Manfred Oberlechner, Reinhard Heinisch, Patrick Duval (Hg.)

Nationalpopulismus bildet?
Lehren für Unterricht und Bildung

The New European National Populism

Lessons for School Education

Le nouveau national-populisme européen

Quelles leçons pour l'école?

WOCHEN SCHAU WISSENSCHAFT

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Preface

This trilingual book is a collaborative work undertaken at a time when the health of liberal democracy can no longer be taken for granted. Authoritarian regimes have emerged from Turkey to Russia, liberalizing trends have been visibly reversed in China and throughout the Middle East, and presidents are now in office from the Philippines to Brazil who openly flaunt their disregard for the rule of law. Perhaps we should have always assumed that somewhere, new democracies will come up against authoritarian reality; and probably we should have anticipated that the idea of a world converging on liberal democracy because all other systems had failed – an idea forcefully but naively expressed by Francis Fukuyama in the End of History[1] – would turn out to be an illusion. Even if these points are conceded, however, we have long since moved past the tipping point of burgeoning civil societies running into the police batons and rubber bullets of a re-assertive authoritarian state – as happened for example in Moscow as early as in 2005. The struggle for the future of liberal democracy has since expanded to such an extent that it is now perilously close to the West, the European Union, and the United States, which were until recently considered the ultimate guardians of liberal democracy, the rule of law, free speech, minority rights, and a free and fair press.

Throughout Western democracies the surge of radical right populism and the rise of various strands of nationalism, together with different forms of xenophobia and religious fundamentalism, have all led to polarized publics, radicalized political discourses and a decline in people's trust in indispensable institutions, from governments and political parties to the courts and the media. More and more countries once thought immune to populism, whether on account of their wealth (Switzerland), their transparent political systems (Norway, Denmark, Sweden), their liberal traditions (Netherlands, US), their voting systems (UK) or the burden of their history (Germany), have succumbed to national populism – as we may label this now almost ubiquitous phenomenon. Many skeptics who had previously dismissed warnings about national populism as undue alarmism have been persuaded otherwise in the wake of the Brexit referendum and the election of Donald Trump.

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[1] Fukuyama 1992

The sudden increase in attention paid to this phenomenon has also resulted in the indiscriminate labeling in public discourse and the media of all forms of political manifestation that lie outside the traditional mainstream as populist or extremist. Often the success of fringe parties and movements is hyped to such an extent that real world consequences are more a function of media hyperbole than actual electoral outcomes. The erosion of liberal democracy tends to occur in incremental steps, however, rather than as the result of dramatic election victories and revolutionary change. National populists, whether in opposition or – increasingly – in government, are slowly but steadily setting the agenda, pushing any existing consensus toward extremes and disrupting normal standards of political behavior and discourse. Hungary is a case in point, with most of the country's media now under state control and with public institutions, including universities and the judiciary, no longer independent of the ruling party, under a government openly engaging in overt campaigns against groups and individuals whom it deems politically unfriendly. What was unimaginable and widely dismissed as alarmist just a few years ago has now become reality in an EU member state.

The new phenomenon of national populism in all its many guises and forms now presents the greatest threat to the current international political order and to Western democracy since the end of the Cold War. At the same time, however, national populism is both underestimated and overestimated as a phenomenon and remains poorly understood. It therefore poses a particular challenge to education and teaching on two levels. Firstly, teachers, educators, and even social scientists themselves are still struggling to understand the phenomenon fully and incorporate it in their teaching. Second, education and schooling are increasingly affected by policies and political mandates shaped by populist politics, policies, and parties because populist actors become increasingly powerful. This is partly due to the fact that democratic institutions inevitably find it difficult to resist democratically legitimated political outcomes.

The goal of this book is thus to provide an understanding of the phenomenon we subsume under the label of 'national populism' and explore the two main impulses of the phenomenon: (i) nationalism, i.e. the idea that some people are worthy of greater concern because of their ethnic or political origins; and (ii) populism, i.e. the belief that there is an antagonistic relationship between a (good) but amorphous 'people' and a corrupt 'elite' that needs to be deposed.

The title of this book, "Nationalpopulismus bildet? Lehren für Unterricht und Bildung (The new european national populism: lessons for school education; Le nouveau national-populisme européen: quelles leçons pour l'école?)", as well

as the symposium of the same name, is a reminder that this project is part of a series of workshops and publications, including "*Migration bildet – Migrations et formations – Migration and Education* (2017)",[2] each dedicated to a complex new societal phenomenon affecting education. The three editors of this book, *Manfred Oberlechner* of the Salzburg University of Education, *Reinhard Heinisch* of the *Department of Political Science* at the University of Salzburg, and *Patrick Duval* of the University of Lorraine, share overall responsibility for the current work, which they intend as a conceptual introduction to different research agendas and approaches to populism in conjunction with pedagogy and education.

A project of this magnitude and range requires the collaboration of many scholars of different disciplines, most notably specialists in education research, sociology, cultural studies, and political science. All of the authors, regardless of their specialization, were asked to bear the following guidelines in mind when approaching their respective contributions: "[T]he issue domains of education and national populism are to be studied in connection and examined in terms of their historical, political, educational sociological, country-specific and media-related dimensions."

The following sub-themes were also included: exploring historical, political science and sociological perspectives on national populism; providing conceptual definitions and delimitations; presenting case studies from individual countries and transnational comparisons; discussing the incorporation of the topic in education and teaching; examining the demands on education and the dangers for education arising from national populism; and discussing what the response of educational institutions should or could be. All contributors were asked to focus on current debates and controversies and, if possible, to link their analyses to their own research or their own pedagogical experiences.

Readers should note that the diversity of disciplines and research areas involved means that this work does not present uniform conceptualizations and perspectives. Instead, the very purpose of our book is to introduce readers to a range of concepts and approaches. This also entails the use of different methodologies, epistemologies and research cultures, discourses, and even different languages.

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2   Oberlechner, Obermair, Duval 2018; Oberlechner, Trültzsch-Wijnen, Duval 2017

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REINHARD HEINISCH

Introduction

The rise of radical right populism, and to a lesser extent the rise of radical left populism, is the most significant contemporary political development in both established and new democracies. This phenomenon is not limited to any particular region, continent or even type of democracy. We find it in mature democracies that rely on winner-take-all election systems, such as the US and the UK, in countries such as Austria with voting systems that favor proportional representation, and in countries with direct democratic systems such as Switzerland. Populism is by no means confined to poorer countries where people are arguably more likely to struggle with the fallout from globalization and a lack of resources. In fact, some of the wealthiest countries, including Denmark, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Norway and Austria, were among the first in which radical right populist parties emerged. Prosperous Northern Italy rather than the poorer South was the cradle of Italian radical rightwing populism. Nor is the phenomenon limited to partitocratic regimes in which ossified and oligarchic parties dominate national politics to the exclusion of any meaningful opposition. Italy, Austria and perhaps also France may fall into this category but Switzerland and the Scandinavian democracies clearly do not, and yet they too have been swept up in the populist surge and were among the first countries to develop successful populist parties. Populism is also at home in new democracies whose populations might have been expected to cherish their recent escape from authoritarian and illiberal states.

Populism is also no longer merely a protest phenomenon limited to the fringes of political activism, and thus can no longer be dismissed as a 'normal' pathology,[1] i.e., as a kind of political illness occasionally unavoidable in an otherwise healthy body politic. Populism has long since moved from the margins to the center of political decision-making, first, by engaging in agenda-setting on salient political issues, then by forging cooperation with typically conservative mainstream parties, and eventually by entering government and setting policies.

Populism is also far from being merely an academic question and thus primarily the focus of an inordinate amount of scholarship. Hardly a day goes

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[1]   Mudde 2004, 541–563

by without some prominent media or public figure invoking the specter of the rising tide of populism. As Ivan Krastev has argued, we all now live in an 'age of populism'.**²**

The general concern voiced in most of these accounts is that populism constitutes a direct threat to the fundamental pillars of the post-war liberal democratic order. As such, populism also shakes the principles of our modern democratic system of education. The relationship between populism, democracy and education is the subject of this book. We, the editors and contributors, examine the effect that populism has on our systems of education and the role that education may have in preventing and mitigating the impacts of radical populism. Our education systems, moreover, will be tasked with teaching about this new phenomenon most likely under conditions in which political debates are more polarized and public policies are often shaped, directly or indirectly, by populists.

Before delving into this subject matter, we first must clarify what we mean by populism. The term is so ubiquitous that it has come to refer to diverse phenomena. Not every form of protest or electoral success of a far left or far right party is attributable to populism. Problematic oversimplifications easily arise when all manners of unconventional or unexpected behaviors are labeled populist. The term populism may refer to entirely different frames of reference that thus need to be distinguished. For example, a conservative Bavarian politician choosing colorful language and emotive expressions to connect with 'ordinary' voters in his home district may be engaging in populist style or rhetoric. Likewise, a Green Party billboard campaign using provocative imagery and exaggerated claims about the dangers posed by a US-European trade agreement may be employing a populist strategy. In neither case, however, are the political actors and their respective parties 'populist' in the sense of populism as an ideology or ideological frame that poses a fundamental challenge to liberal democracy.

What is populism?

Most of these conceptualizations of populism can be subsumed under at least four different groups according to the ways in which the term may be understood: populism as a style; populism as a (mobilization) strategy; populism as a thin ideology or system of ideas; and populism as a discourse. In the literature on populism as a style, scholars such as Jagers and Walgrave**³** examine the behavior,

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2   Krastev 2011, 11–16

3   Jagers, Walgrave 2007, 319–345; Moffitt, Tormey 2014, 381–397

rhetoric and speech of political actors who claim to have a special affinity for ordinary people through their use of exaggeration, simplification, emotive language and emotional appeals. Populism as a strategy or strategic discourse also makes use of an inventory of emotive scripts, breaches of taboo, us-them-scenarios and exaggerated claims to draw attention to political campaigns and political goals. Populist styles and strategies are as old as democracy itself and are often also employed by political actors who are not themselves populist in the ideological sense of the word. The statement by Austria's erstwhile Chancellor Bruno Kreisky that a few billion more in government spending would cause him fewer headaches[4] than several hundred thousand more unemployed people is an oft-cited example of populist style being employed by an otherwise non-populist politician.

By contrast, populism as an ideology, belief system or set of ideas – also known as ideational populism – is characterized by its constant reference to an amorphous concept of a (virtuous) people with no differences of class or interest. In ideational populism, the 'people' are threatened or opposed by corrupt 'elites' and dangerous others who impose their agendas on the people or otherwise threaten their interests. The 'enemies of the people' are typically depicted in equally amorphous terms and, depending on circumstances, can refer to a variety of groups, including mainstream politicians, the rich, immigrants, the liberal media, the European Union, the courts, intellectuals, artists, and experts in general. The key characteristics that define ideational populism are its references to the people as an homogeneous group and to the antagonism between the people and the elites. The work of Cas Mudde and others[5] has been instrumental in ensuring that the ideational approach is now the most widely shared conceptualization of populism in empirical political science.

Some scholars consider populism more as a type of ideological discourse in which politicians operate with certain frames and ambivalent claims. In such a discourse, constant references are made to ordinary without real differences who are ignored by corrupt elites and whose will thus is systematically thwarted. Expressions such as 'real Austrians' or 'heartland America' are typical examples of a discourse suggesting that a particular subgroup of authentic and genuine people exists within the larger national population – a group deserving of special

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[4] Chancellor Kreisky's remarks are available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kT 7p3EEtcCg> [accessed 11/7/2019]

[5] Mudde 2004, 541–563; Mudde, Rovira Kaltwasser 2017; Heinisch, Mazzoleni 2016, 105–122

consideration and whose interests have been betrayed. Populists present themselves as change agents vowing to restore the 'people' to their rightful place. Donald Trump's main campaign slogan, 'Make America Great Again', is a prime example of this phenomenon.

In populist accounts, elites disrespect the common people and even threaten to replace them with immigrants. Conspiracy theories, seemingly common-sense solutions, and sweeping promises of change are as much part of the populist narrative as are unconventional forms of campaigning and the extensive use of social media.

The idea of antagonism between people and the elites is a rather basic one and as such populism has neither a value system nor any solutions of its own but rather must connect itself with the ideas of other belief systems (or 'host ideologies'). In combination with ideologies of the right or left, populists are able to offer seeming solutions to the problems they claim exit by presenting themselves as left-wing or right-wing populists. In left-wing populism, the people are depicted as being oppressed by capitalist elites and global modes of exploitation. In contrast with the classical left, however, left-wing populism does not push for a class revolution or internationalism but favors special national solutions or a return to idealized national origins. In Latin America, for instance, the leftist populist Hugo Chavez pursued his revolution in the name of Simon Bolivar, while Evo Morales, the former President of Bolivia, programmatically invoked romantic notions of pre-Columbian indigenous societies.

In Western Europe, radical right populism poses a much greater challenge than its left-wing counterpart. In Western Europe the radical right generally represents anti-egalitarian and thus anti-enlightenment positions founded on a belief in natural inequality, including ethnic and racial inequality. Although there are parallels with (neo) conservative thinking, the taditional or old (especially the fascist) far right usually goes much further in elevating racial and ethnic categories to central programmatic positions. The rejection of the European enlightenment tradition of liberalism, universalism, and humanism is taken to an extreme by the far right in the sense that it uses the alleged biological or genetic inequality of humans to justify intellectual and cultural hegemony. The new right, meanwhile, uses these concepts especially to advocate cultural and ethnic autonomy.[6] The racism, xenophobia, and cultural relativism of the old right have been resuscitated by the new right to justify extreme measures in the name of protecting the sanctity of a particular *ethnos*.

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6   Rydgren 2018, 1–14; Heinisch 2003, 91–130

Despite the many parallels between the extreme right and the radical populist right, they differ significantly in that the radical populist right is generally neither undemocratic nor prone to violence. Indeed, one of the keys to the success of populist parties is their less dogmatic and more voter-seeking approach. Populists aim to be popular and are thus willing to adjust their programmatic positions to appeal to a broad cross-section of voters. The scholar of populism Paul Taggart referred to this as populism's 'chameleonic tendency'.[7] Populist parties often undergo a series of party splits in which they rid themselves of extremists and dogmatic hardliners to achieve a measure of cohesion and to be able to appeal both to more radical voters who form the party's base and more moderate voters who provide electoral reach.

Radical right populism (hereafter RRP) is a new political phenomenon in that it does not constitute a mere continuation of earlier fascist and Nazi traditions, even in cases when parties may have been founded by former Nazis and war veterans, as in the case of the Austrian Freedom Party, or even when they have activists who see themselves as carrying on an old radical right tradition. Right-wing populist parties have not succeeded on account of their connections to far-right traditions but because they seemingly offer explanations and answers to perceived or genuine problems that motivate large parts of today's electorates. Like all ideologies or ideological frames, RRP offers a diagnosis of what is wrong, typically in the form of alleging public corruption, 'over-foreignization', liberal elites imposing alien values on ordinary people, crime spiraling out of control, etc. Scapegoats are then identified to assign blame for these issues, such as self-serving politicians who ignore people's concerns, immigrants, the European Union, and mainstream political parties who no longer listen to the people. Lastly, radical right populists suggest radical solutions in the form of what is to be done, such as getting rid of immigrants, countering Islam, exiting the EU or starting a trade war. RRP thus draws on nationalism, nativism, racism, and ethnocratic ideas, thereby forming one part of a broad spectrum of today's radical right that includes extreme right groups such as the identitarian movement, Hooligans against Salafists (HoGeSa), the so-called *Reichsbürger*,[8] neo-Nazis and others.

Populism in its various manifestations represents first and foremost a rejection of societal and political elites. The most persuasive explanation for its surge

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[7]   Taggart 2000

[8]   *Reichsbürger* is a radical right-wing group that rejects the contemporary democratic German state and its constitution.

in recent time is that populism can be understood as a response to a crisis of legitimacy of political institutions and actors. This may have come about as the result of a growing failure on the part the political establishment to represent significant population groups who have become alienated from traditional politics in recent decades.

Why does populism pose a danger to democracy?

In assessing the threat posed by populism to democracy we first need to distinguish between democracy as a generalized form of rule 'by the people, of the people, for the people' (to quote from Lincoln's Gettysburg Address) and the subtype of liberal democracy. Whereas populists may openly admit to being ideologically opposed to liberal democracy, with some scholars of populism such as Takis Pappas even defining populism as 'illiberal democracy'',[9] they also typically claim to be fighting for a purer and more people-centered democracy. This has led scholars to distinguish between 'responsive' and 'responsible'[10] governments, with populists claiming to be responsive and all about listening to the people. Populists tend to call for direct democratic mechanisms such as plebiscites, referenda, and ballot initiatives to enhance the responsiveness of the political system by bypassing the decision-making process dominated by elites. Populists also claim to perform a service to democracy in that their mobilization campaigns draw in lots of people who are otherwise apathetic, marginalized, and ignored.[11]

Nonetheless, a compelling argument can be made that populism in its various forms does indeed constitute a potential threat both to democracy in general and to liberal democracy in particular. Philosophically, populism is anti-pluralist and anti-political in the sense that it rejects the diverse character of populations and instead constructs a homogenous people with similar attitudes and interests. In the eyes of populists it is only these people who are worth attention, whether on the grounds that they constitute the majority and/or because they can somehow lay claim to being the 'original' or 'genuine' population and thus merit special consideration. And while it is true that left-wing populism is more inclusive than right-wing populism, which excludes people on ethnic and racial terms, left-wing populism does engage in classism and thus also denies that certain groups can be truly representative of the people. In any case, the claim that the

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9 Pappas 2019
10 Bardi, Bartolini, Trechsel 2014, 235 – 252
11 Huber, Schimpf 2016, 103 – 129

'true' people are all alike, and want the same things contradicts the very purpose of politics if defined as a process by which people who differ in age, gender, occupation, geographic area and other characteristics can resolve their different interests and goals. By engaging in deliberation, bargaining, and compromise, democracies usually deliver an outcome whereby the majority prevails but the minority also retains or gains some benefits and/or protection. Populism seeks to 'resolve' such societal differences, whether by taking the majority position or by supporting those who are the loudest or most mobilized.

It is of course widely accepted as a fair principle that the majority, or at least the people most committed to an issue, should prevail in a democracy. If the power of the majority remains unchecked, however, the political system will transform into a 'tyranny of the majority' that is likely to degenerate into an outright tyranny oppressing in the end also the very people who comprise the majority. Indeed, if eighty percent of the media are controlled by one group or the government, if courts issue rulings for the benefit of only one group or the government, and if schools teach as facts that which one group or the government claims as truths, it can reasonably be asked how it is even possible to determine what the majority position in a society really is. If history is any guide, then opposition to liberal democracy constitutes de facto opposition to democracy. Therefore, from past and present trends one is forced to conclude that unrestrained majoritarian democracies are far more likely to follow the increasingly authoritarian Hungarian political model than the Swiss model. Moreover, many complex issues are not clear-cut and thus cannot be effectively decided through mobilization and emotional appeals. Brexit and the dilemma of interpreting the results of the British referendum on EU membership is probably the most instructive case of how populist sentiments and mass mobilization have resulted in political polarization and complete political gridlock.

Populist political actors can undermine democracy by two different processes once they have achieved a certain amount of power. One of these processes involves the 'illiberal democracy from below', whereby existing legal and constitutional limits are broken and political opponents are intimidated through mass mobilization, emotional appeals, scapegoating, and polarization. Decisions are often taken with the aim of appeasing the mobilized masses. In this context, populists often support direct democracy because it offers a convenient opportunity to engage in mass mobilization and because populist parties enjoy significant advantages in such scenarios. For example, such parties are often leadership-oriented and tend to have relatively authoritarian internal structures, enabling them to present themselves as more cohesive than their more liberal and less strictly

organized political competitors. This allows populists to project sharply polarizing messages without having to fear criticism from within their own ranks. Since many populist parties started out in fringe positions and were long kept at a distance from typical channels and institutions of political power they have also learnt to appropriate new forms of political communication, including entertainment and social media.

The second process by which populist actors can undermine democracy is through 'authoritarian democracy from above'. This process begins with the discrediting of critical media and civil society. Step by step, the system of checks and balances becomes eroded as the populist party in government penetrates all institutions and then typically changes the constitution to facilitate its own hold on power. In recent media discourse, this process has been referred to as *Orbanization*, which is often presented as a potential model for Hungary's neighbors, including Austria, Slovakia and Slovenia.[12] The steps in this piecemeal establishment of an illiberal democratic regime, and thereafter of an increasingly authoritarian state, are typically justified as representing the will of the true population and /or by the need to protect the population from dangerous external threats, often with allusions to conspiracies against the state and the people. The state is no longer neutral but becomes a de facto agent of the radical right populist party. In this role, the state intervenes in party-political competition on behalf of the governing populist party and makes it almost impossible for the opposition to gain ground. In this role, too, the the populist party in power also ultimately determines the content of school textbooks and the curricula offered at universities. Such a system is democratic in the sense that elections are still held and the results may even reflect a genuine count of the ballot papers; but neither election campaigning nor the dissemination of information are in any way consistent with free and fair elections. Another characteristic of authoritarian democracy from above is the predominance of the executive branch and the central position of the populist party and its leader within the executive structure, meaning that – unlike in the liberal democratic system – there are no autonomous spaces or institutions of review, accountability, and control.

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12 Der Standard, 24/4/2018. Available at: <https://newsmavens.com/news/aha-moments/ 1442/the-orbanization-of-austrian-politics> [accessed 11/7/2019]; World Politics Review, 6/6/2018. Available at: <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/trend-lines/24837/why -orbanization-isn-t-a-risk-in-slovenia-despite-an-anti-immigration-party-s-win> [accessed 11/7/2019]; Politics in Hungary, 13/11/2013. Available at: <https://politicsin hungary.wordpress.com/2013/11/13/orbanization-of-europe/> [accessed 23/06/2019]

In liberal democracies, the excesses of majority rule and short-term reflexive politics are constrained by limits imposed even on popular governments, including institutional checks, and balances, effective opposition, a free media, non-governmental organizations and civil society activism. In liberal democracies as they were established throughout the West, governments are not above the law, court decisions and constitutions are not directly subject to popular sentiments, the right to freedom of speech protects especially also unpopular speech, and the media's task is to scrutinize and criticize those in power even if this offends large numbers of people. The underlying rationale is not to constrain the will of the majority for its own sake but a recognition that unconstrained governments, even if legitimated by large majorities, may find it hard to resist the temptation to do everything possible to stay in power. In Western democracies the idea of checks and balances is thus seen as a prerequisite not only for liberal democracy but for democracy in general.

This raises the question of whether 'populist democracies' are even possible if democracy is understood in its fullest sense. The evidence from countries where populists currently enjoy undiluted power, such as Venezuela and Hungary, is not encouraging. Even in places as diverse as the USA, Bolivia, and Poland, in which populists of one type or another are in dominant government positions, there have been consistent attempts to influence the independent judiciary, to inflame public sentiments against the media, to disparage established liberal democratic institutions and to change the rules of the political system in order to stay in power. Even under a relatively benign and reasonably successful populist government such as in Bolivia, President Morales has spearheaded multiple constitutional changes to thwart limits on presidential terms and extend his stay in office by all means possible. In Poland, the government has sought to replace the judges in the country's high court with judges more in line with the government. In the USA, the Trump administration routinely alleges electoral fraud and has called for changes in state election laws designed to benefit the President's political party and political agenda. Such changes to the rules of current democratic systems make it harder for opposition parties to mount effective election campaigns. Elections may be held, as they are in Hungary for example, but the contests are not free and fair in the sense that the government and the opposition compete, institutionally speaking, on an equal footing. If the state no longer guarantees the two key dimensions underlying current democratic systems, i.e. limited government and political competition with a genuine choice between opposition and government, it becomes difficult to recognize any resulting form of government as in any way democratic. In short, 'managed' or 'guided' democracy may merely be a euphemism for a version of authoritarianism.

In most other countries, populists are still either in opposition or in coalition governments, which restricts their ability to reshape the democratic system at more fundamental levels. There too, however, we see populist politicians pushing against the traditional conventions of liberal democracy, as for example when Matteo Salvini, Italy's former and possibly future Minister of the Interior and leader of the right-wing populist Lega Nord party, instructed Italian authorities to ignore European and international laws.[13] Another case in point is the former Austrian minister of the interior from the right-wing populist Freedom Party, who publicly argued that the European Convention of Human Rights should be set aside on the grounds that the law must follow the people and not the other way round.[14]

As already mentioned, the most notorious case of an illiberal and increasingly authoritarian government in Europe is that of the Hungarian government under Viktor Orbán. Hungary under Orbán is becoming a textbook case of an increasingly authoritarian version of democracy. Not only does the government defy and challenge political values and rules that constitute the foundation and prerequisites for membership in the European Union, President Orbán also openly talks about rejecting liberal democracy. At the same time he quite openly expresses his preference for a more authoritarian or 'guided' form of democratic rule consisting of elections that are essentially contests for the 'supreme leader', whose role is far more than that of a mere prime minister in that the leader is the personification of the new political model. These contests take place under conditions in which opposition voices have been silenced and in which the state media and several private media outlets have been brought under government control while others have been economically ruined. NGOs, think-tanks and academic institutions have been curtailed or shut down or made pliable by their financial dependence on the state. The following negative evaluation of the quality of Hungarian democracy by the reputable US NGO Freedom House is a telling indicator:

> Hungary's status declined from Free to Partly Free due to sustained attacks on the country's democratic institutions by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's Fidesz party, which has used its parliamentary supermajority to impose

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13 Euronews, 28/8/2018. Available at: <https://www.euronews.com/2018/08/24/8-laws-italy -may-be-violating-by-preventing-diciotti-migrants-from-arriving> [accessed 11/7/2019]

14 Euronews, 28/8/2018. Available at: <https://www.euronews.com/2018/08/24/8-laws-italy -may-be-violating-by-preventing-diciotti-migrants-from-arriving> [accessed 11/7/2019]

restrictions on or assert control over the opposition, the media, religious groups, academia, NGOs, the courts, asylum seekers, and the private sector since 2010.[15]

In 2017 the anti-corruption organization Transparency International reported that Hungary had slipped seven places on its ranking in just one year.[16] The effects and the pattern are clear. There is the radicalization of the political climate, as the country is experiencing a gradual shift in its normal societal consensus as to what constitutes an appropriate public discourse. At the same time, populist parties also contribute to the radicalization of other parties that see themselves challenged by the polarizing discourse of populists. Meanwhile, campaigns against established institutions serve to undermine public trust and contribute to their destabilization. Another consequence of the suppression of critical opinions in education and academia is that critical discourse and real opposition are silenced. This means that corruption and influence-peddling thrive in an environment without control mechanisms.

High levels of corruption are seen not only in Viktor Orbán's government but also in the case of the former Austrian FPÖ leader and rightwing populist Jörg Haider, who was infamously responsible for Austria's largest financial scandal by providing excessive loan guarantees to a bank that provided funding for politcally popular but economically irresponsible investment schemes and political kickbacks to politicians. From 1999 to 2008, Haider was an enormously popular and virtually all-powerful governor of the Austrian state of Carinthia, which he eventually drove to near bankruptcy and which was only saved by a bailout from the national government. Closely related to the issue of corruption is a phenomenon we might call the proneness of populist governments to making decisions based on short-term popular sentiments. Left unchecked, such actions can lead to imprudent policies that ultimately prove costly. When the international credit market froze in the wake of the 2007–8 financial crisis, for example, the bailout sums demanded from the Carinthian government to rescue the bank for which Haider's administration had accepted loan guarantees were far in excess of the state's entire budget. The populist governor's freewheeling spending policies are an instructive example of responsive but not responsible politics in which

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15   Freedom House, 2019. Available at: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2019/hungary> [accessed 12/2/2019]

16   Transparency International, 2016. Available at: <https://transparency.hu/en/news/cpi-2016-magyarorszag-tovabbra-is-lejtmenetben/> [accessed 12/2/2019]

economically unsound decisions are coupled with political corruption and where the institutions of oversight have been so weakened or politically intimidated that they looked the other way.

Populism as a global phenomenon

Populism is not uniform. As already mentioned, its core ideas about people-centered sovereignty and anti-elitism are generally wedded to host ideologies, which in combination can result in left-wing, right-wing, or even centrist populism. Yet populism has also been shaped by distanced regional political traditions and differences in political systems across the world.

North American populism has long been strongly connected with nativism, as was vividly on display in Donald Trump's campaign rhetoric, predominantly centered on demands to protect domestic labor against competition from migrant workers. In extreme cases it is directed against every kind of immigrant and even refuses to recognize native-born minorities. Throughout history, American populism has frequently mobilized against poor immigrants, including the Irish, Jews, Eastern Europeans, Italians and – most recently – Asians and Latin Americans as well as Muslims and immigrants from the Middle East. Early and contemporary forms of populism in the US have succeeded in connecting common sensibilities to big political ideas that suggest new directions for the country. Populism in Donald Trump's America finds expression in the issue of the 'wall' on the Mexican border, the 'tearing up' of free-trade agreements, and the associated order of liberal internationalism. Similar sentiments were expressed during the presidency of Andrew Jackson from 1829 to 1837 through the idea of a free land-grab from the east all the way to the Pacific coast, supported by the notion of 'Manifest Destiny'. Not unlike the supporters of Trump who relish the idea of 'draining the swamp' in Washington, Jacksonian supporters wanted to curb the power of the central state in favor of greater local control. Jackson, who was a polarizing figure like Trump and sought to communicate with people directly in a straightforward manner, eventually succeeded in reshaping America by expanding the power of the presidency and turning the nationalism of Southwestern frontiersmen into the central ideational framework that has defined the country ever since. Whereas the founding fathers appear to be more like accidental revolutionaries who otherwise resembled English country gentlemen, the heroes in Jacksonian and post-Jacksonian America were different: the new mythology celebrated rugged individualism and the 'common man' doing uncommon things. It is this radical "break with the elites and the positioning of the common per-

son at the center of America's story that makes Jackson the precursor to populism in the US as the man who laid the foundations of its positive future image."[17]

The notion of conspiracies and backroom deal-making by unaccountable insiders permeates populist discourse the world over. Frustrations with such a political order culminated in the US in the foundation of the Populist Party (1892–96), which sought to establish itself as a third force in politics. The central figure at the time was William Jennings Bryan (1860–1925), an advocate for the interests of small-scale farmers against big industry. The Populist Party ultimately failed to survive political approaches made by the Democrats, who offered Bryan the opportunity to run as their joint presidential candidate in 1986 and 1900. However, the memory of the Jacksonian revolution, the Populist Party and the Progressive Era that followed these phenomena have given populism a more positive image in the US than elsewhere.

Although populism in the US has historically been a third-party phenomenon, as in the case of Ross Perot who ran as an independent in 1992 and 1996, the Republican Donald Trump is undoubtedly the most important political figure in recent history to be widely labeled a populist. His ascent to the White House is a case of an established party being taken over by a right-wing populist outsider.

Whereas populism had long remained at the margins of politics in Europe and the United States, it has often been at the center of political changes in Latin American history. While Europeans were only beginning to grapple with this phenomenon, Latin America had been moving from its second wave of populism, also known as neoliberal populism, to a third type. This third wave was to become associated with the leftist regimes of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela and Evo Morales in Bolivia.

Latin America's presidentialized political systems have always been far more receptive to personalities and leader figures who purport to be saviors of the people than have the parliamentary and party-based systems that prevail in Western Europe. Representing a tradition that goes back to the colorful strongmen or *caudillos* of the nineteenth century, these leader figures have shown disdain for established and often corrupt elites, styling themselves as men of action on behalf of ordinary people. Political institutions in Latin America were often insufficiently developed to absorb and channel the politically mobilized public in order to bring about necessary political reforms, especially during periods of rapid modernization and industrialization. As a result, charismatic leaders like Argentine president Juan Perón sought to bypass traditional politics and institutions by

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17   Heinisch, Holtz-Bacha, Mazzoleni 2017, 19–40

turning directly to the masses to push for political change. Whenever economic developments brought about popular mobilization that could no longer be contained by the existing political system, a new wave of populist leaders rose to prominence, including Juan and Eva Perón, Carlos Menem, and Néstor and Cristina (Fernández de) Kirchner in Argentina, Getulio Vargas in Brazil, Lázaro Cárdenas and Andrés M. López Obrador in Mexico, as well as Juan Velasco Alvarado, Alberto Fujimori and Alan García in Peru.

In recent decades, Hugo Chávez and Nicolas Maduro in Venezuela, Evo Morales in Bolivia, Rafael Correa in Ecuador, and Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua, among others, have become the leading exponents of leftist populism.[18] What this latest group of populist politicians share with their predecessors is their presentation of themselves as charismatic agents for change who want to deliver, especially for poorer people, the kinds of political achievements the previous system could not. Right-wing and left-wing populists the world over now profess a disdain for liberal internationalism and globalization in favor of national autonomy.

In Western Europe, populism resurfaced in the 1970s and 1980s in the form of political protest.[19] In 1972 the former Danish lawyer Mogens Glistrup founded the Progress Party *(Fremskridtspartiet)* to protest against his country's high taxes.[20] While taxes and the perception of an overbearing (welfare) state fueled sentiments of protest in Scandinavia, in parts of continental Europe such as Austria, France, and Italy it was excessive forms of insider politics and *partitocrazia* that stoked the anger of citizens. The perception that mainstream parties had a monopoly on power, were engaging in extensive clientelism and were often implicated in high-profile cases of political corruption all prepared the ground for political outsiders and new bodies to take on the political establishment. The Front National in France and the FPÖ in Austria are two early examples. In other instances, populist parties have sprung up in the context of secessionist protests against 'corrupt' or 'non-responsive' national governments, as was the case with the Flemish Bloc (VB) in Belgium and the Lega Nord in Italy. Resentment of the erosion of national sovereignty through accession to the European Union has been another factor in the rise of populist protest, as exemplified by the Swiss People's Party, an early champion of the anti-European cause.

Western European populism came to be associated at an early stage with 'charismatic' leadership, chiefly because of the way the phenomenon manifested

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18   Heinisch, Holtz-Bacha, Mazzoleni 2017, 19–40

19   Ibid.

20   Ibid.

itself in France, Italy, and Austria. There, in three of the earliest cases of radical rightwing populism in Europe, the parties were led by men, Jean-Marie Le Pen, Umberto Bossi, and Jörg Haider respectively, that represented a departure from traditional politicians. However, since European political systems are party-based (with the notable exception of France), Western European populist formations have been less beholden to the success and duration of the leadership of single individuals than more presidentialized and personalized political systems elsewhere. As a result, party-based populism was able to pass power on from one generation of leaders to the next as long as the new leaders were able to follow the same winning formulas.[21]

As populist parties mutated from middle-class protest parties into parties for voters who felt threatened by modernization and internationalization (especially men with lower levels of education working in traditional and non-professional occupations), populists have adapted their agenda accordingly. The fact that radical rightwing populist parties have presented themselves as less dogmatic than other far-right groups more attached to ideological principles proved an advantage in the electoral marketplace. Identity politics, anti-immigration positions, Euroscepticism, criticism of globalization and free trade, as well as law and order issues became fixtures in the programs of nearly all populist parties across the continent.[22] The European financial and economic crisis only deepened these sentiments. However, no agenda has been more important to populists in recent years than the issue of refugees, security and Islam, which has resonated across Europe and has proven especially salient in Austria, Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Italy, Denmark, Switzerland, and Norway.[23]

Effective populist parties have emerged even in countries long considered 'safe' from populism, such as Germany, for example, due to its anti-populist constitutional protections, or the United Kingdom, not only on account of its voting system but as being thought too liberal for nativism to prosper. Nonetheless, the United Kingdom Independence Party entered the European Parliament and used it as a platform for attacking the EU and its policies.[24] Along with the British referendum on Brexit, national elections in Germany, the Netherlands, Italy and Austria among others have resulted in surges of support for populist parties.

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21   Heinisch, Mazzoleni 2016

22   Minkenberg 2001, 1–21; Mudde 2007; Van Spanje 2010, 563–586; Rooduijn, de Lange, Van der Brug 2014, 563–575

23   Marzouki, McDonnell, Roy 2016

24   Ford, Morrell, Heath 2012, 26–44; Tournier-Sol 2015, 140–156

Both Western and Eastern Europe have become hotbeds of populist politics and both ended up changing the composition of the European Parliament in the 2019 elections and thus are likely to affect EU politics and policies.

Populism and education

It is partly because of its chameleonic nature and its many local hues that populism remains a difficult subject for study. Not only does populism change, moreover, it also attracts different voters for different reasons. The study of populism also remains difficult because of a lack of comprehensive data. In this book, however, the focus is on populism and education. This is relevant because the rise of new radical nationalist and nativist forms of populism in Western democracies, loosely labeled here as 'national populism', has not only challenged established political institutions along with cultural and economic elites but also – and increasingly – the world of education and academia. The case of the autonomous Central European University in Budapest being driven out of Hungary by the Orbán regime, for example, has gained international notoriety. Schools and universities thus find it necessary to reflect on their own intellectual response to populism as a popular form of manufacturing outrage, polarizing societies, and radically opposing established institutional and political rules. This is essential because radical right populism is intensely hostile to the humanist, pluralist, and diversity-oriented ideals to which public education in Western countries is committed.

We therefore ask how we are to understand and counter a phenomenon that poses a direct threat to fundamental pillars of the European post-war order and challenges the principles of our modern democratic system of education. This education system, after all is based on the ideal of the social emancipation of the individual and citizen through the acquisition of knowledge and the formation of critical and reflective minds. Democratic education depends also on the free exchange of ideas with others, regardless of their origins and status. The question thus arises as to how the modern education system, with its origin in humanism, enlightenment, and modernity, can confront such movements that celebrate uniformity of thought, antidemocratic and discriminatory impulses and nationalist retreat from the world. Should the education system abandon its self-imposed neutrality and defend the democratic system in the midst of societal change and political crisis? Is this even a task that society and the state can expect the public education system to take on?

Educators, parents, and pedagogues are more than ever confronted with such fundamental questions. More specifically, students and faculty of university edu-

cation programs find themselves having to devote more attention to the once seemingly peripheral phenomenon of populism as the growing pressure from forces opposed to liberal democracy and diversity are turning this into a question affecting the nature of their profession and their educational mission.

In light of these sociopolitical developments and the self-image of the pedagogy of diversity as a science of praxis-oriented active learning, it must be a key task for any institution devoted to teaching pedagogical competences at universities to undertake a scientific examination of the effects of national populism on education. Accordingly, the issue domains of education and national populism need to be studied in connection and examined in terms of their historical, political, educational, sociological, country-specific, and media-related dimensions. This is the task undertaken in this book.

We have asked authors from different countries and different fields of expertise to provide insights informed by diverse viewpoints and shaped by different intellectual traditions and academic experiences.

In their introductory article (in French), *Patrick Duval* and *Manfred Oberlechner* raise the sensitive question of how the new phenomenon of national populism in Western European countries should be taught. Educators are torn between the ethical duty of neutrality and a concern for an informed and critical approach to a phenomenon that threatens democracy and the public education system.

To establish a baseline and understand developments in our society, we asked sociologists to provide us with an analysis of the current state of society in which political preferences for radical rightwing populist policy solutions and actors have become more prevalent. In a very substantial chapter that draws on ongoing research, *Wolfgang Aschauer* examines in considerable detail the presence of authoritarian attitudes, xenophobia, and political alienation in Austria, applying criteria developed by Critical Theory. The approach argues that people who are or feel 'left behind' are especially prone to react with defensive values expressing higher levels of authoritarian attitudes, right-wing orientation, EU-rejection, and ethnic prejudice. This chapter shows that the linkages between attitudinal dispositions and socioeconomic contexts remain complex and contradictory, thus calling for a deeper analysis of certain new dimensions of authoritarianism in Austria.

Janine Heinz examines authoritarianism as a reaction to complex uncertainty. This chapter takes the sense of a lack of moral guidance in society, fears of social deprivation and the effects of increasing precariousness as its point of departure for investigating how and to what extent individuals "transfer" such experiences into authoritarian attitudes.

Political scientists *Karen Umansky* and *Judith Kohlenberger* examine the role

played by immigration as a 'legitimate enemy' strategy in the general election held in Austria in 2017. Their research assesses the importance of the immigration issue to each party and the contextual meaning of this issue, including an assessment of textual references in the parties' election manifestos.

Farid Hafez provides an analytical account (in German) of how racism has shaped the politics of education in Austria. He argues that educational polices in response to the growth of right-wing discourse in Austria have been designed with the intention of controlling Muslims and presenting them as 'the other'.

The chapter by *Matthias Belafi* (in German) provides an analysis of the Austrian Freedom Party in public office, tracing the party's origins and evolution as well as its political profile before discussing its role in government in detail. The FPÖ represents one of the few radical right populist parties that have twice been in government. In each case, the FPÖ came to power in coalition with a conservative party partner, and in each case their term of government ended prematurely. Both in and out of office, moreover, the Freedom Party has been able to shape the policy agenda. This was especially the case in the last government, as the chapter describes, where on a range of policy issues ranging from welfare state reform and social policy to immigration, Islam and culture, the Freedom Party along with the conservatives was able to implement laws reflecting an agenda based on exclusivist and restrictive notions of identity and nationality.

Johannes Thonhauser's chapter (in German) discusses the case of Carinthia, an Austrian state whose ethnic and religious cleavages have created a fertile cultural and political context in which radical right and populist politics have flourished. In tracing the state's history, this chapter shows how external threats and pressure from above have created intense forces compelling cohesion, conformity and loyalty, resulting in the persecution of religious and ethnic minorities, most notably of the state's Slovenian minority.

Shaireen Rasheed reflects on the rise of radical right populist and nativist sentiments and argues that these must be tackled in the classroom. She lays out her agenda and reports on experiences of creating Pedagogies of Resistance in the classroom. Her approach is informed by the clashes in contemporary American society between a diverse population and resurgent currents of racism and reactionary sentiments in the wake of the election of Donald Trump.

Claudia Fahrenwald's chapter on civil society (in German) pleads for a re-politicization of current discourse on education. She discusses how the resurgence of populism poses a particular challenge to schools and other institutions in democratic societies. Educational institutions must move beyond teaching facts and figures, she argues, toward fostering the ability to participate meaningfully in society.

Christina-Marie Juen's chapter (in German) discusses the question of how much students pursing degrees in education actually know about radical right populism. She reflects on the paradox that while teachers are regarded as key to the aim of students becoming politically aware citizens, little thought is typically given to teacher-trainers' own political understanding.

Britta Breser's chapter (in German) argues that certain forms of transnational political participation have the potential to counter national populism. She goes on to explore the implications for political education based on the example of online advice about the European Citizen Initiative.

Michael May's chapter (in German) focuses on strategies for educating people about democracy in times of resurgent radical right populism. His discussion examines situations in which educators are confronted with radical racist and nativist sentiments in classroom settings and are forced to respond but at the same time are torn between the conflicting impulses of not wanting to dignify unacceptable positions while wanting to engage students with such views.

Franz Gmainer-Pranzl's chapter (in German) discusses reciprocal learning processes in post-secular societies in which Islamic, Christian, and secular traditions converge and find value in each other. The chapter presents a dialog experiment that shows how non-religious people can benefit from understanding religion as a source of reason and humanity, thus serving as a possible model for a societal dialogue amongst people of different belief systems.

Gerrit Dworok's chapter (in German) discusses collective identities, specifically the collective identity of the so-called Bonn Republic, which he argues could serve as a blueprint and alternative with important didactic value in the context of the current identity crisis – a crisis which the author links to the rise of national populism.

Lukas Schildknecht devotes his chapter (in German) to the connections between education, national populism, and symbolic violence. His main thesis is that the texts of the new right and identitarian movement can be interpreted as a text-based pretense or staging of education.

Marie Cazes focuses in her chapter (in French) the specificities of Finnish national populism through the study of three parliamentary parties: the Rural Party of Finland *(Suomen Maaseudun puolue)*; the Finns Party *(Perussuomalaiset)*; and the Blue Future *(Sininen Tulevaisuus)*. She examines the agrarian origins of these parties and their later nationalist and anti-immigration rhetoric, their political programs and their unusual appropriation and vindication of the term 'populist'.

Roberto Dagnino's chapter (in French) deals with the evolution of the political and societal discourse in Rotterdam. Based on the 2018 communal elections,

his analysis focuses on the emergence and socio-political specificities of populism in Rotterdam in light of the Dutch multicultural crisis, showing how this development prefigures the end of the political dividing lines that has have prevailed since the Second World War

The chapter by *Vanessa Joan Müller*, *Wolfgang Brunner* and *Martin Walkner* (in German) relates to the exhibition of the same name at the *Kunsthalle Wien*, which from November 2015 to February 2016 displayed a variety of artistic responses to different populist argumentation patterns. These three works showed how political populism has increasingly employed pop-cultural and artistic methods since the turn of the millennium. The works on display were intended as commentaries on the theme, or as subversive secondary layers, as analyses or critical footnotes, and also uncovered the ubiquitous nature of political populism. The exhibition spanned an arc from artistic performances and interventions in public space to workshops with students and guided tours through the exhibition in Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, German, English and Turkish.

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