certain journalistic practices with the aim of skewing them.

Keywords: disinformation, polarization, clickbait, pseudo-media, populism

## **Ágnes Patakfalvi-Czirják**

### **“Music Unites Us” The Mainstreaming of Populism through Popular Music in Hungary**

The concept of populism has had an impressive career in the last decade in political science literature, as well as in sociology. The majority of studies refers to populist political strategies, discursive frameworks, and populist parties, while the number of works exploring the cultural aspects of the phenomenon is lower (Stroschein 2019). Similarly, the populism in Hungary was understood as an answer to the economic and social crisis since 2006. These explanations connect the rise of populist discourses directly to the mentioned crisis, nevertheless, they are enable to reveal why have populist discourses affected not just the policymaking, but the cultural side too. My proposed presentation, which is based on research conducted for the Volkswagen Stiftung project “Popular Music and the Rise of Populism in Europe” (ref. 94 754), attempts to analyse this general academic interpretation through looking at the relationship between populism and popular music in the case of Hungary. In the research design, we have attempted to revive critical traditions of the studying of popular culture, and have connected aesthetic and structural musical analysis with the studying of the political and social context through the method of musicological group analysis combined with anthropological field work. The main research question of the presentation aims to answer how the Fidesz-controlled hegemony-building uses the popular music industry and well-known performers to connect different audiences to unite into one political community.

Keywords: populism, hegemony-building, popular music, Hungary, Orbán-regime

## **Nuppu Pelevina**

### **Russian Instagram Influencers’ Strategies’ during the Russian War in Ukrainea**

Russian popular culture seemed to politicize within days after the Russian invasion in Ukraine February 24th. Many social media platforms, Instagram included, were filled with #nowar hashtags and hearts. However, this short-lived moment of solidarity was soon replaced by intensifying polarization and increasing patriotism. Entertainment bloggers and influencers tend to stay out of political dis-

cussions, which has been considered a strategic choice as influencers' audiences' political positions are diverse. However, in moments of major social or political crisis, influencers are urged by their followers to take a stand. As an entertainment centered and highly commercial platform, Instagram has gained minimal interest from political scientists; most previous studies have focused on political actors. However, recent research on social media influencers (SMI) has shown that many influencers do address political issues, and some scholars have recognized the potential of politicization in Instagram. This research studies how influencers balance between pressure from their respective audiences and the general public, restrictions posed by the Russian government, as well as Instagram's actions during the war. Research draws from a wide literature on social media influencers and political communication on social media. Multimethod approach combines digital methods with qualitative analysis. Data is gathered from multiple social media platforms, Instagram, Telegram and VKontakte both manually and using digital tools. This presentation addresses questions and challenges of gathering, storing, and analyzing ephemeral social media content from various platforms in an exceptional and radically changing context, as influencers migrate from Instagram to various other social media platforms.

Keywords: social media, Russia, polarization, Instagram, influencer

## **Ivana Piterová, Alexander Loziak and Jana Papcunova**

### **Polarisation of Attitudes towards Migration in Pre-election Period**

Populist communication in combination with anti-immigrant statements can elicit polarised attitudes and emotions. However, it was an anti-corruption and anti-elitist campaign that helped the Ordinary People win the Slovak parliamentary elections in 2020. The present study aims to identify themes in social discourse (public comments, N=1375) (cognitive aspect of attitudes) on the "old" topic of migration in the social media posts of the main Slovak political parties (N=8) in the pre-election period (January-February 2020); and to identify discrete emotions and its prevalence within the analysed social discourse and in the individual media posts (emotional aspect of attitudes). The triangulation method was used to identify dominant themes in social discourse. Text mining, specifically Syuzhet package's sentiment and emotion analysis in R programming language, was utilised to compute frequency of 7 out of 8 Plutchik theory-based emotions. One emotion, trust, was excluded from analysis, as the Syuzhet package method failed to take into account the discourse context. Political parties differed in the way the topic of migration was communicated. A qualitative analysis of the discourse revealed that the cognitive reaction of Slovaks to the topic of migration is associated with several topics: questioning the morale of government elites; economic, identity and security threats; conflicts of liberals and conservatives, which have polarising character but lead to the same emotional reactions, mostly fear, anticipation, and anger. The study demonstrates that rather than fear of migration, anticipation of change in the morale of the elites was the key element of the pre-election period.

Keywords: populism, emotions, cognitions, migration, attitudes, pre-election, Slovakia

## **Mykola Polovyi**

### **Evolution of Empathy to "LNR" and "DNR" in Russian Social Media as the Mean of Substantiation of the Russian Invasion**

The aim of the presentation is to assess a sense of using the empathy constructions as the explanation and justification of the military intrusion to the Ukraine. The most usual constructs of compas-

sion to “people of Donbass” and “poor children of Donbass” and construction of feelings of guilt such as “where you was previous 8 years” are described. The dynamics of quantity of empathy posts in Russian segment of Facebook during two months – from 24 January to 24 March 2022 is assessed and interpreted. It is grounded that all anguishes of Ukrainian people resulted of the beginning in 2014 of the Russian-Ukrainian war transformed by Russian propaganda discourse into the sufferings of “people of Donbass by Ukrainian nazists”.

Keywords: empathy to children, social networks, pro-Russian propaganda, Ukraine

## **Kinga Polynczuk-Alenius**

### **Fateful Triangle: LGBTQ+ Rights, Media, and Democratic Imagination in Poland**

In this paper, I investigate the mediated discourses that emerged during the perfect storm around the rights, or the lack thereof, of the LGBTQ+ community in Poland. In particular, I focus on the 2020 activities of the now defunct feminist, queer collective Stop Bzdurom (Stop Rubbish), which intensified in response to the brutally homophobic, dehumanising campaign launched by the ultraconservative government led by the Law and Justice (PiS) party. For my purposes, Stop Bzdurom is a particularly potent case because the collective was dissolved due to inquisitive and negative media attention. I approach the controversy surrounding Stop Bzdurom as a moment of rupture that invites resistance, contestation and change, and as a key development in the re/making of democratic imagination in Poland. Theoretically, I view ‘democratic imagination’ as the repository of idea(l)s geared towards equalising power relations and minimising domination over nonhegemonic identities and bodies. Its horizon has been remade through a mediated process, whereby 1) pro-government outlets contract democratic imagination by promulgating oppression and exclusion of the LGBTQ+ community; 2) Stop Bzdurom expand democratic imagination via self-mediation of their resistance on social media; and 3) oppositional media misrepresent the LGBTQ+ community and the activities of Stop Bzdurom to preserve the post-communist status quo of democratic imagination. Empirically to substantiate this proposition, I use Foucauldian discourse analysis to interrogate the social media self-representation and mainstream media coverage of Stop Bzdurom.

Keywords: democratic imagination, Foucault, LGBTQ+ rights, media, Poland

## **Niko Pyrhönen, Anton Berg and Katja Valaskivi**

### **Mediatized Religious Populism: Circulation & remediation via Fast Messaging Apps**

In recent years, the world news has followed a growing global trend that connects the success of populist politics with religious supporters and institutions. While there is no shared definition of populism among scholars of religion or media, most agree that one of the driving forces behind today’s populist movements is defending ‘the people’ against ‘the elites’ in society (Reineman et al., 2018). More recently, the focus on mediatization of the political has led to conceptualizations of the political sphere as a stage on which immediacy, intimacy, and closeness generate new populist scripts - the style through which established and aspiring politicians can present themselves as outsiders of the political systems they hail from (Moffitt 2016). Given that the importance of religion to recent populist movements has been well recognized, there are still only few empirical studies on the phenomenon (Yilmaz and Morieson 2021). There is even less research that would study the intersection of media, religion and populism (Martikainen and Sakki 2021). In this paper, we set out to narrow this gap in research by focusing on the operationalization of populism as a distinct political style that makes use of mediatized spaces and religious influences and references. We are particularly interested in

the circulation and remediation processes of the contents. Empirically, we analyse the discussions and contents shared on the fast messaging app Telegram during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, comprising of a total 180000 messages posted in eight Finnish groups that are affiliated to conspiratory mobilizations (such as QAnon), evangelicalism, esoterism and radical right. As our interest is in the circulation and remediation, our analysis focuses on the shared links and the network of religious contexts in the data, visualized with IssueCrawler and Gephi software. Given the large size of our collected data, we will make use of quantitative methods from computational social science and natural language processing in addition to qualitative approaches. We aim to identify circulating themes and features characteristic of mediatized religious populism, particularly the esoteric and eschatological components that tend to be de-emphasized in the journalistic media. This allows us to bring empirical insight to the intertwined characteristics of populist style and religious contents on social media platforms prior to their emergence in the mainstream space. Based on the results of the analysis, we assess the extent to which the scripts on fast messaging apps contribute to a shared embodied symbolic space capable of attracting attention and affect, but also of mobilising the masses.

Keywords: religious populism, computational social science, circulation, remediation

## **Iida Pyy and Anniina Leiviskä**

### **Challenging the Politics of Negative Emotions in Educational Policy-making**

This paper discusses the role of negative political emotions in educational policy-making through a particular case of banning asylum seekers' visits to local schools and day-care centres in one of the largest cities in Finland. The paper uses the case example to demonstrate that while political emotions may often serve positive functions in democratic politics, especially concerning highly controversial and polarizing issues such as immigration and asylum-seeking, political emotions may also be employed to justify the overruling of established democratic values, procedures, and human rights principles. In our case example, the educational policy-making prompted by citizens' expressions of negative political emotions exemplified ethnic or racial stigmatization and led to the diminishing of schools' possibilities to engage with the advancing of significant educational aims associated with human rights and social justice. Therefore, while we affirm the requirement to pay increasing attention to the role of emotions in democratic politics, we also use our case to highlight the need to consider the nature and justification of affectively charged political actions and decisions in light of general, higher-order principles, such as democratic and human rights principles.

Keywords: political emotions, polarization, democracy, educational policy, human rights

## **Sebastian Ronderos**

### **From Lula to Bolsonaro: Unravelling Veja Magazine's (Anti)populist Fantasies**

By studying Veja Magazine's treatment of the words 'populist' and 'populism', this paper intends to bring fantasy back to the core of the discursive study of populism as a signifier. It draws our attention to how, from an elitist policymaking perspective, the discursive disputes against the Workers' Party (PT) and the alliances for electing Jair Bolsonaro as president of Brazil in 2018 were normatively endowed and ideologically constructed. In using the concept of fantasy to develop an analytical grid for the study of Veja magazine's discursive anti-populism, this study explores the distinctive virtues of adopting a psychoanalytically-inflected discourse theory approach to the study of political antagonism and the critique of ideology.

Keywords: anti-populism, fantasy, antagonism, discourses about populism

## **Anna Catharina Sampaio Vale**

### **Five Dimensions to Populist Communication: Debating Parameters**

Populist communication is understood as the strategic use, mainly by politicians, to increase political antagonism, leaving little or no space for plural thinking. This poster focuses on the first contribution of a doctoral thesis on populist communications. It introduces five dimensions to populist communications proposed by the author based on literature review in populism and populist communication from authors Leslie Bethell, Claes de Vreese, Silvio Waisbord, Frank Esser, Maria Galito, Gianpietro Mazzoleni, Cas Mudde and others. Understanding and framing populist communication is an important step, so the initial phase of this research considers five dimensions of populist communications, namely: “Social media and populists” – main aspect: communication; “Us against them” – main aspect: social; “Sovereignty” – main aspect: moral; “Minimum state” – main aspect: political; Scientific denialism – main aspect: scientific. The five dimensions support a better understanding of the relation between populist communications and voters in Brazil, and can contribute to better understanding strategies, political communications and populist communication in the country. They can also be useful to additional research, as the effects of populism to communication and politics still call for better understanding and parameters as mentioned by Claes de Vreese and Cas Mudde. Parameters can be helpful to understand populist communication and develop comparative research. During the Winter Seminar, the objective is to present the dimensions and discuss what can be added or changed, or whether it can be utilized by other researchers to future comparative studies.

Keywords: populist communications, dimensions, comparative studies, Brazil, populism

## **Robert Sata**

### **The Politicization of Europe vs. the EU in Hungarian Populist Discourse**

In recent years, Hungary has become infamous for leading the wave of democratic backsliding in the EU, with Prime Minister Viktor Orbán successfully exploiting economic insecurity and cultural fears to legitimize his illiberal rule. Using systematic content analysis of the official speeches and interviews of the prime minister in 2010-2022, this paper describes the creation of Orbán’s discourse of continuous crisis and fear. This paper argues Orbán constructs discursively the image of crisis to justify his populist system. The discursive processes of ‘othering’ that delineate both ‘us’ and ‘dangerous others’, are central to this polarizing discourse that seeks to mobilize identity fears against those ‘dangerous others’ who are to be blamed for the crisis(es). The discursive depictions of both Europe and the EU are at the core of this identity-based politics to justify extreme policy measures in defence of sovereignty. This way, Orbán’s discourse presents a fascinating duality: on the one hand it centres on the idea that Hungary is a defender of European Christian civilization and its traditional values, while on the other demands that the EU and its common governance systems, liberal foundations, secular organization, gender and LGBTQ+ rights or religious tolerance must be opposed in order to “save” Europe.

Keywords: populism, discourse, crisis, EU, identity fear

## **Patrick Sawyer and Yagmur Kalayci**

### **Conspiracy Theories as a Component of Populist Rhetoric**

What are the functions of conspiracy theory rhetoric used by leaders of populist movements? Whereas many scholars have demonstrated a consistent relationship between conspiracy theory beliefs and support for populist candidates, the mechanisms that explain this relationship remain under-examined. This exploratory study moves in this direction by coding conspiracy theory rhetoric in a large corpus of speeches by Donald Trump using a qualitative content analysis in order to uncover the functions of such references for forging and retaining a strong relationship with the broader populist movement. The authors argue that conspiracy theory rhetoric could serve both a ‘demonization’ function, for attacking and delegitimizing opponents, and a ‘mobilization’ function, that can be used to forge a more concrete ‘bloc’ of supporters. Early results point to a significant amount of evidence of demonizing functions in Trump’s rhetoric, such as attacking individual politicians, stereotyping the opposing camp, and delegitimizing political institutions, as well as mobilizing functions, such as coordinating the attention of followers, and reinforcing group identity. Furthermore, conspiracy theory rhetoric of all kinds are found primarily in campaign speeches, and are nearly absent in interviews and prepared speeches, implying that Trump refers to them primarily when speaking directly to his supporters.

Keywords: populism, conspiracy theories, othering, stereotyping, siege mentality

## **Pia Schramm**

### **Digital Populist Practices to the Museum Landscape**

Populist discourses increasingly challenge questions on heritage and memory culture all over Europe – cultural institutions such as museums and heritage sites are hence confronted populist claims towards their work. Social media platforms enable also non-established populist actors to combat against such institutions. Based on a one-year anthropological fieldwork in Germany, my research concerns populist everyday online-practices of non-established Users engaging with museums and heritage sites on Facebook and YouTube. Bringing together a framework of populism as a set of practices (Moffitt 2016) and an understanding of emotions as practice (Scheer 2011), I describe the emotionally loaded micro-political practices by populist acting users that concern the representations and understandings of history, heritage and memory culture embodied within museums. These practices become especially visible when museums deal with the history of the GDR or the Holocaust. Following Herzfelds (2019) approach, I take into question how populism works, e.g. how revisionist populist acting users challenge the politics of museums. As socio-political actors, museums display specific interpretations of history and presence based on their (political) attitudes – hence they create affective atmospheres (Bozoğlu 2019) that suggest certain feeling rules (Hochschild) towards national belonging and identity. Populist actors do not feel aligned with the tales of cultural institutions and claim the museums do not represent them as ‘the people’. With criticizing the ways museums co-produce history and heritage, populists proclaim alternative readings and writings of history. In this combat over the ‘true national history’, subjective experiences and affective detachment are the driving force for populist practices.

Keywords: museum, heritage, populist practices, non-established actors, online, Facebook

## **Sergio Schargel**

### **“BUT YOU’RE NOT A REAL JEW”: The Veiled Brazilian Antisemitism**

At the beginning of 2020, a situation in Brazil made international headlines: the secretary of culture, Roberto Alvim, published a video in which he played the minister of Nazi propaganda, Joseph Goebbels. Simultaneously, Anthropologist Adriana Dias, from UNICAMP, identified a total of at least 334 neo-Nazi cells active in Brazil. Similar to the myth of racial democracy, Brazil deals with another false secular narrative: The myth that there is no antisemitism within the country. This is not, however, exclusive to Brazil as other countries, even Germany, which is constantly referenced as a country that had “overcome” racism and antisemitism with the denazification process, deal with an antisemitism that is often veiled, concealed, but that emerges when stimulated. By mixing empiric experiences with statistical data, the aim of this essay is to evidence some ways in which the hatred toward the Jewish people can manifest itself nowadays, and how it is growing in the whole world, with particular regard to Brazil. In a time when a secretary of culture paraphrases Goebbels and remains unpunished, the relevance of this work is justified for bringing up a discussion on the ways in which antisemitism can be manifested in the contemporary times, helping to take down the myth that there is no antisemitism in Brazil.

Keywords: antisemitism, Judaism, Bolsonarism, AfD, authoritarianism

## **Sophie Schmalenberger**

### **Feeling (Eastern) German: The AfD and Populism as Affective Alternative**

The Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) and particular its success in former Eastern Germany is the object of a growing body of academic literature. However, existing approaches rarely go beyond conceptualizing structural divides, socio-cultural deprivation, protest voting or the mobilization of distinct emotions as reasons for the party’s success. This does not do justice to the specific memory cultural implications and complex affective underpinnings of the AfD’s maneuvering in present-day Germany, particularly in the territories of the former GDR. Aiming to fill this gap, this conference contribution introduces an approach that takes its vantage point from a critique of modern German memory culture and is geared towards understanding the affective and memory cultural dimensions of the AfD’s populism. Here, the analysis of multimodal social media content, posted by selected AfD actors during the 2019 regional elections in the federal states of Brandenburg and Thuringia, illustrates how the AfD’s articulation of a far-right populist subject position relies on the strategic mobilization of particular Eastern German memories, embodied experiences and affective intensities connected to life in the GDR, the Fall of the Wall, German reunification as well as the aftermath of 1989/1990. This, I argue, enables the AfD to offer their Eastern German supporters a way of being and feeling (Eastern) German that simultaneously relies on and constitutes itself against the state-sponsored memory culture and affective governance (Shoshan 2016) in reunified Germany.

Keywords: Eastern Germany, populism, affect, far-right, memory, AfD, nationalism

## **Sophie Schmalenberger**

### **“Germany. But normal.”: The AfD and the Re-articulation of the National Normal**

Reminiscent of the (in)famous populist slogans “Take Back Control” and “Make America Great Again” in its simplicity and ‘emptiness’, the Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) chose “Germany. But normal.” as motto for its 2021 federal election campaign. While political commentators were quick to classi-

fy it as attempt to portray their ethno-nationalist and anti-pluralist political preferences as normal, however, the slogan subsumes rather poignantly the AfD's overall ambition to re-define what 'feels normal' in contemporary Germany. This contribution argues that the AfD offers its supporters an alternative, ethno-nationalist way of being German that on the one hand defies the state-sponsored affective governance that reproduces a civic German nationalism (Shoshan 2016) and on the other relies on already existing, 'mainstreamed' discourses of German supremacy and the affective regimes that underpin them. Based on the analysis of selected social media content posted by leading AfD actors, this conference contribution will illustrate how the AfD strategically de-emphasizes the importance of Holocaust and WW2 commemoration while employing references to positively connotated moments and personas in German history as well as established ideas of German virtues and national belonging. In doing so, the AfD does not only engage in historical revisionism, aiming for the memory cultural normalization of modern Germany, but also articulates a counter-hegemonic German-ness that is affectively structured by the admiration for the ethnic German nation and disdain for (ethnic and religious) minorities and political opponents.

Keywords: Germany, AfD, nationalism, affect, populism, memory

## **Laura-Elena Sibinescu**

### **'The People Have a Right to See This!': The Use of Facebook Live As a Populist Tool**

Transparency in political processes is an essential feature of democracy. In practice, the degree to which these processes are actually examined outside the institutions that produce them depends on citizens' resources and interest in engaging with and influencing them. Political actors making these processes more accessible and interesting to the public would thus draw and benefit from citizens' attention. In February 2022 the Romanian Parliament adopted a procedural decision to ban the use of Facebook Live in its sessions, in addition to introducing penalties for harassment between MPs. This came in response to actions by a few politicians belonging to or associated with nationalist right-wing Alliance for the Unity of Romanians (AUR) who have been making extensive use of Facebook Live to broadcast directly from parliamentary sessions since entering the Parliament in December 2021. This decision prompted AUR and the liberal-progressive Save Romania Union (USR) to express a common view that limiting the use of Facebook Live has a negative impact on transparency and is therefore anti-democratic. Although USR has in a sense pioneered the use of video recordings and broadcasts in this way since their entry into the Parliament in 2016, it is AUR members who have been using this technical feature to address a widespread audience directly and represent the view 'from the ground', filtered through their own discourses. This paper examines how prominent AUR members articulate the concept of political transparency in their Facebook Live broadcasts of parliamentary sessions. The particular focus is on how the discourse of AUR connects transparency to democracy and the 'us-them' binary drawn between anti-democratic MPs and the citizens they are meant to serve.

Keywords: right-wing populism, transparency, democracy, Romania, Facebook

## **Tanja Sihvonen**

### **Clash of Realities? TikTok Videos as Warfront in Ukraine**

War is a state of usually open and declared armed hostile conflict carried on by force of arms, as between nations or between parties within a nation. Warfare is typically carried out by land, sea, and air, but recently the importance of cyberwar, the use of IT to attack the information systems of

an enemy state, has been growing. Even though cyberwar is a contested term (Kleemann, 2021; Valeriano & Maness, 2015), it is a fact that many countries maintain active capabilities for offensive and defensive cyber operations. In information war a conflict over the possession, distribution, and manipulation of information is manifested on multiple arenas, including social media. This paper focuses on these new fronts of war in Ukraine by examining videos on TikTok that provide ground reports and other emotionally moving content from the warzone. I analyse these videos in the context of mis-, dis- and malinformation studies. There has been a growing concern over real and fake warzone livestreams on TikTok, as well as the distribution of realistic video game footage or old clips from YouTube as “authentic” war reporting (Tenborge & Collins, 2022). TikTok is famous for its emphasis on “raw” content, aimed at producing a sense of authenticity, as well as its user-centeredness, and I argue that these characteristics play a crucial part in the successful delivery of affective war-related content. There are also algorithmic and even financial incentives for warzone livestreaming, which I unpack as part of my analysis. References Kleemann, S. (2021). Cyber Warfare and the Humanization” of International Humanitarian Law. *International Journal of Cyber Warfare and Terrorism* 11(2), 1-11. DOI: 10.4018/IJCWT.2021040101 Tenborge, K., & Collins, B. (2022). War in Ukraine sparks new wave of misinformation. *NBC News*, Feb 26, 2022. <https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/tech-news/war-ukraine-sparks-new-wave-misinformation-rcna17779> Valeriano, B., & Maness, R. C. (2015). *Cyber War versus Cyber Realities: Cyber Conflict in the International System*. Oxford University Press.

Keywords: cyberwar, information war, disinformation, tiktok, video sharing, livestreaming

## **Radosław Sojak, Andrzej Meler and Beata Królicka**

### **MPs’ Emotions on COVID-19. In Search of Automated Populism Detection Method**

Identifying and measuring populism has become an issue of a growing importance in the contemporary politics. This is especially true in the context of the most divisive and controversial issues, such as COVID-19. Our analysis starts with the assumption that modern populism is a phenomenon based predominantly on emotions enticed among the public. Building upon Rico, Guinjoan, and Anduiza studies, as well as analyses by Ben Stanley, we suggest that anger and contempt/disgust are the two emotions constitutive for the populist discourse. The main part of our analysis consists of using an automated method of sentiment detection based on the NAWL dictionary for the Polish language. We focus on the Tweets by the Polish MPs which were published during the first year of the pandemic. The analysis consists of a half a milion posts of which on avarage only 20% touched on the pandemic issues. The goals of our study are: (1) to establish whether the level of populism correlates with the profile of a political party; (2) to analyse whether power divide between ruling parties and opposition results in the level of populist emotions in their communication concerning the pandemic. The results are rather suprising. The overall differences in the emotional overtone of the tweets are not substantial. It is rather a relation to power that determines the level of populist emotions. Right-wing ruling parties are much more toned down in their communication wheras liberal opposition parties use some populist emotions to formulate and support their position.

Keywords: emotions, populism, sentiment analysis, COVID-19, members of Polish parliament

## **Miriam Sokalski**

### **The *Emotional* Identity. How Auto-affirmative Identity-politics Evokes Feelings of Self-esteem and Worthiness**

Even though science could not yet come to a common definition of populism, all approaches mention the identity discourse as a core element of the phenomenon. Identity, in turn, is most often understood from a cognitive perspective, paying tribute to values or specific (social) characteristics. However, in the populist rhetoric emotions are often given primacy; conscious reflexions and reasoning comes second at best – gut feeling trumps facts. Additionally, the case of the Polish Law and Order party's identity politics reveals how emotions are used to create images – either negative ones of an out-group or positive self-images of the in-group. History thereby serves as a tool to create role models whose character traits are then ascribed to the whole nation – a practice called emotional remembering. The identification with these attributes evokes in turn elevated emotions by its recipients enhancing their sense of self. The way emotions are instrumentalised to create such auto-affirmative self-concepts led to the idea to think of identity in terms of an *emotional identity* – one that is mainly based on what is felt by the recipients. Identification occurs here through the affective dimension and the identity-question *Who am I?* equals what one learns to feel towards him- or herself. Therefore, it is argued, self-esteem is at the core of this emotional game – a game, which is tempting because it provides those belonging to the in-group, feelings of self-worth. But since ego's worthiness is gained through the degradation of alter it reflects a form of collective narcissism. This practice is undemanding and convenient for one doesn't need to actively do anything in order to feel better about oneself. Creating such emotional identities, a concept yet unexplored, allows for a special bond between populist leaders and their voters.

Key words: emotional Identity, self-esteem, collective narcissism, emotional remembering, law and order/PIs

## **Pranay Somayajula**

### **The Ideological Foundations of Ethnic Democracy in India and Israel**

The close military, political, and diplomatic relationship between the right-wing nationalist governments of India under Narendra Modi and Israel under Benjamin Netanyahu is well-documented. Thus far, however, no study has undertaken a comprehensive comparative analysis of the ideological themes and principle that underlie the two countries' particular nationalist regimes. Using the analytical framework of ethnic democracy first developed by Israeli sociology Sammy Smooha, I seek to answer the question: How do the parallel themes found in Hindutva and Revisionist Zionist ideology influence the contemporary nationalist right and shape the construction and perpetuation of ethnic democracy in India and Israel? Using a combination of primary ideological writings and secondary scholarly commentary, this paper highlights the primary themes—the construction and mobilization of national identity, the question of national minorities, the deployment of historical narrative, the politics of national renewal, and the articulation of maximalist territorial claims—that can be found in both the Hindutva ideology of the Indian BJP and the Revisionist Zionist ideology of the Israeli Likud Party. Examining each theme at both the ideological level as well as the level of contemporary Indian and Israeli politics, I provide an in-depth comparative analysis of each case. Ultimately, I conclude that while the contemporary political right in both countries does invoke the legacies and ideologies of the past to shape and legitimize their respective ethnic-democratic regimes, both movements strategically select and repackage the key tenets of these ideologies to suit the unique needs and conditions of a 21st-century ethnic democracy.

Keywords: nationalism, ethnic democracy, Revisionist Zionism, Hindu nationalism, Hindutva

## **Anna Sosnovskaya**

### **Discourse Analysis of the Present Conflict over Heritage Preservation in Saint Petersburg**

We propose to present a discourse analysis of the present conflict over heritage preservation in Saint Petersburg. Major actors in this conflict include UNESCO, local and federal governments, business enterprises, interest groups, residents, and the existing material heritage. We will outline the concepts, objectives, assumptions, values, and affects that have been operating to maintain this conflict. 7 discourses were found, each implies its own emotional mode, which determines interactions and representations in the media. The first discourse is about preservation of heritage: against the demolition of historical buildings and for the preservation of the city's unchanged appearance with its landscape and spatial characteristics. The second discourse is about urban development and aimed the development of districts, its economic advantages. The third discourse is that of city defenders: the most active, controlling and emotional (fear, pain, aggression, contempt, shame, guilt, love, nostalgia, solidarity and other emotions can be reconstructed from media texts). The fourth discourse is "creative city" and "creative class". The fifth discourse is of architectural expertise. The sixth discourse is about things and heritage. They speak through experts, historians and curators represented the interests of a particular object, building or location. We have reconstructed the conflict and antagonism between discourses. A table "Markers of symbolic politics and ideology with examples from the studied discourses, through media texts" has been created, which contains: Ways of action (operating) of ideology, articulation, struggle for meaning; Some typical strategies of symbolic construction; Examples of discursive assembly of groups (identities).

Keywords: discourse analysis, ANT, affects, UNESCO heritage, Saint Petersburg

## **Nataliia Steblyna**

### **Emotions of the Russia-Ukraine War: Tonality and Emotion Analysis of Zelensky's**

Emotions may be critical for a war: a society, which feels confident and united, may effectively respond to military aggression. And of course, it's high ranked officials who should work with the emotions and the society. Ukrainians were shocked with Russian attacks on their peaceful land on 24th of February, however, from the first days of the war there were plenty of evidences of decisive resistance. This resistance was observed on many levels, and high ranked officials' communication was used for this aim as well. Thus, analysis of the communication may be important for better understanding of the processes of political emotions generation in the times of war and peace, their influence on society, usage of social networks for particular emotions formation. For this aim Zelensky's tweets were studied (October 2021 -March 2022) with computer analysis (Python language, TextBlob library). Average indicators of tonality and their dynamics were calculated and interpreted. As a rule, Ukrainian president remains neutral, however, the indicators decreased from 0,3 (more positive) to 0,06 (almost neutral) since October. There were only a few tweets with negative tonality (with -0,5 as the highest indicator). Zelensky didn't use Twitter for aggressive writing, and his aim was not to blame Russia, describe horrors of the war or expose numerous war crimes of the army-occupant. As emotion analysis shows, gratitude (towards Western partners mostly) – was the most common emotion of the twitting, while other emotions, like joy or confidence decreased.

Keywords: emotions, tonality analysis, the Russia-Ukraine War, Zelensky, Twitter

## **Gavin Sullivan**

### **Political Reactionism as Affective Practice**

Political Reactionism as Affective Practice: UKIP Supporters and Non-Voters in Pre-Brexit England  
United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) supporters and non-voters in England participate respectively in forms of engaged and disengaged anti-political activity, but the role of individual, group-based, and collective emotions is still unclear. Drawing upon recent analyses of the complex emotional dynamics (e.g., resentment) underpinning the growth of right-wing populist political movements and support for parties such as UKIP, this analysis explores the affective features of reactionary political stances. The framework of affective practices is used to show how resentful affects are created, facilitated, and transformed in sharing or suppressing populist political views and practices; that is, populism is evident not only in the prevalence and influence of illiberal and anti-elite discourses but also should be explored as it is embodied and enacted in “past focused” and “change resistant” everyday actions and in relation to opportunities that “sediment” affect-laden political positions and identities. Reflexive thematic analysis of data from qualitative interviews with UKIP voters and non-voters (who both supported leaving the EU) in 2015 after the UK election but before the EU referendum vote showed that many participants: 1) shared “condensed” complaints about politics and enacted resentment towards politicians who did not listen to them, 2) oriented towards shameful and purportedly shameless racism about migrants, and 3) appeared to struggle with shame and humiliation attributed to the EU in a complex combination of transvaluation of the UK and freedom of movement, a nostalgic need for restoration of national pride, and endorsement of leaving the EU as a form of “change backwards.”

Keywords: reactionism, populism, affective practices, resentment, national pride, shame

## **Liv Sunnercrantz and Jens Kaae Fisker**

### **Spectres of the Climate Crisis, or, an Intergenerational Haunted Politics**

While a climate spectre haunts Europe, something is rotten in the state of Norway. Fossil fuels and petroleum extraction runs deep and divides generations. It is a nation haunted by both past and future. Two Derridean ghosts manifest in our post-foundational discourse analysis of Norwegian media discourse (2021-2022): that of a High-Carbon Past; and that of a Low-Carbon Future. In fiction, the ghost appears as a lament for a utopian past in national TV’s “State of Happiness”, as a performative projection of the traces of history (cf. Wolfreys, 2010). Glorification and naturalisation of “the Oil adventure” – a soon-to-be-lost past – renders politics and culture impotent (cf. Goodwin & Taylor, 2009: 23), hoping only for a cyclical revival by way of finding “the new oil”. Now, Norwegian culture and society is polarised along generational divides. The younger generation “Greta” is being haunted by the ghost of a high-carbon past from which there is no escape. It comes back to haunt them and their (possible) future. Their future is thus haunted by a spectre from the past, foreshadowing a dystopian coming-to-pass. The older generation “Petro” is being haunted by the ghost of an anticipated low-carbon future whose features are clouded by the mist of uncertainty. Their past/present is haunted by a spectre from the future. For both generations, fear is a key and mobilising affect but in different ways: a fear of losing the privileges of the past/present for generation Petro, and a fear of losing a livable planet for generation Greta.

Keywords: climate crisis, hauntology, polarisation, generations, fear

## **Zea Szebeni**

### **On the Like-hunt: Emotional Reactions to Political Messaging in the Hungarian Election**

Elections are politically turbulent times, during which the use of emotionally heated narratives by politicians is common. Emotions can drive affective polarization, predict belief in false narratives (e.g. Martel et al., 2020) as well as drive engagement in social media. As such, it is vital that we understand which narratives elicits an emotional reaction on social media and which of these narratives go “viral” because of this emotional engagement. This can be especially significant in the sociopolitical context of Hungary, where polarization between political camps is already high, and disinformation is being spread by both political camps. In this study we are analyzing Facebook data collected in the months prior to the Hungarian parliamentary elections (April, 2022). The data consists of the most popular posts – in terms of the different emotional, “click speck” reactions - by politicians as well as the most followed political influencers. Through content analysis we aim to establish associations between the types of pages, content of the narratives and audience emotions, while through visual discourse analysis we will analyze what these narratives “look like”. Through this we will be able to 1) establish the emotions associated with different styles and narratives of political communication, 2) see whether false narratives elicit different emotional responses and 3) explore the emotional features of populist communication.

Keywords: populism, emotions, Hungary, elections, social media, disinformation

## **Salla Tuomola**

### **The Good, the Mean Counter-publics**

This study investigates the public discourse on immigrants and refugees in right-wing alternative media. The theoretical framework of the research is built on the concepts of counter-publics, right-wing populism and extreme racist thinking. The work uses one of the Finnish-language counter-media, MV-lehti, as a case example. In 2015, MV-lehti was the most popular and controversial right-wing alternative media in Finland. The main research problem is to shed light on how the right-wing populist online publication constructs counter-publics in the discourse on immigration and refugees. The research takes a two-fold approach to the problem – first, by investigating the meaning-making processes of MV-lehti as alternative media, and second, by examining the meaning of MV-lehti as alternative media to the media publicity as a whole. The article-based dissertation answers to the research question that binds four articles together and goes as follows: What elements constitute the strategy of the public address of MV-lehti on the immigration topic? The research question connects the study to the debate on radical extreme thinking that in recent years has been ongoing on the polarization and radicalization of the political climate in Europe and the United States. The study utilizes discourse-analytical stance to analyse the communication practices of right-wing alternative media. The strategies of the immigration debate of MV-lehti reveal that such media purposefully construct and distribute the ideological perception of the reality that is deviant to mainstream. The research shows how right-wing alternative media drive anti-democratic worldview with opposite values to constitutional state.

Keywords: counterpublics, right-wing populism, extreme racist thinking, anti-immigrant

## **Aastha Tyagi**

### **Judaav (Affectionate Connection), Emotions, and Cadres: How Affective Connections Shape and Sustain the Hindu Nationalist Movement in India”**

Full title: Judaav (affectionate connection), emotions, and cadres: how affective connections shape and sustain the Hindu nationalist movement in India Abstract: The Hindu nationalist movement in India is led by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (National Volunteers Corp; RSS) and is now at the zenith of its success (India’s current Prime Minister and majority of the parliament are inspired by, and part of the movement). Many scholarly works studying ideological movements have ignored the everyday cadre building and processes of retaining memberships at the ground level, especially unquantifiable care work and emotional investments. Ethnographic fieldwork conducted with the largest student organisation in the world, and an essential part of the RSS and its affiliate organisations, the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (All India Students’ Committee; ABVP), shows that it is the everyday relationships, emotional investments, and affective connections allow for deeper socialisation and retaining of memberships in the organisation. In this paper, I aim to show how ‘judaav’ (affection that emerges through connection) expressed through affective, performative, symbolic and material ways, are the main investments that allow the ideology to have the position it has today. These individual forms of connections (most often articulated in kinship terms) form the crux of how the Hindu nationalist movement makes and retains lifelong members and loyalists. In many cases, these connections become the foci of members’ allegiance to the organization and the ideology, inviting them to invest tremendous material resources, time, and even be violent for it.

Keywords: Hindu nationalism, youth, socialisation, right-wing groups

## **Uros Ugarkovic**

### **Populism vs Parliamentarism: Towards Nonantagonistic Forms of Democratic Politics**

This paper focuses on the relation between the categories of antagonism and politics, as it tackles the question of whether politics is intrinsically antagonistic, or we could speak of non-antagonistic forms of thinking and acting politically. In so doing, it critically engages with the argument of Laclau by revisiting his stance on the centrality of antagonism for politics, which is seen as a result of his conflation of populism with politics and the consequent difficulty to anticipate the possibility of a non-populist political logic. Against the backdrop of Laclau’s argument, this paper asks the question of whether there can exist a non-populist political logic, or a form of democratic politics which, together with populism, would be opposed to the apolitical forms of administration. Drawing on the intellectual project of Kari Palonen, this work portrays parliamentarism as a non-populist political logic, which is based upon the logic of difference and a non-antagonistic form of the construction of the ‘people’ as the democratic subject. Lastly, differentiating between the notions of democratic politics and politics of democracy, the paper ends by highlighting the contingent nature of the effect that populist and parliamentary forms of democratic politics have upon what is often constructed and perceived as the quality of democracy.

Keywords: populism, parliamentarism, politics, discourse theory, antagonism

## **Roman Urbanowicz**

### **Moral Catastrophes and Visceral Responses: Uprising of August 2020 in the Belarusian Countryside**

The events of the anti-authoritarian uprising of August 2020 in Belarus reached diverse quarters of the nation, and its countryside did not remain passive, even though it was previously seen as notoriously dominated by of atomising system of dependency, implemented through the state-controlled labour economy. The presentation concerns those few weeks of August as they were experienced by young men in the countryside, the company I had in my fieldwork site in one of the villages in the north-west of Belarus. Particularly, I focus on totalising experiences of state violence and cravings they cause, those of retaliation, radical political participation, and claiming rights to the dignified future itself; all shaped by peculiarities of class- and gender-based positions. An overwhelming wave of police brutality, with thousands of arrested and hundreds of tortured and mutilated, that swept the country in the days after the presidential elections, indeed shook many to the very core. A wild assortment of sensations came to the surface in various circles, and amongst the most prominent for rural lads were the most visceral ones – anger, rage, and cravings for violent retaliation. The authoritarian covenant regarding terms of limits of violence and mutual conventions of masculine dignity was breached brazenly and abruptly. Indeed, it prompted moral havoc, and caused ethical responses that dwelt on reshaping the very limits of civility and humanity; radical, yet so natural in the times where lives felt threatened unjustly. Analytically, I scrutinise the said tempest of emotion focusing on various scales of visceral properties of the event, particularly considering them within a larger picture of moral guidelines and political participation. In so doing, I engage critically with literature on political anthropology, but also on hope, revolutions, and events per se.

Keywords: violence, moral anthropology, state, revolution, Belarus

## **Sebastián Vallejo Vera**

### **Killing Me Softly with His Words: The Effects of Populist Rhetoric on Affective**

In the last two decades, populism and populist rhetoric have become pervasive features in Latin American politics and beyond (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2018). The literature on populism has linked populist appeals to the polarization of the electorate (Taggart, 2019). On the one hand, supply-side studies assume polarization as an innate quality of the common friend vs foe populist rhetoric (Hawkins, 2010), while demand-side research focuses on populist-voters' sociological profile, political attitudes, beliefs and issue positions (Akkerman, Zaslove & Spruyt, 2017; Hawkins, Rovira Kaltwasser & Andreadis, 2020). However, research on the effect that populism and populist rhetoric have on polarized perceptions of citizens provides little empirical evidence to support this causal claim. Furthermore, the mechanisms through which this happens are not entirely clear. In our research we address this gap by studying the effect of populist rhetoric on perceived affective polarization—the perceived distance between the in-group and the out-group of a voter. We field a nationally representative survey in Ecuador that embeds a vignette experiment to be answered by 3,600 Ecuadorian respondents. In our survey experiment, we show a news story of a fictional mayor justifying their political behavior. We randomly assign a party to the mayor, as well as the type of rhetoric used (i.e., populist or non-populist). We then measure whether exposure to the populist vignette increases affective polarization among respondents. This setup allows us to determine some of the mechanisms at play. For example, we can determine whether populist rhetoric pulls respondents towards like-minded politicians (and/or their followers), pushes respondents away from opposing politicians (and/or their followers), or both. Respondents might also have preconceived attitudes about populism and about the populist characteristics of a co-partisan politician. Using time-to-answer as a proxy for cognitive dissonance and congruence, we evaluate how cognitive

dissonances from mismatches in these attitudes moderate changes in affective polarization. Research has found heterogeneous reactions to populist candidates conditional on populist attitudes, and political context. We test how the effect of populist rhetoric on affective polarization is mediated by political polarization and partisanship strength. We provide evidence of a supply-side effect of populism on affective polarization, and a partial explanation to the mechanisms at play. This work adds to the growing body of literature that provides empirical evidence to some of the fundamental suppositions about populism (i.e., manichean rhetoric has an effect on voter's behavior). When political figures engage in populist rhetoric, voters react by distancing themselves from the out-group, a condition that can hamper democratic deliberation and increase conflict.

Keywords: affective polarization, populism, Ecuador, survey experiment,

## **Feeza Vasudeva**

### **Public, Private and the Politics of Emotions**

The ethos of liberal democracy has been rooted in the conception of a rational self and the division of private and public spaces. Within this conception, a rational individual is a public one. An individual could hold discriminatory opinions in the domain of the private as long as one was civil in a public space. As political theorist Ajay Gudavarthy puts it, liberalism expects us to be civil and politically correct in the public domain and the opposite at home. Populism, on the other hand, is changing the discourse by blurring the divide between the public and private, and by allowing social spaces to be mobilized based on subjective emotions, including anger, resentment, fear and vulnerability. Within this change driven populist logic, particularly in India, emotionality and affect are not the bad words, but a medium of mobilization of diverse social groups. Considering this engagement, the research aims to investigate how through a politics of emotions and affect, populism is changing the conceptions of public and private divide, and through it the very idea of liberal state in India.

Keywords: public, private, liberalism, emotions, politics.

## **Nikola Venkov**

### **New Media and the Retreat of Liberal Hegemony: a New Laclauian Perspective**

This paper argues that there is a deeper transformation taking place in liberal democratic societies than simply a "rise of populisms". It demonstrates that values and meanings fundamental to post-war modernity and liberal democracy have today become easy to dislodge with large portions of the population. Stepping on Ernesto Laclau's Post-Foundational Discourse Theory (PDT), I develop an argument that the identities of ordinary people in relation to politics are changing and this is rooted in a socio-technical transformation. I suggest this is a second wave of "cognitive mobilisation" (Inglehart) engendered by the spread of interactive new media. Importantly, the paper calls for extending PDT beyond its native focus on the ontological ('the political') – to the ontic ('politics'). As a first step to such 'Extended PDT', the analytic concepts 'discourse circulation' and 'access to discourse' are constructed. These new tools would allow us to study how hegemonic struggles play out in a world of polycentric discourse production. In populism studies, ordinary people are often constructed in the role of passive recipients, exposed to the discourses of populist entrepreneurs and other political elites. Extended PDT gives us a toolbox to explore the agency of "the masses", rather than just the elites, in creating, reproducing and/or amplifying populist messages. This toolbox would let me reflect on a transformation of discourse circulation dynamics with the advent of new media. Insights are discussed in relation to the 2018 "gender scare" in Bulgaria.

Keywords: post-foundational discourse theory, discourse circulation, rise of populisms

## **Lorenzo Viviani and Mirko Crulli**

### **The European Radical Right Populism during the “Long Crisis-decade” (2008-2019)**

This paper questions the thesis that there has been a structural difference in the evolution of North-western Europe (NWE) and Southern Europe (SE) party systems following the Great Recession of 2008. According to an influential stream of literature, transformations of politics after the Recession and the subsequent euro and migrant crises have been led by populist radical right (PRR) parties in NWE and by populist radical left (PRL) parties in SE. The analysis supporting this thesis focuses on five NWE and four SE countries. First, we explore electoral results, stressing that: the more recent elections have witnessed the surge of PRR and the setback of PRL parties in SE; PRR parties have strengthened far more in SE than in NWE; the latter region has reacted to the crises in a heterogeneous way. Secondly, we rely on the European Values Study (EVS) surveys to verify whether, even before the rise of right-wing populism in SE, NWE and SE citizens shared similar orientations on four issues: immigration, European integration, “authoritarianism vs liberal democracy” and “State vs market”. We then examine whether, during the long crisis-decade, there has been an alignment between Northwestern and Southern Europeans on these four issues. Our findings have remarkable implications for grasping the common reasons behind the success of the populist right in several European political systems.

Keywords: right populism, left populism, Europe, cleavage theory, Great Recession

## **Franziska Wagner**

### **Emotive Rhetoric in Nationalist Discourse on Social Media**

For both politicians and the electorate, emotions play an important role in political communication for to drive attention and gain support. This article aims at analysing the use of emotions in social media by left-wing and right-wing parties, focusing on the context of nationalist discourse. Emotive approaches to nationalist discourse have often been considered in dichotomous, substantialist and reifying terms. Despite the significant progress in the re-evaluation of emotions and nationalism during the last decade, their role has still often been ignored or downplayed. Focusing on text and visual data of social media accounts, I employ semantic analysis and affective image content analysis to comparatively examine the use of emotive rhetoric in nationalist discursive elements. Based on the analysis of politicians’ and parties’ Facebook profiles from 2010, I argue that emotional opportunity structures and political strategies underlie political communication. Emotionally loaded messages in combination with nationalist discourse elicits a strategically planned response of the audience. The timespan from 2010 to 2021 allows me to draw comparisons of various political and social developments such as the so-called refugee crisis and the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: nationalism, emotive rhetoric, party politics, social media, semantic analysis

## **Ferruh Yilmaz**

### **Populism and Moral Panic**

I propose re-considering moral panics as a central strategy to populist intervention as Hall et al. did

in *Policing the Crisis* (1978). The success of the populist far-right depends on the existence of an external threat to the well-being of 'the people'. A continuous series of public controversies and moral panics are necessary for producing the experience of an ongoing crisis. The far-right actors are often—though not always—the initiators of these crises. This presentation will look at the controversies or moral panics about race, gender, and culture in academic curriculum in different countries: the moral panic about “critical race theory” in the US and Australia, the so-called “Islamism” in France and “academic activism” in Denmark (about race and gender). The inciters of these panics often draw on both progressive and conservative arguments. The tragi-interesting part of the assault on race, gender and postcolonial research is that it has found support from both left and right. In France, Macron condemned these researchers for splitting the country into two basically falling in line with the far right. In Denmark, the Social Democratic government joined the fray against academic research on race and gender. In the US, 23 states already passed laws forbidding critical race theory in public schools. I take these moral panics as both the typical examples of right-wing populist rhetorical strategy that has managed to change the ontological vision of societies, by making race, gender and thus culture the central terrain on which social divisions are imagined and sanctioned.

Keywords: critical race theory, populism, moral panic

## **Thomás Zicman de Barros**

### **Cholericly Emancipated? Political Affect in the Yellow Vests Movement**

Since November 2018, France has seen a political affect at the heart of what could be called a “pre-populist” mobilization. The yellow vests (“gilets jaunes”) movement claims to express French people’s choler (“colère”) against the political establishment. The reference to this affect can be found in the movement’s manifestos, in key figures’ public statements, and expressed by regular demonstrators in posters, messages written on their vests, in local assemblies, on digital social media and during psychosocial interviews. The paper applies a mixed methods perspective to analyze these discourses and their different dynamics of circulation – the formal and informal identity building mechanisms used in the dispute to give meaning to the “gilet jaune” empty signifier. Through this analysis, the paper intends to discuss the key question about the complex relations of choler with another important affect: anguish. If for Jacques Lacan anguish is “the only affect that does not deceive”, it is because anguish confronts us with radical contingency, with a groundless real. Following Jacques-Alain Miller’s distinction between constituted and constitutive anguish, as well as Vladimir Safatle’s writings on helplessness, we understand that a “wild” expression of this affect can be paralyzing, but that in other configurations it can also be emancipatory. The paper tries to establish if the yellow vests’ choler conceals or fosters anguish, and from that discover whether this choler would be compatible with a radical democratic ethos that embraces radical contingency, constructs open identities and provides emancipatory perspectives.

Keywords: yellow vests, political affects, anguish, radical democracy, political identity

## **Can Zengin**

### **Social Emotions in Political Behavior: The Role of Self-Conscious Emotions in Polarized Societies**

In the contemporary era, there is an increasing tendency of using “us versus them” rhetoric in a political tribalism sense. Motivated reasoning literature offers one solution as to how group conflict shapes outgroup bias: Individuals grow negative feelings toward out-groups to reduce the cognitive

dissonance, hence they feel better about their judgments. If this is the case, do our emotions play the same role across individuals? To understand the puzzle outlined above, I investigate how people's predisposed tendencies may explain the variance in affective polarization across individuals. Based on the conceptual difference between shame (the actor's negative sense of identity) and guilt (the result of a reaction to a specific behavior) in the psychology literature, I hypothesize that information regarding the in-group bias transgression increases the out-group bias more among shame-prone individuals than guilt-prone ones. To test this argument, I plan to field a survey in which participants who are a member of 3 different dyadic identity categories (gender: men/women, race: white/non-white, party: democrat/republican) are randomly assigned to watch video treatments that illustrate respective identity's offence in the past. Later, the level of out-group bias in each category will be measured by looking at the social-distance measures. I expect to find evidence that proneness to the SCE moderates the relationship between information about in-group's past wrongdoing and the level of affective polarization.

Keywords: SCE, shame, pride, populism, right-wing nationalism, cognitive dissonance

## **Erisa Zykaj**

### **When Populists Play with Emotions inside the EU Institutions. Nigel Farage Case**

How populists political forces use emotions to oppose the European integration process and what kind of emotions they appeal to? Far-right political forces use the democratic institutions within the European Union to communicate that the EU is undemocratic, unaccountable and completely disconnected from EU citizens 'concerns. Brexit figure and former MEP Nigel Farage used the plenary session of the European Parliament during four mandates to create an anti-EU sentiment and establish a dynamic of conflict between the elite and the people with the effect of alignment with the anti-establishment forces and disenfranchised masses in the UK. In academic literature, populism starts to be seen as a complex phenomenon that should get a more serious academic scrutiny as it has demonstrated a role in polarizing the political spectrum. This paper focuses on how the populist figure Nigel Farage created polarization within the European Parliament and built up effectively on emotional communication themes such as sovereignty, identity and immigration, which resonated with different audiences in the 2016 Brexit referendum. The methodology is based on discourse analysis and emotional communication analysis. This paper contributes to applying emotional communication to the EU studies. I analyze whether the emotional communication was appealing to positive emotions like enthusiasm or hope or to negative emotions like fear, anxiety or anger. My main finding is that despite disinformation or half-truths, populist figures such as Nigel Farage have effectively used anti-EU communication based on emotional arguments that rather appeal to fear and anxiety.

Keywords: emotions, referendum, European integration project, populism, polarization

## **Hakan Övünç Ongur**

### **Is COVID-19 Reversing Populist Health Politics? A Discussion From Turkey**

This paper investigates the ways the COVID-19 pandemic are handled by the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) in Turkey, whose diminishing popularity is paradoxically dependent on an Islamist-nationalist discourse in which death, sacrifice and martyrdom are glorified. Following Robert Esposito's paradigm of immunization, it is argued here that the AKP's polarizing politics that divides the country between its loyal 'immune' voters and 'contagious' opposition have been

challenged by COVID-19, as the pandemic necessitated an wholesome approach to every single individual as a member of the same community. The AKP's political discourse since the failed coup attempt of July 15th, 2016, has been formed over the argument that the country is at a continuous warfare with inside and outside enemies and those who understand this situation and thus would sacrifice their lives over this war are the 'true citizens' of the 'New Turkey,' i.e., those who voted for the AKP and its electoral partner Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), and whoever left outside this partnership should be deemed 'traitors.' What the current pandemic has brought about, alongside its economically destabilizing effects, is a mismatch between the AKP's demands of sacrifice from its loyal base and its institutional capability to serve them. To be more specific, the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that the party's neoliberal health policies are actually detrimental in the very first place to this loyal electorate base, who are coming mostly from the working classes of the poor areas and have become more exposed to the disease.

Keywords: populism, biopolitics, thanatopolitics, health policy, Turkey