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Colloquium

UNIPOP

**Emotions, Narratives and Identities
in Politics, Populism and Democracy**

Centre for Social Studies
Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences
University of Coimbra

(23), 24, 25 and 26 January 2024

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KEYNOTES SPEAKERS	8
KEYNOTES PAPERS' ABSTRACTS	10
Populism: between the context and the form?	11
Emilia Palonen	11
Emotions and Politics: ancient questions, new answers	12
George Marcus	
Decolonising populism? Democratising responsibility? Imperial rhetoric, critical uses of the past, and the construction of a community of implicated subjects	13
João Figueiredo	
Populist attitudes – the state of the field	14
José Santana Pereira	
Everyday Populism: affect, belonging and the idiom of popular sovereignty	15
Paolo Cossarini	
Resentful Emotions and Precarious Political Identities in the Era of Grievance Politics	16
Tereza Capelos	
COLLOQUIUM PAPERS' ABSTRACTS	17
Freedom in populist radical right discourses: the case of the polish 'Island of Freedom' in Europe	18
Alexan Alekseev	
Platform folklore and emotion in populist twitter communities	19
Alice Junman	
Performing the self: role of emotions in Volodymyr Zelensky's discourses and performances before and after the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion	20
Alina Mozolevska	
The strategic use of representations of history in the constructions of narratives of national identity: the case of Turkey	21
Ana-Maria Bliuc	
The populist rhetoric of George Simion, leader of the AUR, against the green certificate	22
Andrei Gheorghe	
The women of the red-pill: the emotional work of females defending gender hierarchies in Brazil	23
Beatriz Junqueira Lage Carbone	
Between the leader and the people: right-wing populist mediations and the affective narrative of the betrayed people	24
Brigitte Bargetz	
Paula Diehl	
Nina Elena Eggers	
The concept of trust in political discourse during the COVID-19 pandemic: an analysis of African Union's contribution to global solidarity	25
Catarina Milhazes	
Etienne Franca	
Evolution of affective polarisation toward marginalised groups in Italian media coverage (2008-2023)	26
Caterina Mosca	
Jeremy Dodeigne	
How populism voices protest – a critical frame analysis of protest in Portugal and Spain	27
Cláudia Araújo	
Climate change: emotions and presidential elections in Brazil	28
Daniela Duarte Lima	
Moral outrage, paranoia, and distrust: populist affective repertoires in the construction of the 'other' in American and Irish abortion discourse on twitter	29



Dayei Oh	
Line Nyhagen	
Screening populisms: fictional film and TV narratives and circulations of political sentiment	30
Dom Holdaway	
Digital populism: unravelling André Ventura's social media strategies in shaping political discourse	31
Eduardo Barbabela	
The populist pendulum: between compassion and fear in Turkey's 2023 elections concerning refugees & asylum seekers	32
Erfan Fatehi	
Football and right-wing populism: emotions and narratives about the concept of nationhood and masculinity. The case study of Germany	33
Federico Quadrelli	
Funny people: towards a theory of populist humour	34
Freddie Larden	
Determinants of partisan strength and in-party affect: A Scoping Review	
Haoran Shi, Wanting Wang, Jorge Peraz, Valeria Dibisceglia, Xinni Goh, Yihsuan Hsin, Pia Schomoekel, Dario Krpan, Liam Delane	
Affective polarisation among Turkish migrants in Germany	36
Hilal Atmaca	
Understanding nostalgia in Islamist populism: Turkey, Pakistan, Indonesia	37
Ihsan Yilmaz	
Nicholas Morieson	
Susan de Groot Heupner	
Ana-Maria Bliuc	
The defence of the misogynistic family and the ascension of the extreme right in Brazil	38
Jacqueline Brigagão	
Claudia Malinverni	
Fernanda de Oliveira	
Neoliberalism and the populist repertoire: the case of Chega's far-right newspaper	39
Jaime Roque	
The plurality of discourses on an architectural heritage: emotions, identities and the perception of Wilhelminian-style architectures in France and Poland	40
Johannes Dahm	
On populism's hidden reason: the role of affective investment in populist mythologies	41
Jordi Mariné Jubany	
Camil Ungureanu	
Acceptance and resistance towards the Sweden Democrats on penal emotions in a young population	42
Klara Hermansson	
Bolsonarism vs. science: political influence on official twitter communication in Brazil during the pandemic	43
Kleber Carrilho	
Emilia Palonen	
In search of a better story: the structural approach to studying populist narratives	44
Kostiantyn Yanchenko	
Examining war in the news: ideological and emotional dimensions of direct quotes	45
Liudmila Arcimavičienė	
Decoding anti-establishment identification: conceptualisation, measurement, and dynamics beyond populist attitudes	46
Maisa Almeida de Lima	
Decoding aggressive political communication: AI insights from Italy's 2022 national elections	47



Massimo Rotunno	
Representations of women through the construction of an AI writer in life-changing narrative articles for women's magazines: A Critical Discourse Analysis	48
Melada Sudajit-apa	
Emotion norms in International Relations: hostile emotions and exclusion	49
Mustafa Gökcan Kösen	
Melike Akkaraca Köse	
Two types of resentment	50
Mikko Salmela	
Thomas Szanto	
Representing the EU in political contests: mediated discourses on Europeism and populism in Portugal	51
Moara Assis Crivelente, Maria Raquel Freire, Sofia José Santos, Luiza Bezerra	
Visual Populism: an Affective Approach. From dystopia to counter-utopia, the case of French populist narratives on social media	52
Morgane Belhadi	
Analysis of emotions in politics: electoral campaigns of the Incumbent Party (AKP) in Turkey	53
Nurdan Selay Bedir	
Who are the populist young adults? An analysis of the predictors of populist attitudes	54
Ricardo Soares	
Carla Malafaia	
Pedro Ferreira	
Democratising democracy through political polarisation: the use of affects in left-wing populism	55
Rui Pedro Gonçalves Pinheiro	
Rallying 'round the Drag': anti-gender protest and far-right mainstreaming in Germany	56
Sabine Volk	
Describing the taboo: the role of images in the reconstruction of childhood memories of conflict	57
Samara Velte	
The Spanish 'squad': identity-building from the populist left	58
Sara García Santamaría	
What emotions matter for supporting populist parties?	59
Steven Saxonberg	
Oľga Gyárfášová	
From threat to polarisation: the role of threats, leaders and institutional choices in strengthening partisan polarisation in Europe	60
Veronika Patkós	
The language of manipulation: linguistic manifestations of (inter)subjectivity and affect in distorted communication	61
Viktorija Mažeikienė	



Keynotes Speakers

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George Marcus, Emeritus professor of political science at Williams College. His current research continues the role of emotion in democratic politics. He is the author, co-author, and co-editor of many books and has published numerous articles in political science journals, all available [here](#). He was a co-editor as well as a contributor to several edited volumes. He was co-founder and, for 12 years, co-editor of the journal Political Methodology. He serves on the editorial board of the journal Political Psychology. He also has received numerous grants and awards.

João Figueiredo, PhD in High History Studies (Empire, politics, and post-colonialism) and in Human Rights, both at the University of Coimbra. His work focuses on Portuguese colonialism, and he has collaborated with the Educational Service of the Douro Museum. As an anti-racist activist, he has collaborated with Djass - Association of Afro-descendants and SOS Racism. He has written several book chapters and peer-reviewed articles for several journals.

José Santana Pereira, PhD in Political and Social Sciences (Italy). His research has focused on the field of media effects on public opinion and the study of national media systems from a comparative perspective, as well as electoral behaviour and political attitudes, especially populist attitudes. He has published several articles and book chapters in Portuguese, English, and French.



He is a leader, co-leader, country coordinator, researcher in many European projects, and a team member responsible for the ICS-ISCTE Polls.

Paolo Cossarini, María Zambrano Fellow at the Department of Constitutional Law, Political Science and Administration (University of Valencia), and member of the DEMOS research group (Aalborg University). He held Postdoctoral research, lectures and visit positions in Denmark, Italy, UK, and France. He has published several articles and is co-editor of many books. His research focuses on populism and nationalism, Italian and Spanish politics, protest movements, EU politics, and civil society organisations.

Tereza Capelos, Associate Professor in Politics and IR at the University of Southampton, she studies the psychological processes, mechanisms, and dynamics that explain political behaviour. Her recent work focuses on grievance politics, particularly resentful emotionality, and reactionary orientations as determinants of anti-democratic and authoritarian political preferences. She also examines the role of uncertainty, anxiety, trust, and empathy as determinants of polarisation vs. cooperation during crises and tensions. She is co-editor of the Palgrave Studies in Political Psychology and publishes articles in several international peer-review journals. She is also a Standing Group Co-Convener for the Political Psychology Standing Group of the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR) and Former President of the International Society of Political Psychology. She has recently been awarded two Horizon Europe projects focusing on the role of emotions in democratic governance.

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Keynotes Papers' Abstracts



Populism: between the context and the form?

Emilia Palonen

Senior University Lecturer in Political Science at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Helsinki

The affective dimension of populism is at stake when we consider the populist moments as foundational or constitutive of a new movement and political identity: from this immanent reading of Ernesto Laclau, populism is the temporary, affective occupation of the idea of “us” in the field crisscrossed with antagonisms. Considering populism not a regime or system of governance, but a logic, the democratic ethos of populism can be seen as connected to the ideas of contingency and temporality. We can recognize here how the flow of different significations can be arrested and even turn their direction. Through examples, the talk offers heuristics for analysis of populism, and even its praxis. In asking what is in the form of populism, we do not ignore the contents, but are able to better perceive what gets affectively loaded as us-building or othering material and pay attention to the processes and mechanisms at stake.



Emotions and Politics: ancient questions, new answers

George Marcus

Professor of political science, emeritus, at Williams College, United States of America

Humans have lived in not one single polity but in many. Humans have lived as nomads, as hunter-gatherers, in settlements overseeing domesticated animals and agriculture. Also in social units of families of various kinds, tribes, clans, in expansive empires, and, of late, within nation states. That variability has fostered the question of which is the best. The effort to settle that question, rests of a trip of concepts: reason, emotion, and narrative. Each has long held a history casting good reasoning as ideal, emotion as malevolent, and narrative as contested, as a two faced phenomenon, problematic when narrative is used as demagoguery, or good when used as a form of public deliberation. These tools ill-serve. Neuroscience offers new understanding of each. Understandings that give new answers to the ancient query: what regime best serves humans. I offer brief sketches of the old tools and the new and what answers await.



Decolonising populism? Democratising responsibility? Imperial rhetoric, critical uses of the past, and the construction of a community of implicated subjects

João Figueiredo

Käte Hamburger Kolleg “Legal Unity and Pluralism”, University of Münster, Germany

One striking similarity between contemporary right-wing discourses apologetic of the Portuguese Empire and emancipatory left-wing decolonial interventions is their focus on past elites. While right-wing populists mythologise ‘dead white European males’ to chastise present leaders, left-wing populists metonymically equate them with contemporary nations to establish the moral obligation of their fellow citizens to pay for historical reparations and compensation. I argue that both rhetorical uses of the past reiterate a ‘great man’ theory of history, foreclose the construction of a moral community of implicated subjects, as defined by Michael Rothberg, and hamper affirmative action. The way forward, I suggest, might not be to decolonise populism, as George Ciccariello-Maher proposed, but to democratise responsibility for remedying the lingering effects of the colonial past. This implies discarding the elitist rhetoric of the New State and embracing civic storytelling to foreground the radical heterogeneity of the half-willing subjects and subaltern groups that participated in the Portuguese overseas expansion.



Populist attitudes – the state of the field

José Santana Pereira

Associate Professor at the ISCTE-University Institute of Lisbon, Portugal

This keynote speech addresses the theoretical and empirical innovations in the academic understanding of the demand side of populism. Based on a thorough analysis of the literature in the field, it seeks to provide an answer to the following questions: What are populist attitudes? How can we measure them? How widespread are populist attitudes in consolidated democracies? Which factors contribute to the development and/or expression of such attitudes? Are populist attitudes related to specific emotions? What about their link to identities? When are populist attitudes activated? What are the consequences in terms of political behaviour and vote choice? By doing this, it aims to contribute to the discussion of populism from an individual perspective with the most recent perspectives developed in the field of political science over the last 15 years.



Everyday Populism: affect, belonging and the idiom of popular sovereignty

Paolo Cossarini

*Researcher at the Department of Constitutional Law, Political Science and Administration,
University of Valencia, Spain*

This paper examines the (seemingly trivial) reproduction of discourses about ‘popular sovereignty’. Borrowing from the scholarship that draws on *banal* and *everyday* nationalism, and advancing an understanding of populism not as fact but as claim, this paper assesses the everyday routines that contribute to sustain the populist stance of people-centrism and popular sovereignty. Stressing the key *spatial*, *temporal*, and *affective-symbolic* dimensions involved in the discourse of popular sovereignty, this paper argues for a relational account of *everyday populism*. To exemplify this, this paper explores the links between affect, the politics of belonging and the idiom of sovereignty across a series of case studies.



Resentful Emotions and Precarious Political Identities in the Era of Grievance Politics

Tereza Capelos

Associate Professor in Political Psychology, University of Southampton, United Kingdom

Grievance politics, imbued with hot and uneasy emotionality, dominates the emotional politics of contemporary democracies. Hot emotions can serve as emotional flashpoints signalling social, political, and economic crises and uncomfortable truths about unequal distribution of resources and opportunities, rising asset and wealth inequality, local marginalisation, felt often as loss of dignity and humiliation. While grievance politics deals with what matters to us, it can turn anti-democratic when ignored, or pro-democratic when the emotional origins of its demands are addressed. In this talk, I will examine the relationship between the emotional economy of grievance politics founded on *ressentiment*, and the proliferation of precarious political identities in contemporary democracies. We also explore solutions for pro-democratic articulations and responses to grievance politics that alleviate resentment and strengthen pro-social political identities and attachments.

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Colloquium Papers' Abstracts



Freedom in populist radical right discourses: the case of the polish ‘Island of Freedom’ in Europe

Alexan Alekseev
University of Helsinki, Finland

Freedom is arguably one of the central signifiers to provide meaning to Western societies and their democracies. Across the political spectrum, speakers actively use and abuse the concept of freedom, effectively turning it into an object of discursive struggle. The populist radical right is not an exception. By focusing on the case of the Polish *Law and Justice* party (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, PiS*), one of the biggest and most successful populist radical right parties in the world, this article investigates how in practice the PRR discursively constructs freedom in the European Union and what this concept may be used for. It highlights the role of freedom as the key signifier (re)structuring the Polish national imaginary along the binary opposition between Poland, portrayed as an “island of Freedom”, and its international environment in Europe and beyond, where freedom withers. Thus, in the *PiS* case, freedom, constructed along populist, nativist, and authoritarian lines, becomes a powerful weapon in a discursive struggle against perceived enemies within Poland and abroad.



Platform folklore and emotion in populist twitter communities

Alice Junman
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This project studies the role of platforms in shaping practice, emotion, and narratives for right-wing populist activists, drawing upon the idea of platform affordances and platform folklore. Platform affordances – that is, “a set of contextual constraints and props that shape the usage of technology, which emerge at the intersection between devices’ properties and the users’ perception of their utility” (Caliandro & Anselmi, 2021:3) –allows analysis of how users navigate structural-technical constraints to their digital action, while also utilising these constraints in creative ways. However, the concept does not explain how people make sense of or interpret such platform affordances: thus, I also draw upon ideas of platform folklore to understand these collective narratives. The analysis draws upon 20 life history interviews with right-wing populist Twitter activists from Sweden and the United States. The study finds that the collective platform folklore of these communities utilizes both technological and cultural-political ideas in their formulation of folklore, actively positioning themselves as victims of marginalisation. Similarly, they hold conflicting views on Twitter, both depending on and despising it. The analysis also shows how their actions are shaped by their platform folklore.



Performing the self: role of emotions in Volodymyr Zelensky's discourses and performances before and after the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion

Alina Mozolevska

Petro Mohyla Black Sea National University, Mykolaiv, Ukraine

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine did not only put an end to a long-lasting period of peace in Europe, but also led to deep transformations of international politics and threats to global security. It also caused significant image losses for Russian leadership as a great power and the emergence of new political leaders on international arena. The key role in this transformation is played by Volodymyr Zelensky, the president of Ukraine. Using CDA and multimodal analysis approach, this paper seeks to explore the dynamics of Zelensky's leadership and performance before and after the full-scale invasion. It studies the role of bodily performance and emotions in the construction of the self, as well as their potential to transform and co-construct the vision of Ukrainian collective identity. The study is based on analysis of a heterogeneous dataset composed of public addresses, interviews and videos from president's vlog (2019-2023).



The strategic use of representations of history in the constructions of narratives of national identity: the case of Turkey

Ana-Maria Bliuc
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Applying an interdisciplinary theoretical lens (drawn predominantly from political psychology), we analyse how populist political elites capitalise on specific interpretations of historical events as a means of gaining and increasing their public support. Our analysis aims to identify the strategic ways in which these interpretations are incorporated into narratives of national identity. We argue that the content of any collective identity, including that of a national identity can be constructed, reconstructed, and refined in different ways by opinion leaders (i.e., political elites), so that the collective norms and actions aligned to a specific national identity can be manipulated and transformed to match the agenda of the respective leader. In the context of the 2023 national elections in Turkey, we propose that such narratives of national identity will incorporate versions of historical events carefully curated to activate particular moral emotions, beliefs, and values in voters, and in particular within the political supporters. Our analysis shows how this strategy is used to present the respective leader as the most prototypical representation of the Turkish national identity, the embodiment of emotions, beliefs, and values which best represent what it means to be an authentic group member (i.e., patriotic Turk). In contrast, a similar strategy is used in reverse to portray the opposition as not truly representing a legitimate version of national identity.



The populist rhetoric of George Simion, leader of the AUR, against the green certificate

Andrei Gheorghe
University of Bucharest, Romania

The research paper proposed concerns the study of the use of emotions in the relationship between George Simion, the leader of the Party AUR (Alliance for the Union of Romanians) and his followers on social media channels, especially on Facebook. The analysis will address Simion's Facebook live sessions concerning the debate around the Green Certificate at the end on 2021. The paper will examine how were constructed and which are the emotions used in the populist rhetoric of George Simion, to mobilise his audience against the adoption of the Green Certificate by the Romanian. The qualitative approach was used in the analyse of the narrative used against the Green Certificate in order to play the emotional layer of the audience.



The women of the red-pill: the emotional work of females defending gender hierarchies in Brazil

Beatriz Junqueira Lage Carbone
Saarland University, Germany

The rise of right-wing populism in Brazil in the last ten years has created the political space for groups that once remained in the fringes of the cybersphere to express their anger and discontentment with feminism and gender mainstreaming. Many studies have shed light on the importance of anti-genderism in the articulation of right-wing populist movements. Women have played a crucial role in promoting anti-genderism in Brazil, showcasing the fear of “gender ideology” as disintegrating forces to the family and the nation. Less attention has been paid to the emotional work of women who are not only prominent within the right-wing populist movement but also in the manosphere. Against this background, in this paper, I undertake a critical discourse analysis of the emotion narratives of women, who felt ostracized and ridiculed by feminists in the past, in order to identify the discursive strategies of the politicization of their resentful affects.



Between the leader and the people: right-wing populist mediations and the affective narrative of the betrayed people

Brigitte Bargetz
University of Kiel, Vienna, Austria

Paula Diehl
University of Kiel, Vienna, Austria

Nina Elena Eggers
University of Bremen, Germany

Politics provides orientation, and narratives help creating such orientation. Narratives, here understood as the act of storytelling, recall memories, organize political experiences, and (re)imagine and legitimize social relations. Yet, storytelling is also affective. It helps sorting one's feelings, it makes emotional reactions recognizable, and evokes political affects. Populism and right-wing populism also offer such affective narratives. Indeed, it is the narrative of the betrayed people which, in the specific case of right-wing populism, gives orientation to those feeling betrayed by the elite in addressing their anxieties and proposing a strong identity as 'the real people'. As such this affective narrative generates fear and hate but also solidarity and empowerment, and yet is threatened by every element that disturbs its presumably homogeneity.



The concept of trust in political discourse during the COVID-19 pandemic: an analysis of African Union's contribution to global solidarity

Catarina Milhazes
Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra, Portugal

Etienne Franca
Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra, Portugal

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the African Union (AU) led important initiatives aiming to increase solidarity in face of a global health crisis. Bearing the brunt of worn beliefs that the continent should abide by discriminating international governance mechanisms, the AU opted instead to develop alternatives. This article investigates the organisation's initiatives during the high of the pandemic (2020 and 2021), drawing from the notion of trust and its role in guiding political behaviour. The analysis highlights the relation between certain discourses based on (mis)trust and forms of political polarisation. In such discourses, the concept of trust often became instrumental to reinforce assumed oppositions (such as North and South, government and people, public and private), leading to the erosion of national, regional, and international solidarity. Rather than abiding by such frames and reinforcing unequal power relations, the AU-led initiatives analysed are seen as an effort to overcome discourses based on binary frames and, thus, as a reaction to historically-rooted stigmatising behaviours.



Evolution of affective polarisation toward marginalised groups in Italian media coverage (2008-2023)

Caterina Mosca
University of Namur, Belgium

Jeremy Dodeigne
University of Namur, Belgium

The concept of affective polarisation has provided a burgeoning literature in the U.S., where a large scholarship has not only measured but also explained its evolution over time. Unfortunately, the same cannot be argued for European democracies. Very little is known about affective polarisation's unfolding within European societies, political parties, and media – especially from a longitudinal perspective. Additionally, hardly any study has been focusing on the relationship between affective polarisation and its potential dehumanisation effects towards scapegoats. This paper provides greater insights into one of the key drivers of affective polarisation, namely the ways media report news on marginalised groups (e.g., migrants). Our main research goal is to identify temporal evolution in the type of media coverage. Our main hypothesis is that critical crises (e.g., the economic and financial crises in the late 2000s as well as the 2015 migration crisis) trigger greater emotive and negative media reporting towards scapegoat groups. However, we expect that such effects will be conditioned by the type of media (e.g., quality versus tabloid media). For that goal, this pilot study relies on an automated content analysis of two Italian newspapers (2008-2023) to identify the types of emotive rhetoric and negativity used by journalists when covering news about socially marginalised groups. Overall, our aim with this pilot study is to contribute to enriching the field of media studies about the longitudinal evolution of affective polarisation and dehumanisation in European democracies.



How populism voices protest – a critical frame analysis of protest in Portugal and Spain

Cláudia Araújo
University of Barcelona, Spain

Populist leaders claim to be the true voices of the people, and where better to hear those voices than on the streets, during instances of popular mobilisation? In this article, I combine protest event analysis and critical frame analysis to identify the main populist frames used in protest events in Portugal and Spain from the beginning of the 21st century (2000-2020). I uncover how populism frames (such as the opposition between the good vs. the bad citizens, the instrumentalisation of fundamental freedoms or the defence of the real citizenry) began being employed by mainstream political parties well before the emergence and electoral growth of populist parties, and prior to the Great Recession and anti-austerity protest movement – progressively gaining strength in Spain, but still noticeable in Portugal. I explore how those frames evolved between 2000 and 2020, including their appropriation by populist forces, to demonstrate their effect on depoliticisation and delegitimisation of what they frame as “bad protest” and “bad protesters” (aka bad people) and the reinforcement of their own message and its legitimacy. I also demonstrate how this discourse acts as a securitising move, ultimately framing “bad protest” as a security problem that needs to be restrained – or even eliminated – from the public sphere.



Climate change: emotions and presidential elections in Brazil

Daniela Duarte Lima
Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra, Portugal

We are going through a time of serious climate crisis in which catastrophes are announced. Thus, the question I bring to this essay is whether the Enlightenment ideal of impartiality can have a place in this current world. To illustrate my arguments, I present how debates about the deforestation of the Amazon rainforest raised emotions in the 2022 presidential elections in Brazil, analysing the narrative of an environmental journalist and two indigenous leaders. Based on these narratives, combined with an analysis based on feminist political theories, I seek to demonstrate that the public debate is not neutral, as intended, but rather permeated by problems and issues based on the experiences of individuals and their social groups. To overcome this exclusionary and anti-democratic dichotomy between reason and emotion, we must understand, instead of denying, the way in which passions influence the perception of the problems faced by people. Based on these, I then demonstrate how climate change is already introducing emotional debates into the public space as a relevant issue for contemporary democracies.



Moral outrage, paranoia, and distrust: populist affective repertoires in the construction of the ‘other’ in American and Irish abortion discourse on twitter

Dayei Oh

Helsinki Institute for Social Sciences and Humanities (HSSH), Finland

Line Nyhagen

Loughborough University, United Kingdom

Abortion, along with other women’s rights issues, has become a main political issue in populist politics globally in recent years, including in the United States and Ireland. This article investigates the American (2020) and Irish (2018) abortion discourse on Twitter through a discursive psychological approach which examines the role of affective repertoires in generating the populist frontiers demarcating Us versus Them. By analysing 6,000 abortion discussion tweets from the two countries' Twittersphere, our analysis establishes three affective repertoires in the construction of Us versus Them: (1) moral outrage, (2) the paranoia of the conspiracy, and (3) the distrust of Them as corrupt establishments. Our cross-country analysis highlights the similarities and differences between American and Irish repertoires and between pro-life and pro-choice repertoires. Moreover, it suggests the historical continuation of moralised politics in abortion discourse and identifies the distinct populist characteristics of abortion politics in the 2020s.



Screening populisms: fictional film and TV narratives and circulations of political sentiment

Dom Holdaway
University of Urbino “Carlo Bo”, Pesaro-Urbino, Italy

I propose re-considering moral panics as a central element to the populist far right’s hegemonic strategy that aims at securing consent to their vision of social division: the ordinary people vs. an intellectual, cosmopolitan elite that allows the subversive forces to destroy the social fabric. This would mean rethinking the Laclauian notion that the unity of popular identities an articulation of disparate demands in a chain of equivalences against a subversive force. This conceptualisation of populist identity formation implies an analytical focus on the populist logic. Instead, I suggest focusing on the affective appeal to identities conceptualised as solidarity structures against a threatening enemy. It is here moral panics become an important element in populist far right strategies. Moral panics not only give a concrete form for otherwise diffuse and general anxieties about social change by directing them against the deviant groups allowed to operate by the corrupt elites; they also create a sense of control by projecting the problems onto concrete enemies that are said to threaten the stability of social cohesion or peace by undermining the moral and cultural fabric of society. In other words, populist far-right appeals to the human emotional tendency to create solidarity structures against a threatening enemy. In this sense, affect and reason are not necessarily opposite terms; any affective investment will come with reasoned discourse. The reasoning may not always be based on factual premises but shared moral or cultural values that become shared in the face of the threat.



Digital populism: unravelling André Ventura's social media strategies in shaping political discourse

Eduardo Barbabela

Centre for Public Administration and Public Policies (CAPP), University of Lisbon, Portugal

Social media platforms have undergone significant transformations in recent years, reshaping sociability, particularly in the realm of politics. These digital platforms have not only revolutionised information dissemination but have also played a crucial role in influencing the democratic process. Political actors leverage these platforms to transmit information, blurring the lines between public and private spheres and fostering a subjectivity-driven logic that accentuates elements like political personalism. The chapter explores this dynamic, focusing on the actions of André Ventura, the Portuguese politician with the highest Facebook engagement in 2023. Adopting a qualitative and quantitative approach, the analysis utilises data collected by the CrowdTangle platform to decipher the narratives, tactics, and engagement metrics employed by Ventura during the specified period.



The populist pendulum: between compassion and fear in Turkey's 2023 elections concerning refugees & asylum seekers

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This paper examines the dynamic interplay of emotions in populist political communication during the 2023 Turkish elections, with a specific focus on the Syrian refugee issue. Employing Thematic Analysis of Discourse and Comparative Emotional Spectrum Analysis, the research explores the communication strategies of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu. Erdoğan's narrative, rooted in Turkey's historical and cultural identity, adopted a compassionate stance towards refugees, aiming to foster empathy and moral responsibility. In contrast, Kılıçdaroğlu's campaign highlighted national security and resource management, evoking concerns about societal impacts. The paper adopts a post-foundational perspective to analyse 'us-building' in populist contexts, highlighting how both candidates crafted distinct, emotionally resonant narratives, exemplifying 'Janus-faced populism' in this dual-populist landscape. The findings of this paper offer insights into the nuanced use of emotional narratives in shaping public discourse and political identity. By illuminating the divergent approaches of Erdoğan and Kılıçdaroğlu, this study contributes to a broader comprehension of the complex dynamics in political communication, particularly in the context of populist rhetoric and its impact on societal narratives in Turkey and beyond.



Football and right-wing populism: emotions and narratives about the concept of nationhood and masculinity. The case study of Germany

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In this contribution I will present a part of the research work I am doing on the relationship between right-wing populism and youth organizations in civil society in Germany. Specifically, I will present some empirical results related to the analysis carried out in the subsystem of Sport, which represents a peculiar subsystem of civil society where "emotions" and "social representations" play a very important role. The sphere of sports is particularly exposed to the interventions of right-wing populist narratives: on the one hand with regard to the nationalist impulse, with its rituals (flags, anthems, competitive clashes between "nations," etc...) and on the other hand with regard to the process of identity construction of masculinity. This is especially true for soccer, which will be the focus of this analysis. Cases of sexism, racism, and homophobia occur with particular frequency in the football field, in the world of fans, but also in sports structures (organised Sport). This Paper aims to offer a contribution to the reflection on the role that emotions play in empowering right-wing populist narratives through a qualitative analysis based on interviews with expert and documentary analysis. This contribution is a part of the dissertation work I am doing. The case presented will be the German one.



Funny people: towards a theory of populist humour

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Humour is increasingly acknowledged as an important aspect of populist performance. This is evident both on the right, with figures such as Trump noted for their humour, and with the “dirtbag left”. However, its role in populist discourse has not been theorised. This is an important gap: because populism and humour share similarities as discursive forms, humour theory can illuminate aspects of populism and vice versa. This paper provides a theoretical framework for approaching humour within Laclau’s populism. It builds on the contributions of more recent discursive-performative scholars on the “low” (Ostiguy, 2017), “bad manners” (Moffitt, 2016), and transgression (Aiolfi, 2022). Whilst these are acknowledged sites of populist humour, the role of humour has been overlooked. I draw upon the psychoanalytic humour theories of McGowan (2017) and Zupančič (2008), and the semiotic approach of Virno (2008) to address this gap. I bring these theories together with Laclau in a process of reactivation, deconstruction, commensuration, and articulation to produce a theory of populist humour (Glynos and Howarth, 2007). I also set out how discourse theory can contribute to humour theory by addressing the question of when humour becomes political and distinguishing emancipatory and reactionary humour through its social/political and ethics/ideology distinctions. I test my theory with examples from left-wing and right-wing populism, and the supply and demand sides of populism.



Determinants of partisan strength and in-party affect: A Scoping Review

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This scoping review investigated the determinants of partisan strength and in-party affect, pivotal for understanding affective polarisation and establishing further interventions. In our methodological approach, we adhered to the Levac et al. (2010) framework, focusing on peer-reviewed articles that tested hypotheses related to partisan strength and in-party affect. By systematically examining these studies, our analysis shed light on the complex dynamics underpinning partisan attitudes. Notably, we found a clear positive correlation between partisan strength and in-party affect. However, the impact of political knowledge on partisan strength was inconclusive, suggesting that the clarity and relevance of information, alongside a voter's ability to differentiate between parties, were pivotal. Our study also highlighted the role of selective exposure and biased interpretation in reinforcing partisan attitudes. Furthermore, we identified significant variations in the effects of social sorting, with objective membership and social identities such as gender or religion playing mediating and moderating roles. The salience of in-party identity was also shown to enhance partisan strength. Our findings contribute to the broader understanding of the antecedents of affective polarisation, highlighting the need for future research to focus on empirical validation of proposed mechanisms and clearer methodological justifications.



Affective polarisation among Turkish migrants in Germany

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This article aims to investigate affective polarisation among Turkish migrants in Germany based on socio-political divides in Turkey. Considering their integration and political resocialisation performance, I argue that Turkish migrants in Germany can constitute a typical case of affective polarisation. I find evidence that there is affective polarisation among Turkish migrants in Germany based on socio-political divides in Turkish society; partisanship as a social identity, partisan sorting, and the information environment have an impact on this outcome. Considering the positive effect of naturalisation on political integration into the host country's political system (e.g., Hainmueller et al., 2015), I believe that citizenship can interact with the political behaviour of migrants; therefore, I also analyse the impact of citizenship on migrants' affective polarisation. I test the hypotheses on two groups of young, educated, naturalised, and unnaturalised migrants as the least and the less likely groups to be affectively polarised based on socio-political divides in the country of origin. I conclude that partisan animus is observable among migrants regardless of their citizenship. My findings mirror the data on the affective polarisation of the Turkish domestic electorate.



Understanding nostalgia in Islamist populism: Turkey, Pakistan, Indonesia

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This paper examines how religious populism deploys the emotion of nostalgia to mobilise people around a religious identity and history. Drawing on semi-structured qualitative interviews with voters of populist parties in Turkey, Pakistan, and Indonesia, the paper presents a comparative study on the relationship between nostalgia, religion, and politics, and how a “religious nostalgia”, namely Islamist nostalgia, is used to foment populist mobilisation. Considering nostalgia an individual emotion and a political discourse, we analyse the role of nostalgia in the mobilisation of a shared and uniform religious past by the respective populist parties and leadership. As such, the paper ties together the demand-and supply-side of populism by seeking (in)consistencies between leadership and voters and how top-down religious nostalgia is or is not reproduced. Further contributing to the growing scholarship that argues a positive relationship between nostalgia and populism (e.g., Elçi 2021; Konakçi 2023), the study compares three countries where populism has a strong religious orientation to examine the intersection between religious populism and nostalgia.



The defence of the misogynistic family and the ascension of the extreme right in Brazil

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The rise of the extreme right to power in Brazil has multiple facets, one of which is the use of discourse that defends the misogynistic family, based on views of Christianity and the demonisation of the left. Our objective in this article is to identify these discursive practices, the long-term repertoires with which they are articulated and the subjectivities that these engender. To do so, we will analyse the speeches of two Brazilian politicians who were elected using heteronormative images and speeches assuming the unconditional defence of a misogynistic family: Jair Messias Bolsonaro and Nikolas Ferreira. The first is 68 years old and was elected federal deputy for the state of Rio de Janeiro for seven consecutive terms and for the Presidency of the Republic in 2018. The second, aged 27, was elected councillor of the municipality of Belo Horizonte in 2019 and in 2022 federal deputy for Minas Gerais with the highest number of votes in the country. They were chosen for two reasons: the great generational difference between them and the similarity in ultraconservative agendas. Ferreira and Bolsonaro present themselves as Christians and supporters of the traditional Brazilian family. Bolsonaro has as one of his slogans “God, Family, Homeland and Freedom”. The research corpus consists of videos of the two politicians available on YouTube, from January 2018 to July 2023; the analysis is guided by the perspective of critical social psychology and constructionism.



Neoliberalism and the populist repertoire: the case of Chega’s far-right newspaper

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Drawing on the key theoretical approaches to populism, the political trajectory of the Portuguese far-right Chega (Enough) party has been mostly addressed through descriptions of its ideological profile and style of political communication. This paper aims to contribute to this literature with a quantitative and qualitative content analysis of the front-page main stories found in this Chega’s newspaper – *Folha Nacional* – that are dedicated to the social theme of (in)security. This approach is anchored in a distinct sociological framework focused on how far-right populism articulates a dialectic of structural crisis and authoritarian solutions via a “politics of fear” supported by a strategy of “news production”. Contrary to perspectives which emphasise its anti-systemic nature, the paper argues that far-right populism overlaps with the history of neoliberalism, a political project that articulates free markets with the securitisation of social relations.



The plurality of discourses on an architectural heritage: emotions, identities and the perception of Wilhelminian-style architectures in France and Poland

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This contribution presents an interdisciplinary approach, which is applied within the scope of the analysis of the contemporary perception of the architectural and urban traces of the Wilhemine Period in France and Poland. The main focus is on the urban expansions that have been realised by the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century under the Prussian-German administration in Poznań (Poland) and Strasbourg (France). Interviews and surveys on the current perception and reception of the dissonant' (architectural) heritage have been conducted in both cities. In a theoretically informed part, the contribution would first like to outline the interdisciplinary approach: the fields of (linguistic) discourse analysis, critical heritage studies and the concept phantom borders? are linked with each other. The notion of discourse will be in the centre: actors, strategies, emotions, identities. In a next part, empirical data (transcribed interviews) will be examined. The focus is directed towards methods that capture the plurality of the (heritage) discourse; narratives, emotions and framings are in the foreground. The aim of the analysis is to better understand different mechanisms that take place and are realised within the specific discourse, that has a strong impact on regional and transnational identities. Axes of the conference: relationship between emotions and narratives on identity formation and socio-political signification; impact of beliefs/representations on social signification; opportunities and challenges of narratives enhancing the role of diversity, intercultural dialogue, and progress towards democracy.



On populism's hidden reason: the role of affective investment in populist mythologies

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Since the 70s, social sciences in general and political philosophy in particular have focused, fundamentally, on public reason. More recently, however, a so-called affective turn in social sciences has renewed attention to emotional dynamics in politics. Populism is partially to blame since current populist movements have effectively mobilised existing affects of resentment and anger. Nonetheless, as Frédéric Lordon has warned, this affective turn can also entail a return to psychological subjectivism, leaving social sciences without their social aspect. My claim in this paper is that the concept of myth can help overcome this impasse and present a more systematic account of the role of affects in forming populist identities. I defend this through a critical analysis of this concept in the work of Ernesto Laclau, who has focused intensely on the identificatory mechanisms of populism. Against classic political myth theories that conceive myth as irrational, contemporary approaches like Chiara Bottici's have focused on its role as narrative that grants significance and affectivity to a community. Similarly, I argue, that Laclau's conceptualization of myth can be thought of as a form of symbolic articulation that channels affectivity by portraying an image of fullness, even if this image cannot be ultimately realised. Thus, myth can be considered an emotionally charged narrative at the heart of populism. However, we will also raise questions as to whether Laclau's conception of myth-making deals adequately with issues of validity and truth.



Acceptance and resistance towards the Sweden Democrats on penal emotions in a young population

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The public debate on crime has intensified in Sweden, as in many other western societies. The interest in criminal policy has increased among Swedish voters, and opinion polls indicate that the public favour longer prison sentences. These traits are also discernible among the young. An authoritative position on issues related to law and order is a key characteristic of populist radical right parties. One way of understanding the success of populist radical right parties, is to consider the emotional appeal of these parties' communication on crime. This study will advance the research on penal populism as well as on the appeal of radical right parties, by exploring public attitudes to punishment from a symbolic perspective. The analysis draws on 27 in-dept interviews with young people in Sweden. The interviews were structured around a vignette, an election film produced by the populist radical right party The Sweden Democrats. This study will deepen our understanding of penal attitudes by analysing these attitudes as intertwined with emotions. Punitive discourse, as well as punitive attitudes, have been characterized as emotionally intense, and research on penal populism has similarly stressed the centrality of emotions. However, emotions should also be considered in relation to non-punitive discourses and attitudes. In this way we can also illuminate the limits of populist appeals.



Bolsonarism vs. science: political influence on official twitter communication in Brazil during the pandemic

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This paper proposes an analysis of the discourse dynamics of (and about) the Health Ministry's official communication during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. To understand the context, we use the hashtag landscape method (Koljonen & Palonen, 2021) to capture the antagonisms in digital social and traditional government's discourses in the mainstream media. To analyse, we utilise data from Twitter, including health authorities and presidential communications across diverse platforms, during pivotal moments in the narrative: the pandemic onset, the first COVID-19-related death in the country, the changes in the Health Ministry leadership (with implications for Twitter discourse), the beginning of vaccination, some significant peaks in Twitter's discussions, and also moments of significant negationist, pro-hydroxychloroquine, and anti-vaccine presidential discourses. In the Transatlantic Endure project context, we want to highlight the divergences between scientific-bureaucratic and political leadership discourses. This collaborative work aims to culminate in a comprehensive analysis, showing the proximities and divergences between official bureaucratic communication and political leaders' narratives across other contexts, like Finland, Germany, and Poland. Trying to comprehend the intricate interplay between scientific guidance and political rhetoric, we aim to contribute to a better understanding of crisis communication strategies and governance nuances in the context of crises.



In search of a better story: the structural approach to studying populist narratives

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Narrative approaches have gained significant traction in political science and its subfields, including the study of populism. However, the existing literature on populist narratives and storytelling remains fragmented, making it challenging, if not impossible, to delineate the precise contours of a narrative approach to populism. This article undertakes a comprehensive critique of various strands of literature that address narrative approaches in a broader context, as well as those specifically focused on populist storytelling. The primary objective is to offer an organized overview of this dynamic research subfield. Commencing with an exploration of the discourse surrounding the "narrative turn(s)," this paper elucidates the origins of the growing emphasis on storytelling within social sciences. Subsequently, it conducts an incisive examination of the literature concerning populist narratives, highlighting the prevalent fragmentation and the absence of universally accepted foundational definitions. Lastly, drawing from the recent theoretical and empirical works, the article discusses further research trajectories in the subdomain of populist storytelling. It shows how a more systematic focus on the structural aspects of populist narratives can bring the subdomain forward and bring us closer to a more comprehensive understanding of populism across disciplines.



Examining war in the news: ideological and emotional dimensions of direct quotes

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This study aims to identify prevalent narrative patterns of emotional constructs in the mainstream Lithuanian news media discourse on the war in Ukraine, and their ideological effect on the collective identity expressed in direct quotes. To achieve this goal, war news coverage within one year from February 23, 2022 to February 23, 2023 by the national Lithuanian broadcaster LRT was collected and analysed within the theoretical framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough 2013, van Dijk 2015, Wodak 2015) and frame semantics, with the major focus on relational categories of self-identity and othering. It has been hypothesized that the impact of the direct quotes in war news coverage is ideologically significant due to their high contribution to the narrative of the collective Self and their emotional value for in-group identification.



Decoding anti-establishment identification: conceptualisation, measurement, and dynamics beyond populist attitudes

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This study delves into the realm of populism by focusing on the often-overlooked dimension of demand specifically, the identification with the anti-establishment sentiment. My research recognizes the rejection of the political establishment as an attitude in itself not equated to populist attitudes and displays how this variable behaves in regards to other sets of attitudes and behaviours. Drawing upon a pool of post-election survey data covering 29 countries, I constructed an original measure of anti-establishment identification. From this starting point, the research explores the relations of anti-establishment identification with populist attitudes and with factors that refer to economic hardship, whether at the individual level or at the country level. My findings confirm that anti-establishment identification and populist attitudes are significantly correlated; that those who reject the establishment display a significantly higher level of populist attitudes; and that anti-establishment identification partially explains populist attitudes. The study also confirms that, by adding negative sociotropic perceptions, a stronger model of explanation of populist attitudes is found. On the country level, I studied the moderating role of inequality in shaping the anti-establishment-populist link and found that the impact of anti-establishment identification on populist attitudes is stronger in countries with lower level of inequality.



Decoding aggressive political communication: AI insights from Italy's 2022 national elections

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This paper investigates the use of aggressive political communication during the Italian national elections of 2022. In particular, three leaders of the three main Italian parties are examined, namely the winner Giorgia Meloni, the former secretary of the Partito Democratico Enrico Letta and the leader of the Movimento 5 Stelle Giuseppe Conte. The paper proposes an approach with different levels of analysis to identify different patterns of aggression within social communication. Instagram post descriptions and each image containing the leaders' faces are analysed. Understanding the evolution of both elements, both separately and in combination, is relevant especially considering the permanent campaign condition in social media communication (Ceccobelli 2018). The observed period ranges from one month before to one month after the election outcome of 25 September 2022. The analysis is completed by some qualitative investigations comparing the obtained dataset with the polling trends over the period in question in order to investigate possible temporal trends related to voter approval. The tools used are the RoBERTa library for sentiment analysis and Amazon Facial Recognition for facial analysis. The latter, in particular, is an extremely topical issue given the recent possibility that the European AI Act may ban similar technologies.



Representations of women through the construction of an AI writer in life-changing narrative articles for women's magazines: A Critical Discourse Analysis

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ChatGPT has increasingly been utilized to generate ideas and create texts in e-popular media. This has raised concerns of whether conversational AI might produce texts that perpetuate socio-political biases. The aim of this qualitative research was thus to examine how ChatGPT shapes social identities and ideology of women depicted in life-changing narratives. In this study, Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis, in combination with the New Feminism, was used as a theoretical framework for analysing lexical choices that construe biases related to women in narrative texts. To investigate ChatGPT's discursive construction of text, I created 40 different prompts for ChatGPT to generate 40 pieces of life-changing narrative articles to be published in a women's magazines. From the lexical analysis with the help of WordSmith Tools, connotative word choices were repetitively deployed to construe 'real' women as a 'powerful', 'independent' and 'transformative' individual; vulnerable counterparts were collectively represented as 'dependent' and 'incapable' entity. Additionally, biases were found to be embedded in women's leadership due to their lack of unspecific behaviours. Nominalisations and relational processes were the distinctively employed discursive strategies, leading to the omission of concrete actions, genuine voices, and emotions of women. The women-to-women only form of assistance ideology was also discursively manifested and reflects the ongoing perspectives towards modern feminism.



Emotion norms in International Relations: hostile emotions and exclusion

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Previous research in social psychology shows that one interesting function of emotions in the group identification processes is when identification develops through acceptance of groups emotion norm and thus, emotion norms constitute normative content of social identity. In this sense, conforming to emotion norms of group become a criterion of a good group member and a part of definition of who we are (Thomas et. al 2009). As Reysen and Branscombe (2008) argues, group members may express actual collective emotions as a means of showing conformity to the group, and those who consistently do not do so may be ostracized or ejected from the group.? Within this context, attempts to create emotion norms around particular events and issues may incite the polarisation within societies by making the display of a particular emotion to a particular event, a criterion of the membership, or by arguing that not feeling an emotion in a particular situation is a sign of insufficient identification with the group. When it comes to nations and nationalism, an emotion norm can function as a measure of loyalty or betrayal. In this respect, expected anger and outrage against the articulated enemies is a typical example of how emotion norms may function as membership criteria (Koschut, 2017). In populist discourse, emotion norms may be articulated as a criterion of being a member of us, of nation, or of the people and some groups in the society may be portrayed as the others just because of their deviant emotional reactions to particular events or actors. This paper explores the normative dimension of anger in domestic politics concerning international issues with a case-study on Turkey-Greece relations. It analyses Turkish media discourse through the news and editorial writings on Greece in selected newspapers for the period of May – November 2022 which is considered as a tense period in the relations. Rather than focusing on anger towards Greece, it attempts to understand the anger as a normative norm for in-group/national members and the anger towards the members who do not follow the display rules of anger towards Greece.



Two types of resentment

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Resentment, a political emotion par excellence, is generally understood as moral anger in response to political or moral injustices or offences, geared at correcting wrongdoings, thus being an emotional gatekeeper for equal respect and democratic order. However, we argue that the complexity of resentment is not sufficiently understood. Not only do targets of resentment vary (e.g., socio-economic institutions responsible for austerity politics in left populism vs. refugees, minorities or elites in right populism); we suggest that underlying this variety there are two significantly diverse types of resentment with dissimilar a) socio-psychological dynamics, b) affective-intentional structure, c) epistemic and normative appropriateness, and d) political consequences. We argue, first, that the underexplored type of resentment emerges through the emotional mechanism of *Ressentiment*, which transforms self-targeting negative emotions and their vulnerable self into other-directed ones such as resentment and hatred with a morally superior self. We then detail how the targets of such resentment are indeterminate, generic others or scapegoats and how the affective focus of this type of resentment becomes the antagonistically defined allegedly threatened social identity instead of particular wrongs. Moreover, we show how the triggering emotions become epistemically opaque and the outcome emotions normatively inappropriate. Finally, we explore its motivational tendencies, suggesting that it leads to anomic, anti-solidaric or dormant violent political action associated with right populism or extremism.



Representing the EU in political contests: mediatised discourses on Europeism and populism in Portugal

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In a time when concerns with the health of democratic regimes spread over Europe, this paper zooms in the political debate in Portugal in order to assess if and how populist trends are perceived and unfold in the country, through which topics and in whose voices. It is particularly interested in the associations made between democracy and Portugal's process of Europeanization through integration into the EU, and thus starts by examining how the EU was represented in the Portuguese media in an electoral context. It first addresses the results of content and critical discourse analysis of different genres of items collected from the three most read newspapers published between September 2021 and February 2022. This timespan was marked by a peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, one budget crisis and campaigns for local and national Parliamentary elections; the debate on the Portuguese media was centred on the political parties' electoral programmes and the very Portuguese democracy, whereas the EU and European affairs were associated with key topics of discussion. This integrated approach helps unpacking narratives and assessing how the EU fared in the debate by identifying which factors underpin supportive or critical narratives about the EU project and Portugal's place in it, and exploring whether and how these narratives were co-opted for populist discourses. It provides the ground for analysing how vital issues that are in the EU and the Portuguese political agendas, such as democracy, human rights, and migration, are covered and debated during a complex political context.



Visual Populism: an Affective Approach. From dystopia to counter-utopia, the case of French populist narratives on social media

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Populism can be qualified as a postmodern phenomenon in that it has emerged in a climate of disaffection of politics and crisis, which it nurtures and maintains (Moffitt 2016), within the political-media space. In this regard, this communication explores the role played by affects and crises in populist visual narratives. It seeks to examine the way emotions - either positive or negative - are exploited by populist leaders to bridge the representational "aesthetical gap" (Ankersmit 1996) between representatives and the people. We posit that representation is a crucial mechanism of populism: combining ethos, logos and pathos rhetorical tools, it produces affects which circulate and transform our perceptions and psycho-social representations attached to the world (Quemener 2018, Ahmed 2021, Rancière 1994). Images, particularly, genuinely convey these representations, hence the party's ideology. This paper focuses on the digital imagery of the Front / Rassemblement National and La France Insoumise, the two main populist forces - respectively far-right and far-left parties - in France today. We will find out that they unfold emotional narratives based on a dialectic between utopia – the glorification of the past, the people and the leader; dystopia – a disillusioned feeling of abandonment and depiction of a collapsing world depicted; and their corollary, counter-utopia – a hope and a desire to reconstruct and establish a new order and mode of organisation of the world.



Analysis of emotions in politics: electoral campaigns of the Incumbent Party (AKP) in Turkey

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World politics reveals that it hasn't been likely to abolish slavery, gain suffrage, defeat apartheid and counter colonisation without raw emotions, passionate struggles, suffering, hopeful rhetoric and courageous imaginations. It proves emotions pivotal role in driving politics. Emotions (anxiety, enthusiasm, anger) are explored for their impact on motivating constituents to engage in politics: seeking information, involving in political activities, voting, protesting or donating. While the scholarly focus is generally on how people experience emotions, the operationalisation of emotions is also substantial in understanding emotions? implications for politics. For instance, the strategic use of fear or anger is vital for denoting us vs them within election strategy or populist repertoire. This paper posits that understanding emotions' role can enhance comprehension of politics. It thus focuses on how emotions are materialised in AKP's campaigns. The AKP has notably carried emotions onto the politics over poor mouths relying on piety. Given that existing studies reconning intricate dynamics on its two-decade electoral success lack satisfactory explanations, exploring overlooked or inadequately analysed factors emotional capital could yield deeper insights. The paper hence opts for emotions as the explanans; electoral videos as the explanandum. The core RQ: How has the AKP shaped, materialised and translated emotions in its electoral campaigns on the way to its success?



Who are the populist young adults? An analysis of the predictors of populist attitudes

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We have witnessed an increasing knowledge production on the demand side of populism. The systematisation of these studies' conclusions shows that adherence to populist attitudes has a diverse and nuanced relationship with socioeconomic characteristics and emotional and political dimensions. Research in the Portuguese context on this field remains scarce. Drawing on quantitative analyses based on a surveyed Portuguese sample of 1047 young adults (aged between 18 and 30), this paper explores the predictive effects of variables that previous research identified as demonstrably more relevant (e.g., economic status, political interest, institutional trust, negative emotions) to study populist attitudes. The results for the Portuguese sample corroborate some findings of the literature. The variables most relevant for explaining populist attitudes are: i) the low institutional trust; ii) the support of people-centred forms of political engagement; iii) the far-left ideological positions, and iv) the negative emotions about the country's political situation. Moreover, despite their lower predictive power, living in semi-rural areas and having far-right ideological positions are also significantly associated with higher populist attitudes. Contrary to most studies, being male, having lower economic status, being politically interested, and supporting the democratic system are not significant predictors of populist attitudes.



Democratising democracy through political polarisation: the use of affects in left-wing populism

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We can observe polarisation in many aspects of the human life. Actually, it is analytically valuable to create contrasting categories to comprehend the world. Consequentially, Chantal Mouffe's recovery of left/right polarisation is a positive initiative. Mouffe argues that we live in a post-political era, grace to the neoliberal consensus that depoliticized the public realm. Against this paradigm, she has developed her post-Marxist theory of radical agonistic democracy with a discursive anti-essentialist approach, emphasizing the emotional and antagonistic nature of collective identities. She contends that we are currently experiencing a populist moment that holds positive potential for the left. Constructing a populist frontier between identities (us/them) by articulating different demands, through passions, in an equivalencial chain, would be a way to see polarisation as democratically advantageous. In this paper I will delve into the specificity of Mouffe's theory and question its optimistic perspective. Firstly, I will analyse Mouffe's concepts of the political and hegemony; analyse her approach on collective identities; highlight the role that affects play on her left populist theory. Secondly, I will advocate for a different perspective emphasizing the need to step away and consider negative consequences of championing populism and of her critic of rationality, consensus, and dialogue in an increasingly emotionally polarised political landscape.



Rallying ‘round the Drag’: anti-gender protest and far-right mainstreaming in Germany

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Having focused on the issue of immigration over the past couple of decades, the European far right has recently adopted new issues, notably the mobilization against climate change action and Green politics as well as liberal (trans-)gender policies and the LGBTQIA+ movement. This article studies anti-gender protest at the local level to explore how the far right integrates the gender issue into previously existing patterns of populist discourse and protest activity. It focuses on the case of a highly mediatized far-right protest event against a drag lecture for children in a public library in Munich, the capital of Catholic Bavaria, in June 2023. Initially proposed by the Bavarian conservatives, in the end it was the local faction of far-right AfD that took to the streets, together with the remnants of the conspiracy mythologists of the anti-lockdown movement and joined by the young activists of the extreme-right Identitarian Movement. Based on extensive research on actors’ websites, on social media, and in local media, the article reconstructs the protest event in the style of an ethnographic thick description. The qualitative analysis yields three key findings: Firstly, the analysis of texts relating to the protest event demonstrates how local AfD politicians construct a coherent anti-systemic narrative of a woke oppression of the normal population’ from the European migration crisis to the COVID-19 pandemic and the current loss of public morals. Secondly, the visual analysis of AfD’s key mobilisation poster points to the shameless usage of Nazi-style imagery to delegitimize the LGBTQIA+ movement by the self-declared democratic AfD. Thirdly, the analysis of the actor constellation at the protest event itself reveals the power of the (anti-)gender issue to gather right-wing forces from the conservatives to the far-right arguably, this holds particularly true for Catholic and structurally conservative Bavaria. Conceptually, the article main contributions thus include new insights into changing far-right ideology and discourse as well as protest politics and coalitions at the local level.



Describing the taboo: the role of images in the reconstruction of childhood memories of conflict

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This paper explores the role of images and physical objects in the construction of memory discourses within post-conflict or nearly post-conflict generations. Previous research has shown that visual elements are a major trigger in the elicitation of childhood memories later in life. In this case, the focus is placed on how young generations born in the last years of a violent conflict, such as the Basque armed conflict (1968-2011), resort to memories of objects and physical images in order to reconstruct informative voids in their narratives about the past. Through a discursive analysis of oral interviews, it can be observed that objects often become emotionally charged metaphors that replace absent figures or data to which these youngsters have only built a symbolic relationship.



The Spanish ‘squad’: identity-building from the populist left

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This paper examines Yolanda Díaz’s attempt to become Spain’s first female Prime Minister in the 2023 general elections. Díaz, currently Second Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Labour, has been leading national approval rankings for years. She recently created Sumar (or “Unite”), an electoral platform aimed at renewing the left after Podemos’ erosion. One of her first steps was the launching of the initiative *Otras Políticas* (meaning both “Other Policies” and “Other Politicians” – in its feminine form). The initiative celebrated public acts across Spain, with Díaz performing as leading an all-female “squad” (emulating Alexandria Ocasio Cortez’s “squad” in the USA). This squad was represented by the Díaz-Colau (Ada Colau, former mayor of Barcelona) alliance, campaigning together for both the 2023 municipal and general elections despite belonging to different parties. The paper analyses Díaz and Colau’s self-performances in their personal Instagram accounts since the institution of *Otras Políticas* in November 2021 until the May 2023 Spanish general elections. The data is analysed through Marttila’s (2015) operationalisation of postfoundational discourse analysis, exploring how they mobilise “a people” by performing “feminist” identities through both discursive and visual strategies. By taking a performative approach, this project questions populism as an either-or phenomenon reserved to politicians we perceive as being essentially populist. Instead, it explores the discursive, aesthetic, and affective performances of what Laclau calls the “people/power contradiction”. The focus of the paper is on what I have called “other populisms”, going beyond right-wing, male, heads of state and focusing instead on how female leaders attempt to construct distinct socio-political identities from the left.



What emotions matter for supporting populist parties?

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Slovakia presents a unique case for studying populist voters, as the party has populist parties across the political spectrum: left-wing populism, centrist populism, right-wing populism and radical right populism. We conducted a survey of Slovak adults asking them questions about how they feel about the political, economic and immigration situation in their country. We did so by allowing them to choose whether they feel hope, anger, pride, fear or resentment. Until now the discourse on resentment has been separate from the discourse on hope/pride/anger/fear, so now we combine the two to see which factors are more important. In addition, we have questions about values, to see whether emotions or prejudice are more important. The dependent variable is which party they would vote for if the election were today.



From threat to polarisation: the role of threats, leaders and institutional choices in strengthening partisan polarisation in Europe

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This study explores the possible role of threat and defence mechanisms in intensifying partisan polarisation in Europe. It uses the General Process Model of threat and defence (GPM), which suggests that people respond to threats with various defence reactions to alleviate anxiety. When explaining polarisation, the most relevant type of these defensive reactions are abstract social reactions. These are defensive compensatory efforts which involve an increased commitment to in-groups, identifications, religious beliefs, values, ideologies, and worldviews, and heightened hostility towards out-groups. The GPM theory posits that threats amplify people's commitment to salient values or identities. The study proposes that defence mechanisms contribute significantly to partisan polarisation, especially in societies where political institutions or leadership styles foster exclusive identities. The research analyses ten data waves of the European Social Survey from 2002 to 2021, encompassing 204 country-year observations from 28 countries. The findings produced with fsQCA align with the GPM model. They offer insights into addressing partisan polarisation in Europe, suggesting that policies enhancing security perceptions, reducing threats, and favouring consensus-based decision-making could mitigate polarisation.



The language of manipulation: linguistic manifestations of (inter)subjectivity and affect in distorted communication

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In post-truth times, the information ecosystem has become unprecedentedly complex and marred by “information noise”. Various forms of distorted communication – propaganda, disinformation, misinformation, fake news, information manipulation, etc. – permeate public discourses. Contemporary technologies have significantly facilitated the spread of various forms of distorted communication. Importantly, creators, authors, audiences, and users of various types of media texts, easily engage in (re)construction of meaning through sharing, reacting, and commenting. Under such conditions, populism finds fertile ground to flourish. This paper seeks to investigate the language of manipulation in the populist discourse of Lithuanian politicians. The author’s aims are (i) to understand and systematise the linguistic properties of “populist politics as a discursive practice” (Gidron and Bonikowski, 2013) and (ii) to embed the insights and findings from the linguistic data in a broader social, geopolitical, cultural and educational context. The author uses corpus-assisted analysis methods the Discourse-Historical Approach (Wodak, 2002) to study the language of manipulation, disinformation in particular, in over 200 media texts and 3,000 reader comments. In addition, the multimodal data have been looked at through the lens of the Appraisal theory (Martin and White, 2005) to study the linguistic manifestations of (inter)subjectivity and affect (emotion and opinion). The findings indicate that the birth, evolution, existence, and spread of various forms of distorted communication are intricately cultivated by an astoundingly complex system of the linguistic expression of affect.