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Populism and Democracy in the 21st Century

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ABSTRACT

Research on populism(s) has to cope with the new constellations of political agency, communication and intermediation that have been triggered by the recent fundamental change of the public sphere. Under the impact of various crises, accelerated globalization and new information technology, this structural change has brought about a comprehensive mediatization of politics and a further push toward "populist democracy" (as a structure). After a summary of the insights into the mechanisms of populism comparative studies have generated, and an overview of the varieties of populisms through the 20th century, the second part of the paper will explore the impacts of the new "Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit" for the quality of democracies in the 21st century. The paper argues that "populism" is not always an external (authoritarian) threat to liberal democracy, but can also be generated from within the liberal script, if and when the partial regimes of "embedded democracy" get out of balance and the "populist" elements overwhelm the procedural and institutional checks.

1   INTRODUCTION[1]

Fifty years ago, in 1969, a book came out that has made it to a "classic" since: "POPULISM. Its meanings and national characteristics", a collective volume edited by Ghita Ionescu and Ernest Gellner that contained papers of a conference held at the LSE two years earlier.[2] Together with some early reflections by Edward Shils (1956), the work of Torcuato di Tella on the Latin American cases since 1965 (1965, 1997), and the new approaches by Margaret Canovan of the 80s (1981, 1999), this book has influenced the debates on populism for many decades, particularly in its differentiations of the functions and modes of the concept and in its analysis of national characteristics, and eventually continental commonalities. Many authors who started working on populisms at the time, empirically and theoretically (myself since the 1970s, with a first comparative approach in 1983; Puhle 1975, 1986), have, at the beginning, more or less followed its lines, approaches, and categories, although they soon became more interested in the particular changes, alliances and mixes of the various movements and aspirations over time. Usually historical and empirical studies had to be complemented and theoretical interpretations revised and rewritten every ten years or so, due to the rise of new movements, new problems, or new fronts of contestation. The most comprehensive, sophisticated and convincing synthesis of this established line of comparative interpretation of old and new populisms has been a seminal book that came out in 2001, the reception of which, however, has remained somewhat contained because it exists only in French: *Les populismes dans le monde. Une histoire sociologique XIXe-XXe siècle*, by Guy Hermet (2001).

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2   For a summary of the debate (and additional comments by Isaiah Berlin), see: To Define Populism, Government and Opposition 3(2), 1968: 137-179.

Besides that, there have been the usual subcultures: An unending richesse of case studies and country studies, most of them on the "classical" regions of populism: the United States ("populist heritage"), Latin America and Europe, a bit less on the rest of the world. In Latin America, particularly the long trajectories of populist movements and regimes, democratic and authoritarian, and the various class alliances behind them have been emphasized. In Europe, the debate has often been reduced to the phenomena of "Rechtspopulismus", a rather broad term with many overlaps with traditional ultra-nationalism, right-wing extremism ("Rechtsextremismus"), or pre- or post-fascism which might also be analyzed otherwise. We also have a broad variety of descriptive literature referring to populist styles and modes of politics, to populist interactions, campaign techniques, populist use of the media, or many other phenomena in the light of advancing populism, triggering inventive varieties of adjectives.

More recently we can also observe an interesting process of restructuring the debate on populism in kind of a polarized way, leaving behind the analysis of movements and their ideologies (which has characterized most of the 20th century), and then either heading toward studies of fragmented and decontextualized, but proliferating patterns, molds ("Versatzstücke"), models and hybrids that are traveling around in a globalized world, or toward a "bigger", more reified and essentialized notion that conceives of "populism" as the meta-adversary of "liberalism" (and of everything illiberal as "populist"), and sees it as a tendentially totalitarian (Jan-Werner Müller), or always authoritarian (Pippa Norris) syndrome. Other authors have located populism more on the democratic side, contesting only the "liberal" elements of democracy (in the sense of civil rights, rule of law, controls and accountability), but not the participatory ones, and even sharing some of the aspirations of the liberals, like those for more autonomy. Karin Priester has tried

to interpret populism, in a recourse to "politics of identity", as resistance (or even a riot) of the "Lebenswelt" against the "systems", i.e. an insurgent move with an ambiguous outcome (Priester 2019). It appears as if, in the 21st century, populismology, at least partly, is moving from social and movement analysis to something like "ideelle Gesamtkulturkritik".

The production of handbooks on populism has exploded, particularly in English, Spanish and German (e.g., Rovira Kaltwasser et al. 2017; Heinisch et al. 2017; De la Torre 2019); the same applies to the number of "introductions" (e.g., Taggart 2000; Müller 2016a, 2016b; Mudde/Rovira Kaltwasser 2017). On the other hand, the last two decades have also seen an impressive proliferation of comparative and, at times, "theoretical" studies of populism, the quality of which often depends on scope, regional specialization and research priorities, on definitions (very much so), and on how they approach the relationship of populism with society and the state, with capitalism, and, above all, with democracy.[3] With regard to the latter, we can today distinguish between various factions of authors: (1) There are those who always knew what it is all about, most prominently Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, theoretical "maximalists" (Urbinati), who, since the 1970s, have gone through many stages, and also some (other) neo-Gramscians (e.g., Laclau 1981, 2005; Mouffe 2005, 2018, and the critique by Priester 2014). Then there are the notorious two factions of (2) "threat" or (3) "corrective", with regard to populism's impact on democracy (cf. e.g., Rovira Kaltwasser 2011; Mudde/Rovira Kaltwasser 2012; Decker 2006). A fourth group which appears to be particularly productive, is in between, focusing more on trying to explain the trajectories of populist movements and their impact on

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3 For "An Overview of the Concept and the State of the Art", see, e.g., the introduction by the editors in: Rovira Kaltwasser/Taggart/Ochoa Espejo/Ostiguy (eds.) 2017: 1-24.

democracies in terms of socio-political analysis, history of society, and political theory. Here the work by Urbinati (2014, 2019), Priester (2012), Jörke (2017), Roberts (2007, 2014a, 2014b, 2015), Knight (1998), Weyland (2001, 2013), and a few others might be mentioned, with a narrower approach also De la Torre (2015) or Mudde/Rovira Kaltwasser (2012).

(5) In certain areas the "communication" people have taken over. And recently there have (6) also been efforts to nail down the seven or eight "essentials" of populism, in order to be able to generate questions for surveys and to construct variables for more numbers crunching. I have eventually participated in such endeavors and, after some reflection and substantial cuts of the list, come up with the following "essentials":

- protest against the status quo, in the name of the "people"
- "people" conceived as homogeneous (also underdogs)
- "Freund/Feind" schemes, dichotomic view of society, conspiracy theories, moralistic indignation, polarization and politics of fear
- antipluralistic, antiliberal positions
- against elites, institutions, and experts
- against intermediaries (parliaments, parties, courts of law, media)
- fiction of direct, unmediated relationship and communication between leaders and followers
- (mostly) exclusionary nationalism.

What we still need, however, in my view is more of a picture of the whole: the relationship between populisms and democracy in the light of the present challenges at the beginning of the 21st century, and particularly in the light of a new fundamental "Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit" we have been and are still experiencing in the last decades. In order to discuss this adequately, we first will have to account for a number of the more important general insights into the mechanisms

of populism, particularly definitions, basic types and functions, the "classics", and further continuities or mixes (including the good old "national characteristics"). The abundant literature we have on all this usually suggests that the history of democracy is full of populist episodes, that in democracies there always is a certain populist potential (which might at times even serve as a "corrective" of representative politics), and that there are populist temptations which should (of course) be prevented from interfering too much with the institutional safeguards of what we have called "embedded democracy" providing freedom of choice, control, accountability, due process of law, and minority rights (cf. Merkel/Puhle et al. 2003). If the latter cannot be achieved, or the actors are malevolent or do not care, democracy, as we understand it, tends to be threatened, reduced to a "defective" quality, or even be transformed into outright authoritarianism. Varieties of populisms figure among the most common contestations of the liberal script, not only from outside, but also from within. Building on Manin's "audience democracy" (Manin 1997), Nadia Urbinati (2019) has recently interpreted populist regimes as a "disfigured" new form of representative government.

In the second part we will have to address the greater complexity of the present situation, and look into the enhanced populist qualities of democracy itself, and the rise of what might be called "populist democracy", as a consequence of a decisive "Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit" (cf. Puhle 2017). So the first part will offer more of a structured summary of what we know and the problems that have been identified, whereas the second part will be more about what we want to know better, and about what we still have more questions than answers, more open ends and ideas for further research than secured findings. The paper reflects research in progress.

2   VARIETIES OF POPULISMS AND DEMOCRACY THROUGH THE 20TH CENTURY

After some caveats with regard to definitions and differentiations, and a warning against an inflationary use of the term "populism", I will present a short summary of the "classical" cases followed by some observations on continuities and new movements.

2.1 SOME DEFINITIONS

The first point that should be made is that there is no such thing as populism as such. What we are dealing with are *varieties of populisms*. They do, however, show a number of significant commonalities. As a first approximation, we can, I think, define populisms (the plural is essential) as social mobilizations and movements of protest and resistance against the status quo in the name of the "people", "the people's will", or the "common men", and not of specific classes or groups, with a corresponding ideology featuring a number or characteristic elements: Populists fight against the elites, the institutions, and the mechanisms of organized politics; they see themselves as a grassroots movement voicing the sentiments of "just" indignation against what they consider to be the conspiracies of a corrupt "establishment" or "oligarchy" and its foreign allies, and an illegitimate usurpation of power that should belong to the people. One of their most important ideological features is the fiction of an immediate relationship between the people and its leaders with direct communication in two ways that does not need any intermediaries. Hence, populists antagonize and try (if they can) to circumvent and weaken all kinds of "corps intermédiaires" with functions of control or accountability, particularly parliaments and courts of justice, but also political parties, interest groups, and independent media. This antiparliamentary and antipluralist concept of populist politics has first been identified by Karl Marx in "The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte" (1852). They are also anti-liberal, and mostly anti-urban, anti-intellectual, and at least rhetorically against "Big Capital" (though usually not outright anti-capitalistic).

Populist movements basically are movements of an underdog culture: They see politics in moralistic and dichotomic terms, in "Freund/Feind" categories, and they cultivate all kinds of conspiracy theories. They polarize, and their most favored political strategy is the politics of fear, and politics instrumentalizing fear. They have an explicit "Feindbild" (image of the enemy): it's the honest many against the corrupt few, the small good guys against the big bad guys. The bad guys are the great national and international corporations and organizations and their agents. The good guys are "the people", i.e. the moral majority (no matter their numbers), of those who were once called the "common men" or the "forgotten men". "The people" at the same time is an entity that is considered to be homogeneous, and excludes many "others", like "corrupt" elites, interests, foreigners, migrants, people of different culture, etc. Populists often are xenophobic, and care about their "identities". And when they speak of the "rule of the people" they usually mean the rule of the populists. They operate through (permanent) mass mobilization and mass control, often, but not necessarily, by charismatic leaders. They can be on the right or on the left. Given their close affinity to nationalism (by their invocation of "the people") they mostly are on the right, but we will also have to account for the exceptions (cf. Puhle 2015a; Priester 2012; Canovan 1999).

Finally, populists' relationships with the state and with democracy can be characterized as highly ambivalent: They usually favor a weak state as long as they fight it, and a strong state once they have conquered it. And populist movements or regimes can be either democratic or undemocratic, or, in the case of regimes, tend to what

we have called "defective democracies" (Merkel/ Puhle et al. 2003), or what others might call "disfigured" (Urbinati) or "illiberal democracies". We have seen cases in which populist energies have strengthened and reinvigorated existing democratic systems. But there also have been many others in which the mechanisms of direct acclamation and the reduction of the controlling potential of the "corps intermédiaires" inherent to populist politics have weakened or damaged the countervailing institutions and the balance of an "embedded democracy", and opened the path toward more manipulation from above, "guided" democracy, Bonapartism, or worse forms of autocracy (cf. Merkel 2004; Puhle 2005). For a democratic politician, embarking on populist politics always will be like walking a tightrope.

2.2 TWO KEY DIFFERENTIATIONS

Second, I think we have to introduce two key differentiations: A first differentiation between "populisms" (as "–isms") and "populist" as an adjective, reserving the "isms" for movements and regimes (in case) that are characterized by specific programs, objectives and aspirations, by the substance matter of their politics and policies, and the respective ideologies, whereas the adjective "populist" would refer to the usual elements, styles, instruments, techniques, a particular rhetoric and mode of communication that could be the vehicle of any kind of politics, from the far right to the far left. In Germany, e.g., politicians like Schumacher, Strauß, Kohl, Seehofer or Schulz have mobilized in a populist way and used populist rhetoric, but they have not been "populists" in a programmatic sense, but rather Christian Democrats and Social Democrats.

With regard to populisms as "-isms" we have to make a second distinction between two real types which have dominated the 20th century: On the one hand, we have had (varieties of) populisms as protest movements (mostly in the more developed world), and on the other, populisms as political projects (mostly in the developing world). The first we could particularly find in the U.S. and in Europe where they have usually articulated reactive anti-modernist protests of those who perceived of themselves, since the last third of the 19th century, as the losers of modernization and of the progress of organized capitalism. Their politics have been more exclusionary, and they have mostly stayed in the opposition. The populists of the second variant, whose politics have been more inclusionary, through most of the 20th century, have formed important revolutionary or reformist multi-class anti-imperialist or national-liberation movements in many countries of the decolonizing world and in Latin America, Turkey and China, and eventually established "populist" regimes geared toward more autonomy, development and modernization which have characterized a significant period in the history of the respective countries (in a way: a period of transition). Only recently new mixes of these two types have occurred more often; I shall come back to this.

In both cases three important constellations could be observed:

(1) Populist movements have almost always been reactions to crises of the old system or regime, of the elites or of the established political parties, within a phase of reorientation and reallocation. Usually it has been the coincidence of unresponsiveness of, disappointment and disaffection with, and loss of trust in the old elites and institutions which can no longer "deliver" in the traditional way, of particular perceptions of vital threats and insecurity (cf. the summary in Eichengreen 2018), and a minimal supply of leadership "en contra" (often from dissenters from the old system) that has triggered populist mobilizations and surges.

(2) Populisms seem to be recurrent phenomena: They have their particular (much debated) "moments" (Goodwyn 1978), i.e. critical junctures in which the factors just mentioned come together. ("Temporality" has become a key issue for a number of workshops on populism recently.) Populisms also may emerge in "waves". Some authors even have identified populist "cycles", during which the movements could change, be fragmented or restructured, form "hybrids", and the latecomers would "learn" from the forerunners, over time and across boundaries and oceans. In Europe, the United States and Latin America, since the last decades of the 19th century, we can identify at least six waves of consecutive populist mobilizations, each of them lasting for about 20 to 30 years.

(3) At the beginning of the 21st century it appears that we could not only find varieties of different populisms, but that we also are increasingly facing many overlaps and hybrids, mixes of continuities and new elements within the various movements, and also a certain trend toward more adaptation, imitation, even some contained global convergencies, so that it may be necessary to look more often into the particular lines of the longue durée.

2.3 AGAINST AN INFLATIONARY USE OF THE TERM

Third, I recommend a certain amount of terminological parsimony in the use of the term "populism". Even in social science research the term (as opposed to its principal use as a political "Kampfbegriff") has lately been used in an inflationary way, and too many things (from Mussolini to Mao) have been labeled as "populisms", a practice that in the end makes the use of the term as an analytical tool for better distinction futile and reduces its explanatory potential. I propose that we do not label as populisms all the movements and regimes which could be characterized

with more precision by the notions indicating their respective "ideological families", like fascists, communists, anarchists, Islamists, etc., not to speak of the "classical" liberals, socialists and Christians, or Eugen Weber's "New Right", the "Völkische" in Germany, or the various kinds of pre- and post-fascists (Weber 1966), ultra-nationalists and minority nationalists, and also the vast majority of single-issue movements (like environmentalists or the rebellious winegrowers of the French Midi). Here the concept of populism as a "thin ideology" (Freeden 1998) can help much. Perhaps we might reserve the term "populism(s)", as a residual category, for those movements which fit the relevant criteria and cannot be characterized more precisely otherwise.

Saying this does not preclude, however, the existence of different degrees of proximity, "family resemblance", and quite a number of "special relationships" populist movements and aspirations may have with certain other "-isms" that might appear "closer" to populism than others, like nationalism, communitarianism, or projects of national liberation, even some libertarian concepts. A particular electoral affinity could be found with fascism, especially at its initial stages when the notorious "military desperados" (and other underdogs, bohemians or dissenters) often went through populist modes before becoming full-fledged fascists. Functionally, also Islamism may be a candidate for further research here.

The other extreme, opposite to the inflationary use of the term "populism", currently seems to be its narrowing: its confinement either to "right-wing populism" only (often indiscriminately mixed up with right-wing extremism), particularly in Europe (cf. for many, Koppetsch 2019, despite its problems), or to "authoritarian populism" (often mixed up with all kinds of authoritarianism), almost globally, and in an increasing number of recent research contexts, from Norris and Inglehart (2019) to the contestations of the

liberal script (Börzel/Zürn 2020). This substantial narrowing of the term might eventually make some sense in the process of organizing sequential steps of research (and also in the light of immediate political impacts), but scholars should remain aware of the fact that "authoritarian populism" is not the whole thing, and that populisms do not have to be necessarily authoritarian.

2.4 THE "CLASSICAL" CASES

We find the first movements labeled "populist" in the last decades of the 19th century in the United States and in Russia. The U.S. Populists and the Russian narodniki have been the archetypes of the movements of the two lines I have mentioned: populisms as protest in the more developed world, and populisms as political projects in the developing world. Both were reactions to comprehensive processes of economic and social change, in the U.S. to advanced industrialization and corporate capitalism, in Russia to the imperialist activities of the more developed West European countries and their Russian allies in an underdeveloped and dependent country. And both showed the face of Janus so typical for populists: on the one hand, they were retrograde, backward looking, xenophobic, at times fundamentalist, and, on the other, they have triggered a significant amount of progressive energies.

The American Populists could build on some of the legacies of the founding fathers, and particularly of Jacksonian politics of the 1830s. From the 1870s on, they articulated the protests of the Mid-Western and Southern farmers and "common men" against organized capitalism, banks, trusts, railway companies, middlemen, and the political "machines" in the big cities. In the end, they lost the national elections, but could conquer a number of states (cf. Postel 2007; Pollack 1990; and the "classic": Hicks 1967). As many Progressives in both parties picked up their points, the Populists, in the long run, have been among the

most successful political movements of the U.S., and have contributed much to make American politics more democratic. By 1921, most of their programmatic demands, and by 1933, almost all of them had been passed into law: besides some bread and butter issues (like railway regulation, trust control, mail savings accounts, environmental protection and the repeal of the gold standard), these were particularly the progressive income tax, female suffrage, popular election of the senators, primaries, and in many states also initiative, referendum and recall (Puhle 1975: 142-154; Hofstadter 1955). -- And the Russian narodniki, who mobilized against the czarist system, against Western imperialism and against capitalism, despite their intellectual elitism, romanticized backwardness and their failure in attracting the peasants, have become an inspiring model for many of the anti-imperialist, populist and national-liberation movements of the developing world. Even Lenin, who did not like them (but helped much to put them on the map of social science research), had respect for them (von Beyme 2002: 836-906; Walicki 1969).

Among the "classics" of the protest populisms of the first type we also find a number of North and Central European peasant movements, tax resisters and xenophobic protest organizations of the lower middle classes of the interwar period and down to the 1960s, also in Western Europe. One of the most prominent and colorful among them has been the short-lived Poujadist movement of small artisans and shopkeepers (UDCA) in France of the 1950s which made it to 12% of the vote in the elections of 1956 (Gollwitzer 1977; Borne 1992; Souillac 2007). Among their 56 MPs of that year was Jean Marie Le Pen who later founded the Front National. Similar continuities between older movements and the more recent ones of a later wave (from the 1970s on), we can also find in Scandinavia, Austria, Belgium and the Netherlands.

The "classics" of the second type, the anti-imperialist and national-liberation populisms of what has been called the "Third World", had their great time between the 1930s and the 1970s. They usually organized broad multi-class movements, mobilized against the "oligarchy" and foreign colonialist or imperialist powers, and had an interventionist and developmental agenda. In many cases they have established regimes of some duration, some more democratic, some more authoritarian, and left a mark on their country's history, mostly on the side of progress and development. Here we can distinguish various types:

- Kemalists in Turkey, KMT in China, Congress Party in India, Sukarno's movement in Indonesia,
- the secular and often socialist Arab nationalists (Nasser, FLN, Baath parties, etc.),
- the classical African movements of decolonization in the 1950s, led by Nkrumah, Kenyatta, Nyerere; the ANC in South Africa, etc. (cf. Hermet 2001; Hermet. et al. 2001; Mény/Surel 2002; and the pioneers in: Ionescu/Gellner 1969).
- The best studied region for a long time has been Latin America, due to the work of Alistair Hennessy, Torcuato di Tella, Ernesto Laclau and others.[4] Here, the populists have marked a longer phase of transition, usually after revolutions or previous substantial reform politics like those implemented in some countries by the "Radicals" (i.e. leftist Liberals) since the 1920s. We can distinguish between three to four types:

  - postrevolutionary stabilizers (PRI in Mexico, MNR in Bolivia; Cuba 1, Nicaragua 1, both before becoming outright Marxist-Leninist),
  - authoritarian regimes (Vargas in Brazil, Perón in Argentina),

- democratic populist movements of different kinds:
  - first wave: APRA (Peru), Acción Democrática (Venezuela), Partido Liberación Nacional (Costa Rica), Partido Revolucionario: PRD (DomRep), Unidad Popular (Chile),
  - second wave: Christian Democrats (Chile, Venezuela [COPEI], El Salvador, Guatemala), Acción Popular (Peru).

2.5 CONTINUITIES AND NEW MOVEMENTS

We can still find these two types today: xenophobic protest populisms in the U.S. and in Europe, and populisms with developmental projects in most of the rest of the world, despite all the changes of contexts and constellations that have taken place (authoritarian regimes, economic crises and change of paradigms, the end of the Cold War, rise of new powers, globalization, digitalization, migrations, terrorism, etc.). They have established clear lines of continuities, on the one hand (the changes of the "Feindbilder" are minimal), and mixed with new elements, on the other, producing also discontinuities and varieties of "hybrid" phenomena which seem to dominate the "Gestalt" of present-day populisms. (For present cases in Africa and Asia I cannot go into here, cf. Resnick 2013; Plagemann/Ufen 2017.)

In Latin America, e.g., various layers of populisms from different periods, seem to coexist: On the one hand, we find movements with a longer tradition, like the (Neo-)Peronists/ the Kirchners in Argentina, the parties of Concertación in Chile, the PRI in Mexico, or APRA in Peru. On the other hand, there are new movements, though not without links to the past, like the PT/Lula/Dilma in Brazil (a mix), the MAS/Evo Morales in Bolivia, Correa in Ecuador, the erratic Chavismo in Venezuela (cf. Hawkins 2011; Merolla/Zechmeister 2011), and also (quite differently) the Zapatistas in Chiapas (Huffschmid 2004; Le Bot 1997). Some authors have made rather clear-cut distinctions

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4   Ionescu/Gellner (1969: 28-61); Di Tella (1965, 1997); Laclau (1981, 2005); also: Knight (1998); Weyland (2001); Coniff (1999); for the context: Collier/Collier (1991).

between the "classics", some "neoliberal" cases (after re-democratization), which eventually have been labeled as "neo"-populists, and more radical leftist variants recently, but I think that the "types" are not so clear, that there also are continuities, and that the mixtures prevail.[5] One interesting mix out of old and new elements can be studied in MORENA of López Obrador (AMLO) who since December 2018 governs Mexico. And in addition, quite a new category is represented by the movement and regime of Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil (since 2019) which follows much more the lines of Donald Trump and certain right-wing European protest traditions than the established patterns of Latin American populisms. I shall come back to this.

Among the protest populisms of the more developed world, the respective movements in the United States, throughout the 20th century, have also shown a great amount of continuity, those of the progressive mainstream as well as those of the Right, from Father Coughlin and Huey Long via George Wallace and Ross Perot down to Donald Trump (the latter at least in style). The slogan "America First!" has first been coined in the 1910s and 20s. Compared to these traditions, the libertarians of the Tea Party movement have looked quite modern. But it has been them who have radicalized and finally destroyed the Republican Party in such a way that it became easy for Donald Trump to hijack it.[6] Trump, however, is populist only in style, in some rhetorical points of his campaign, and in a ruthless and partial use of the mechanisms of "audience democracy". The substance of his performance, in contrast, has turned out to be politics of the rich, by the rich and for the rich. And that is not really populistic.

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5   Cf. besides Roberts and Weyland (2001, 2003): Houle / Kenny (2016); Mudde / Rovira Kaltwasser (2012); De la Torre (2015); De la Torre / Arnson (2013); Abromeit et al. (2016); Puhle (2007).

6   Cf. besides the classic Lipset / Raab (1970): Skocpol / Williamson (2012); Hochschild (2016); Judis (2016); Hochgeschwender (2017).

Also, in Europe we find a wide variety of populisms old and new, and eventually also mixes between them. If we do not count the imported "third-world" populism of the Greek PASOK of Andreas Papandreou (Mouzelis 1985; Sotiropoulos 1996; Puhle 2001), and the various nationalist or personalist "civic forums" and movements of the type "rassemblement" in many of the Central and Eastern European countries during the respective phases of democratization since the 1970s and 90s, we might distinguish between two or three types of new movements of protest and resistance. The most numerous at present seem to be those, whom the Germans call "Rechtspopulisten", i.e. populists of the Right, right-wing extremists, mobilized xenophobic ultranationalists. But, by far not all right-wing extremists, ultranationalists or reactionaries are populists, and not all populists are on the Right, though there has been some confusion in the literature. We also find populists of the Left, among the movements of the critics of globalization and of the G8 summits (attac, occupy, blockupy, BUKO, Global Trade Watch), the anti-capitalist protesters and "indignados" triggered by the financial and institutional crisis of 2008/09, and the increasing number of critics of the European Union and its politics. Although they started out as clearcut anti-system protest movements, some of them have made it to influential political heavyweights that have significantly contributed to change and restructure the party systems of their respective countries. The most important among them have been SYRIZA in Greece and PODEMOS in Spain which both made it into government. SYRIZA led the Greek government from 2015 to 2019, PODEMOS joined a Socialist-led minority government in 2020 (Pappas 2014; Judis 2016; Rivero 2014; Monedero 2014; Mouffe / Errejón 2015). All these movements and (in some cases finally) parties have articulated, in an almost ideal-typical way, populist ideas and aspirations, denouncing the sempiternal "conspiracies" of the banks, of capitalists and the elites, of the established parties and the

"system", the European Union, the IFI and other agents of globalization, and asking for more justice, more direct, unmediated participation, and more respect, particularly for the "common people".[7]

Anti-EU rhetoric can, however, also come from the Right, and we can find even cases where anti-globalist and anti-capitalist criticism overlaps or unites with traditional ultranationalist arguments. The majority of the populist movements in contemporary Europe are "Rechtspopulisten".[8] They usually combine anti-EU, anti-system, anti-"establishment" and anti-immigration positions (cf. Art 2011) with nationalist, xenophobic and exclusionary language, manifest impatience with party democracy, voice disaffection and desencanto with the functioning of the bureaucratic welfare state, and invoke, besides the ominous "crisis of representation" – a ceterum censeo of all authoritarians, libertarians and populists – (the "classic" here is Carl Schmitt 1923), also the traditional myths of the deprivation of the "good people" and of the elitist conspiracies against them. As the driving forces of the supporters and voters of such movements, scholars have basically identified various combinations of status anxiety, relative deprivation, and additional economic or cultural factors (for the contested priorities, cf. e.g., Gideon/Hall 2017 vs. Manow 2018). In line with my criteria, the following movements seem to be obvious candidates:

- the "Progress" or "popular" parties in Scandinavia, from Mogens Glistrup in Denmark in the 70s to the DDP, the "Sweden democrats", or the "True Finns" of today (cf. Taggart 1996);

- the Front/Rassemblement National in France, the Vlaams Blok/Belang in Belgium, the Democratic Center, PVV and the movements of Pim Fortuyn and Geert Wilders in the Netherlands, Blocher's UDC in Switzerland, the FPÖ and its secessions in Austria, and in Great Britain the English Defence League, UKIP, and also many of the ultra tories, who have been behind the Brexit, and the more recent Brexit Party;

- in Italy the Leghe; Berlusconi's Forza Italia seems to be a random case, and Beppe Grillo's and Luigi Di Maio's Cinque Stelle (M5S) may be populists, but not necessarily populists of the Right (cf. e.g., Camus 1998; Vossen 2011; Albertazzi/McDonnell 2015; Pelinka 1987).

- In Spain, the rise of VOX began in 2018, after many intelligent articles had been written for years on why there was no extremist right-wing populist movement in that country.

- In Hungary, we have FIDESZ of Victor Orbán, if we do not count them as traditional nationalists; the Polish PiS, like some groups in Ireland, also could be seen as a traditional ultranationalist catholic party: all of them modernized by new modes of communication (Pappas 2014; Enyedi 2016).

- In Germany, the usual suspects that are mentioned are the "Republicans", the DVU, the Schill Party, and finally the AfD which has made it into parliament with 12,6 % of the vote in 2017 (cf. Wildt 2017). It is, however, not so clear, and depends on definitions, whether (and in which sense) all these ultranationalist and extreme right-wing groups might qualify in a meaningful sense as "populist". I think some might not.

The constellations that led to the rise of such movements have often followed similar patterns and reflected the present political challenges and contestations, particularly the repercussions of globalization, migrations, problems of European coordination, and the "crises" and transformations of political parties. This has been recently witnessed, in an almost ideal-type mode, by the

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7   Cf. besides the classic Barber (1995): Rodrik (2017, 2011); Moffitt (2016); Knöbl (2016); Jörke/Selk (2017).

8   Cf. Taggart (1995); Ignazi (1996); Mouffe (2005); Mudde (2007); Kriesi/Pappas (2015); Akkerman et al. (2015); Decker et al. (2015); van Kessel (2015).

sudden rise of the right-wing party VOX in Spain, which obtained 11% of the votes in the regional elections in Andalucía of December 2018, and 10% (24 seats) in the general elections of April 2019 (but only 6.2% in the elections to the European parliament in May). To achieve this, a number of "typical" factors had come together:

- the long rule of a particular party (or a party cartel, in other cases),
- irresponsiveness and corruption of the party elites, of the right and of the left,
- disappointment (desencanto) over political leadership which does not "deliver",
- all this, on the background of the "crisis" of the catch-all parties (demise of their traditional "milieus", fragmentation, lack of leadership), stalled reforms, economic crises, rising concerns about jobs or education, and hence enhanced perceptions of threats and insecurity, and a new search for "identity".
- The two most important triggers for the rise of VOX have been the problems of immigration ("refugees"), on the one hand, and Catalan separatism, on the other. The latter, particularly, has provoked a resurrection, revitalization and extreme radicalization of the usually feeble and inarticulate xenophobic Spanish nationalism.
- Supplementary "Feindbilder", in a way, have also been found in "Europe" (and "Merkel"), in political correctness and gender studies (!), and in the government's modest policies of "historical memory" (of the Civil War and the Franco regime) which are considered to be a result of conspiracies of the extreme left.

VOX invokes "Spanish values", and they propagate the "reconquista": The Spanish people shall reconquer its home territory. These constellations seem to follow the script.

One of the most recent phenomena concerning right wing populisms in Europe seem to be the efforts to form something like an "International"

of the "Rechtspopulisten", a move that has its practical relevance when it comes to campaigning for the elections to the European parliament. All these movements being nationalist to ultra-nationalist, the question remains whether they might be capable of forming an international organization that really works, beyond some ad-hoc cooperation and networking during the campaigns. They have, in fact, a common "Feindbild", which is "Europe", the legislation and institutions of the EU, and the liberal democracies of most of the member states behind them. But this may not be enough. The experience of a century of populisms in Latin America would rather suggest scepticism: Here, the common anti-imperialist grounding of all populist movements and the common "enemy" in the North, the U.S., imperialism in general, or more recently the IFI and the "Washington consensus" have not sufficed to create a reliable amount of solidarity among them. In the end, their engrained nationalisms have prevailed and functioned as confining obstacles.

3   TOWARD MORE "POPULIST DEMOCRACY" IN THE 21ST CENTURY

The patterns and conjunctures of the recent success stories of a number of populist movements, however, in my view are only one side of the coin. The other side we have to account for in the second part of this paper is a fundamental change affecting democratic politics that goes beyond the established juxtaposition of and relationship between populisms and democracy. I am referring here to the structural transformation of the public sphere and of the conditions and constellations of political interaction and communication which we have been witnessing in the last decades around the turn of the century, in a way a "Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit 2.0" (borrowing from Habermas 1962). Among the outcomes of this transformation, I would count the rise of what might be called "populist democracy", and

also numerous mechanisms that could significantly contribute to increase the chances and perspectives of populist politics. Here, we still face more questions than answers, and detailed research on the implications and repercussion of what is going on has just begun.

3.1 THE "THRESHOLD 21": A NEW "STRUKTURWANDEL DER ÖFFENTLICHKEIT"

The decades around the turn of the century (since about the mid-1980s) have been a period of basic and substantial change in almost all dimensions of social and political group formation and interaction the implications and consequences of which have not yet been fully analyzed. This secular change in a relatively short time span (to which I have assigned the working title: "threshold 21") has been triggered, accelerated and intensified by constellations of a number of factors that have been caused by at least six (in Europe seven) processes of strategic importance (for more details, see Puhle 2017). These are:

(1) the repercussions of the "stagflation crisis" since 1973 for political and social organization and regulation,

(2) the further increase in "globalization", and the protests against it,

(3) the implications of the recent financial, economic and institutional crisis since 2008,

(4) the availability of the new electronic media and IT, particularly the internet and the social media which have – among other consequences, e.g., for the mechanisms of financialized capitalism - given new momentum to,

(5) a comprehensive mediatization of politics and an intensification and "deepening" of the processes of structural change of the public sphere and of the character of the political.

(6) These factors have triggered a sixth (and very important) process that can be described as the breakthrough of the mechanisms of "populist democracy" on a broad scale (as a structure which should not be confounded with populism, populist politics, or populist regimes).

(7) For the European context, we have to add a seventh process: intensified European integration and institution building implying more coordination and interdependence, combined with a perceived lack of democratic legitimation and an underdeveloped institutional imagination of the relevant political actors regarding the future of the Union ("la finalité"), and finally the crisis of the Euro, the remedies to cure, and the protests against them (cf. Krastev 2017; Grimm 2016; Habermas 2011).

I cannot elaborate much here on the details, but only comment briefly on a few points: (1) The "stagflation" crisis has delegitimized the Keynesian models of economic governance and the regulatory and interventionist activities of the Western bureaucratic welfare states, and has made "neo"-liberal paradigms and ideology hegemonic, for some time. The organizational trend of a whole century toward more, and more effective, organization and centralization was turned around: Now it was less government, less centralization, and less regulation that were desirable ("small is beautiful"). This also applied to the classical associations, and above all to the political parties which, in addition to their eroding milieus, the increased competition by new social and political movements, lower rates of participation and the particularization of constituencies, now also became less important because they had less to deliver. The classical catch-all parties of the post-World War Two period (Kirchheimer 1966) have moved toward more fragmentation, disorganization, "loosely coupled anarchy", and dependency (cf. Puhle 2002; Mair 2013; von Beyme 2013; Katz/Mair 2002; Offe 2003; Crouch 2004).

(2) Increased globalization and its consequences have triggered more social polarization and mobilized anti-globalist protest, at a worldwide scale, and in Europe also as a protest against the mechanisms of the EU. This scenario has been particularly conducive to mobilization along populist lines: it has produced many losers of "modernization" (real and perceived ones), it has provided many scapegoats, from international corporations and bureaucrats to culturally different immigrants, and it has set an ideal stage for identity politics, for dichotomic (moralistic) views of the world, for antagonistic "antiestablishmentarianism" (Urbinati) of all kinds, for questions about inclusion, exclusion and social justice, and for conspiracy theories.

(3) All these mechanisms have been intensified by the financial, economic and institutional crisis since 2008, particularly in Europe, where many new (heterogeneous) movements of protest and resistance have been formed, most visible in the groups of "Occupy", "Blockupy", and the various new populist organizations on the right and the left in Greece, Spain, Great Britain, the Netherlands, and elsewhere. In some countries, they have substantially modified the party systems. In Hungary and some other countries, they have produced severe defects of democracy.

(4) The new electronic media, new campaign and networking techniques, and particularly the social media have emphasized the direct and immediate approach to, and communication with the individual citizen, they have contributed to simplify (and personalize) political alternatives and increase organizational fragmentation, short-termism and entertainment factors, and have established a significant new threshold on the road toward a more comprehensive mediatization of political communication and interaction (for the context, see Gunther/Montero/Puhle 2007; Gunther et al. 2016; Norris 2000). What is more, they have also changed the structures of political

communication categorically by mixing, and producing overlaps of the different logics of traditional "collective action" (Olson 1965) through organization on the one hand, and the new "connective action" (Bennett/Segerberg 2013) through websites and digital networks, which lack a center and direction, on the other.

(5) This process has substantially intensified and pushed further into a new quality the long established secular trend toward a structural change of the public sphere, from what used to be liberal "Öffentlichkeit" to what Habermas and others have called "akklamative Öffentlichkeit", a manipulated public sphere, geared toward generating acclamation and mass loyalty.

(6) One of the most consequential outcomes of this transformation may be seen in the broad and sustained process of what one might call the final breakthrough of the mechanisms of "populist democracy". This concept should not be confounded with populist politics or populist regimes; its rise has not much to do with populisms. I understand "populist democracy" as a political structure that emphasizes and propagates the direct and immediate relationship, and the fiction (or the simulacrum) of a permanent two-ways communication between the voters and the leader(s), circumventing and marginalizing the "corps intermédiaires" designed to provide channels of control and accountability. Elements of this concept have their history; they can already be found in parts of the American Constitution (the executive side), in some radical ideas of the French revolution inspired by Rousseau, or later in Max Weber's design for "plebiszitäre Führerdemokratie" (as a correlate to, and corrective for parliamentary democracy; cf. Puhle 2012). Since the end of the Second World War, Western democracies have experienced an increasing proliferation of this model, in two waves:

The first wave, until the end of the 20th century, has been characterized by what has been called the "presidentialization" of parliamentary democracies (particularly in Europe), processes in which the representative components of a democratic system (cf. Fraenkel 1964) have been more and more eroded and outgrown by elements of leader-centered plebiscitarian, direct democracy (as in "Kanzlerdemokratie", or "prime ministerial government"), often combined with technocratic elements and explicit invocations of the ominous TINA syndrome. This trend toward "populist democracy", in a second wave, has been accelerated, electronically and ideologically refined and substantially intensified by the processes of the great transformation of the last decades (including even new safety valves like the "shitstorms" and "shamestorms" in the net as new forms of "action directe").

3.2 SOME IMPACTS AND PROBLEMS OF "POPULIST DEMOCRACY"

The advance of "populist democracy" does, however, not mean that it has become the only game in town (although it may eventually look like it). If we conceive of it as a systemic type which is, like some others, at least partly opposed to "liberal" or "embedded democracy" with its carefully balanced partial regimes, we have, more than anything, to account for the mixes. Real existing democracies (Philippe Schmitter's REDs) are crossbreeds of various elements, usually pertaining to more than one systemic type which might contest (or hamper) one another. We all know the typical cases of mechanisms of "populist democracy" (if the institutions cannot moderate them sufficiently), producing situations in which the procedural and institutional checks of a democratic system are disregarded, the partial regimes of "embedded democracy" get out of balance, and democracy becomes "defective" or worse. These processes could be further enhanced by the dialectics between "populist democracy" and

populism(s): the mechanisms of "populist democracy" favoring the proliferation of populist politics, in terms of movements as well as in terms of strategies, instruments, styles and rhetoric, and vice versa: populist pressures and mobilizations enhancing the channels and structures of "populist democracy". Here also the different trajectories and traditions of the various countries matter. The rise of "populist democracy" has been a challenge for all democracies, and particularly for their elements stemming from the "liberal script". It has changed the character and composition of political intermediation, has affected political agency as well as the institutions, and influenced the outcomes of many interactions.

With regard to *intermediation*, the obvious questions are how the new (social) media and campaign techniques, and the various mixes of "connective" and "collective action", have affected and are affecting the character of political intermediation, the forms of mobilization, the selection of political elites and the outcomes of contestation; and whether or not they are changing the character of "the political". Here, we still have more informed guesswork and hypotheses than answers though in the meantime detailed research has begun on a broader scale. From what we know so far, on the whole, change seems to be significant but contained, and varying in degree from one sector to the next. In our Comparative National Elections Project (CNEP), e.g., that has specialized, among other things, in the study of political intermediation since the 1990s and is actually based on more than 50 surveys in 28 countries (for more details, see Gunther/Montero/Puhle 2007; Gunther et al. 2016), we have also found some striking continuities, e.g., in the higher impact of face-to-face contact compared to newspapers, radio and TV; only that face-to-face now also could mean screen-to-screen or display-to-display. Other studies have also shown that, while the vehicles of intermediation may have changed, functions have not, that in many

cases the new media and techniques only seem to reinforce and intensify old-established mechanisms we have been studying for decades (cf. e.g., Moreno et al. 2019), and that the agenda, in the end, is still set by political actors and not by the media or ill-intentioned disinformants and manipulators (notwithstanding the problems caused by the ominous "Russian" or other hackers, etc.). Different technologies of course require different skills for their implementation; so, network and communication experts, the respective technicians and spin doctors of all kinds have become more important, and the distribution of campaign expenditure has changed. The general trend of politics toward more symbolic action, theatrical events, entertainment and simulation (cf. Ingolfur Blühdorn's "simulative democracy", 2013), the various implications of "audience democracy" (Manin 1997), and the increase in recruiting political personnel from actors (beginning with Ronald Reagan), communicators, showpeople, comedians and other "political amateurs", however, may require more complex explanations and need more additional research.

Another open question is, with regard to *agency, institutions and interactions*, how (much) the rise of "populist democracy" may have affected and changed the structures and the functioning of real existing democracies (REDs): a. in Europe, b. in the United States, c. in Latin America. Are there any general trends? Are there new variants or types of actors? Does everybody "learn" from everybody, at a global scale? Or is it more segmented?

Our point of departure here should be what we have learned about party change during the last decades: Political parties, movements and politics have become more fragmented, more "loosely coupled", more ad hoc, more like networks, and also more entertaining and more superficial. Organized party structures have suffered more from these influences than the more recent and more flexible movements, among them, many populist ones. Despite the many new labels that have been tried out, I would still consider the majority of the parties in developed democracies as being catch-all parties, though modified ones (or "catch-all parties plus"; for more details, Puhle 2017, 2002). When they are represented in parliament, they have tended to become "staatsnäher" (cf. Katz and Mair's "cartel party", 2002, 1995) and hence weaker as independent social and political actors. At the same time, they have often lost their former role of being the key "gatekeepers" of democratic politics and have become merely "players" among other types of organizations and networks, in a much more competitive and demanding field where they often look overloaded and uninspiring. On the other hand, it also seems to be clear that "the party is not over". Contrary to some statements of populist rhetoric, parties are still needed and indispensable for many electoral and parliamentary functions. This has been witnessed by the fact that all social and political movements of the last decades that wanted to survive and play a role in the political arena, in the end have become political parties, from the German Greens and Central European "civic forums", down to the Eurosceptics of the AfD, the Italian Leghe, or the Spanish "indignados", who now are with PODEMOS. The functions of the parties have, however, multiplied and become more complex and more difficult, particularly with regard to the requirements and capabilities of communication. Democratic leadership basically is communication, today perhaps more than before. European leaders have certainly experienced that during the various "crises" of the last decade.

Coming back to our question of how (much) the more recent changes may have affected the structures and the functioning of real existing democracies in Europe, in the United States, and in Latin America, we have to differentiate. There are some general trends, but also many differences. First, the *differences*:

As stated before, in *Europe*, the populist advance has been more contained than elsewhere, basically due to the mechanisms of parliamentary systems and to the advanced degree of welfare stateness, but we know that it has even reached Westminster, that the contradictions and contestations between the principles, instruments and institutions of "embedded" and "populist" democracy can be observed in many countries, particularly in the social media, and that the degree of "defectiveness" of a number of European democracies has been on the rise for some time. The European debate has mostly centered around "Rechtspopulismus", mostly combined with ultranationalist revivals directed against the European Union, discourse on "identity" (mostly "national identity"), and, more recently, the split between "communitarians" and "cosmopolitans". Another important change has to do with legitimation: It appears as if also in Europe the axis of democratic legitimation has moved more into the direction of "output legitimation" (which usually has been characteristic for developing countries), and the connotations of "the meaning of democracy" have switched more from procedural to substantial criteria ("real democracy"; notwithstanding the usual divergence of the perceptions of what a "good" democracy is, between the elites and the "people"). The traditional Left/Right cleavage has, up to a point, been substituted by a more radical and polarizing cleavage between inclusion and exclusion. This process has been intensified by the significant impact and perceived growth (also real in the extremes) of social inequalities, particularly during the last decades (cf. the debates around Piketty 2014; Atkinson 2015). Inequalities and status anxieties have triggered further transformations of the "desencanto" with present politics into severe systemic "disaffection" with, and delegitimation of democracy (an important threshold; see Gunther/Montero/Puhle 2007: 29-74). Electoral participation has fallen dramatically, and selectively (abstention of the lowest third). Social

inequalities have produced political inequalities, which is an ideal scenario for populist politics of all kinds (cf. Merkel 2015).

The *United States* seem to be a special case being the first real existing democracy with a high degree of populist elements which have been enhanced through the 20th century by strong populist traditions in the mainstream of the great parties as well as on the right. The fiction of "immediateness" has been advanced and electronically perfected by Obama (who was the second "big" contender to campaign in the internet, after Vicente Fox in Mexico in 2000). Trump has further proceeded to what might be called a twittering presidency, though this seems to be more of a one-way (and top-down) affair (instead of the "two-ways" fiction), and the president is populistic only in his campaign techniques, but not in his ultimate goals. He has been able to take full advantage of the growing tendencies to give more importance to the affective and emotional components of political behavior and strategies which have been debated for some time under the headlines of "affective polarization" and "negative partisanship", and in which the U.S., compared to other countries, has become a particular champion (cf. Iyengar et al. 2018; Boxell/Gentzkow/Shapiro 2020; Abramowitz/Webster 2018). The greater liability for the U.S., however, is not Trump, but the Republican Party which has been radicalized and destroyed as a political actor (at least at the national level) by the Tea Party and others long before Trump came to hijack it. It still remains to be studied more in detail how much the spectacular rise of "emotionalization" of politics and the advance of the new media and of "populist democracy" have contributed to the party's demise and destruction.

In *Latin America*, we can also observe an early trend toward "populist democracy" which has further enhanced a broad variety of populist movements and politics that have been discussed

earlier: Here we find, in most countries (with the exception of Uruguay), either traditional movements of long standing, eventually restructured and revitalized, or more recent ones, and, above all, mixes out of both old and new elements, as almost to perfection embodied in the movement and politics of Mexican president López Obrador (AMLO), a politician with a long trajectory in traditional twentieth-century Mexican politics, whose campaign in 2018 was the most old-fashioned of all, and highly successful (cf. Moreno et al. 2019). There is, however, one interesting outlier, Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, whose politics have left most of the patterns behind, which have characterized Latin American populisms for a century: they were anti-imperialist movements with projects of autonomy, national liberation and development, more integrating than dividing. Bolsonaro's populism instead is polarizing: It is a populism of protest, which in the past has been typical for the developed (and not the developing) world, along certain right-wing European traditions, and, even more, following Donald Trump, whom Bolsonaro seems to see as a model. Here we can see the proliferation of fragmented and decontextualized elements I have mentioned at the beginning, whereas the critics, if they are terribles simplificateurs, might rather refer to the "totalitarian" Mega-Feind of everything liberal.

The mentioned phenomena also indicate more, and more intensified cross-continental learning processes, and also some tendencies toward more convergence, like the one we have already noticed in the trend toward more output legitimation also in the more developed countries. It also suggests that much of our tentative typologies for the 20th century may have to be modified for the 21st century, and that we may have to think of new paradigms for the study of populisms, democracy and "populist democracy" in the "network societies" (Castells) of a more globalized world.

With regard to the more *general trends*, a number of overall impacts and changes stand out: First, we have to account for the many reinforcements populist aspirations could derive from particular political issues at hand, most prominently, the severe problems of transnational, transcontinental and transcultural migrations, the social consequences of the structural transformation from Fordist economies to knowledge economies, the impacts of advanced globalization for the labor markets, and the respective (competing) efforts of national and international governments and institutions to regulate these processes, not to speak of related crises, catastrophes, epidemics, etc.[9]

Second, the mechanisms of populist democracy and the network logic of "connective action" can help to enhance the direct participation of the citizens, but they also can favor fragmentation and disorder. Their impact for representative democracy can be beneficial or destructive, democratizing or manipulative and "disfiguring", dependent on whether the acting individuals, groups or movements are conscientious democrats or irresponsible populist agitators. Both are using the same channels, they are acting side by side, and formally on equal terms, in the same arena of politics or civil society, and the degree of their conduciveness to more democracy, or a better democracy may vary on a sliding scale.

One important outcome of recent technological innovations, particularly of social media, has, third, been that mobilization has become much easier than before: faster, more comprehensive, better to coordinate (for some time), but also more fragmented, less sustainable, more ad

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9   This paper was written before the pandemic caused by the Coronavirus hit the world in spring 2020. Future research will certainly investigate the impacts this universal, but also nationally different challenge has had on the various mechanisms of "populist democracy" and their interactions with populist and non-populist aspirations and politics.

hoc and short-termish. Cooperation and coalitions have become more fluid, prompt excitement may usually be followed by speedy oblivion. The ominous shit- and shamestorms may eventually be devastating, but they are reliably short. And politicians who have been disgraced (for bigger or lesser misdeeds or scandals), may eventually recover fast.

A related, fourth important factor can be found in a particularly high degree of emotionalization and scandalization of political communication, which is a correlate of the politics of permanent mobilization and unmitigated partiality (cf. "fake news", "alternative truth") with consequences like "affective polarization", "negative partisanship", etc. The growth of emotionalization and scandalization, on the one hand, has been due to the "easiness" and directness of electronic communication which, on average, seems to favor a less formal and more brutal language, to the fragmentation conditioned by the network logic, and to the fact that traditional filters (like quality journalism or intra-organizational checks) are no longer in place. On the other hand, at least around populist aspirations, the loss of trust and solidarity, the preference for "politics of fear", and the Freund/Feind scheme have favored polarization and radicalization from the start. The idea is that people shall even vote out of fear and guided by hate. Here, the logics of populist democracy, on the one hand, and populist politics and pressures, on the other, reinforce one another, triggering a process of "Veralltäglichung" (cotidianization) of the aggressive and dividing mechanisms of populist interactions. The United States of the Trump administration with the emblematic daily presidential twitterings have become a good example for these constellations that might constitute a new front for research on populism and democracy in the 21st century: populist politics and populism as a particular set of continuously reinforced (and comparatively stable) polarizing attitudes and behavior that correspond

and contribute substantially to the defectiveness (Merkel/Puhle et al. 2003) or the disfigurement (Urbinati 2019) of a democracy.

3.3 POPULISMS AND DEMOCRACY

This paper has tried to account for some important points on the current state of research on populism(s). In the first part, substantial findings of about fifty years of monographic and comparative studies on populism, mostly in Europe and the Americas, have been summarized, particularly emphasizing that there are varieties of populisms, that the longue durée matters, that we can find continuities as well as new features and constellations, and that most of the populist movements at the end of the 20th century have been hybrids featuring "old" and "new" elements. In the second part, I have tried to follow the more recent tendencies toward a structure, which I have called "populist democracy", as one of the consequences of a more comprehensive new "Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit" during the last decades, produced by a number of factors that have to do with: crises, advanced globalization, and the availability of new electronic media (particularly social media), and the various mixes of elements of "collective" and "connective action".

The point here is that the structural changes that have made the elements of populist democracy stronger also tend to favor populist aspirations, actors and politics and to give them significant comparative advantages. Therefore, we cannot just go on analyzing populisms in the way it has been done for decades, but we have to account for this new nexus and find answers to a number of questions concerning these new constellations. For some of them, we have already tentative first answers, or at least interesting data, for many others not yet. These questions particularly concern problems of intermediation, and problems of agency, institutions, and interactions,

some of which have been mentioned. What also needs to be addressed, are the movements of "decontextualized" (and "veralltäglicht") populist elements, the hybrid mixes, mutual learning processes, often transcontinental and transoceanic, and also some blurring of the dividing lines between democracy and autocracy. We might have to work on a number of new questions and ideas, new paradigms and typologies in order to shed more light on the relationship between populisms and democracy in the 21st century (and the relationship of both with capitalism), and also to better understand the new constellations of populist democracy.

This brief summary cannot go without a short comment, and a caveat: The particular developments and challenges, that have been identified, do not imply that in the 21st century populisms will take over, and that representative ("embedded", or "liberal") democracy, in one way or other, will be doomed. This could be just one of the possible outcomes, the worst case. Here, I differ a bit from Urbinati (2019), with whom I agree on many other issues; she tends to see populist democracy (as a regime), in a less flexible mode, as a "new form" (and stage?) of "disfigured" representative government. I think, in contrast, that we are back here to the "threat" or "corrective" question with regard to the relationship between populisms and democracy that has been mentioned at the beginning: we know the cases in which the populist mechanisms of direct interaction and the reduction of the controlling potential of the "corps intermédiaires" have weakened or damaged the institutions of an "embedded democracy", and led to defective democracies or to open authoritarianism. It has happened in the past, and it continues to do so at present, in some regions increasingly, as the respective democracy indices and barometers indicate (cf. e.g., BTI 2020). But we also know the other cases in which democracies have come out of the clashes (or "encounters") with populist energies and challenges

reinvigorated, revitalized, even extended and developed further. Here, much depends on context, and on the actors, always provided that the essentials of embedded democracy are not violated beyond repair and recovery.

Democracies are processes; they are always in transformation. The same is true for populisms. And we should not forget two important constellations: The first is, that both, populism and democracy, have the same roots in universal suffrage, and a notorious affinity in deriving their legitimacy from "the people", and that they are in many ways entangled, not least by the fact that democratic politicians need to maximize votes. Populism is not per se undemocratic, as the authors of the narrowed "authoritarian" sample would have it. Populism first is generically and tendentially democratic, whatever might later become of it. And, second, it is, of course, imperative to analyze populism within its relevant contexts, of which one of the most important is the contentious relationship between democracy and capitalism, nationally and transnationally, with their different logics and priorities, and whatever conflicts and crises may result from them. Here, populisms can eventually be functional factors on the side of politics and democracy interacting within this broader context; interacting not least with the crises of capitalism, their social and political spin-offs and repercussions, and the respective reactions of politics, which all would contribute much to define the populists' opportunities as well as their confining conditions. Grosso modo, and in simplified speech, here, capitalism could top democracy, or democracy could top capitalism (which, of course, has to be sectoralized and modified), and it certainly would make a difference if, in a given case, a doomsday scenario for democracy à la Streeck (2013) or Piketty (2014), or a more hopeful one à la Iversen and Soskice (2019; also: Manow 2018) would be seen as being more realistic.

In the debates of the last years, "populism", or more particularly its narrower sample: "populism of the right", or "authoritarian populism", has been framed, in a general way, as the counterpart and archenemy of liberal democracy and "Western values", somehow substituting for what in earlier times had been fascism, communism, or the "evil empire". And it has also been seen as a key factor among the causes of what often appears to be indiscriminately considered as a "crisis of democracy". I shall not debate here the use of the notion "crisis" which also may have more mundane reasons ("crisis" sells) and could be considered as exaggerated (cf. the debates in Merkel 2015). The significant processes of erosion of various partial regimes of embedded democracies we can observe, may indeed not amount to a fundamental and systemic "crisis of democracy", but the stress, the challenges and substantial threats to democracy they produce are nevertheless real. They require attention, monitoring and resistance. And, above all, they ask for a new input of adequate politics and policies to address and remedy the grievances of the citizens and to deal with the problems accumulated, in line with the old wisdom of "never to waste a good crisis".

The best remedy against populist temptations and challenges in a democracy are "good", responsive and responsible, and well communicated politics and policies of the non-populist parties and politicians. This is not least the case because the surge of populisms is not a "cause", but only a symptom of the perceived "crisis of democracy". The causes of the "crisis", to a high degree, usually lie in the previous "bad", inadequate and insufficiently communicated politics and policies of the incumbent elites. Here, the substance and behavior of the elites matter, and agency in general matters.

This could also be one of the reasons for believing that, in many cases, the populist challenges and threats could be checked and controlled, provided that democratic politicians, who are under the unavoidable imperative of populist "temptations", know how to walk their tightrope between mobilizing, on the one hand, as much as they can, and, on the other hand, seeing to it that the institutional mechanisms of democratic participation, control and accountability are not violated too much. This is not easy. But with politicians who can be trusted and can communicate, with strong parliaments and with political parties that are alive, capable of leadership, and do not lack some institutional imagination, it should be possible to profit from the populist energies which exist in every free society.

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