

The Rise of New-Populism in Europe and Asia

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I. INTRODUCTION

The wave of modern populism has dramatically shaken the European Union (EU) and the United States (US) during the last few years. The year 2016 was an *annus horribilis* and heralded a new reality of post-truth politics. It included Brexit, the refugee crisis, the fear of Islamist terrorism with numerous and continuing attacks, the rise of right-wing populist parties and, more generally, authoritarian developments on a global scale. After the dramatic accumulation of warning signals for liberal democracies and the EU as a political system *sui generis*, two scenarios have been discussed: Has “2016” become the zenith of the populist wave with the Dutch and French elections in 2017 as a reality check (Marine Le Pen and Geert Wilders could not reach the unrealistic goal of becoming President or Prime Minister of their country) or is it just the start for populism as a central political force in European politics? On the other hand, for the first time in German post-war history, a radical right-wing populist party entered the national parliament when the Alternative für Deutschland (AFD) became the third largest party in the Bundestag. In Austria, the radical-right wing Freedom Party represents the government as a junior partner. In Poland and Hungary, the conservative regimes have enforced measures that restrict the freedom of media and justice. In general, populism is not a phenomenon on the margin and in opposition, it has entered the mainstream.

There is thus a need for deeper reflection about the status quo of (representative) democracies and a deeper understanding about the political and societal changes which have led to the present state of affairs. Moreover, is the global populist surge just a “Western” story or is there more to it?¹ Populism seems to be a global phenomenon. Starting in the years around the new millennium, the word “popu-

¹ Confirming the latest Devin T. Stewart and Jeffrey Wasserstrom, “The Global Populist Surge Is More than Just a Western Story—Just Look at Asia,” *The Diplomat*, 10 December 2016, accessed 17 January 2018, <https://thediplomat.com/2016/12/the-global-populist-surge-is-more-than-just-a-western-story-just-look-at-asia/>.

lism” began to appear in Asia.² Whereas almost all European countries are dealing with the populist challenges, “populist politicians are a very rare breed in Eastern democracies.”³ The following contribution focuses on the intercultural concept of populism before turning to the migration topic as a “winning formula” and discussing the impacts on and future of representative systems and the West in general.

II. JUST A POLITICAL MOBILISING STRATEGY?

Populism is neither a bare style of communication (in the sense of popular) nor a rigid ideology (in the sense of socialism, liberalism, conservatism or even fascism). Its nature is multi-dimensional: *technical* (as a political style in the anti-elite attitude of “us against them”), *content* (with the focus on specific themes), *medial* (special resonance and interaction) and *personal* (importance of charisma). Anyone who wants to understand the interregional concept of populism must approach it through antagonism. A reasonable definition will then result: Populism can be either inclusive or exclusive, carried out from “below” or “above” and forced. Increasingly, populism, which exhibits an origin story more outside of the European context, stands together with democratic theories of debates about the present and the future of (representative) democracies. Without this emplacement in the history of ideas, the phenomenon of populism would not be adequately recorded.

The term populism has particular relevance in connection with political and media discourse. In contemporary populist discourse all over the world, from Brazil to India, the circulation and repetition of rumours consolidates truth-value: something is seen to be real because “everyone knows” and “everyone says it”. Social media technologies are particularly relevant in this regard, not only as a medium of communicative outreach but as certificates of authenticity in themselves. The popularity of Twitter hashtags, the number of Twitter followers and retweets, and the accrual of likes and shares of Facebook posts are all upheld as metrics of the real in the populist calculus, and social media is frequently hailed as the “authentic voice of the people” by populists. When used in a positive sense, a “populist” is someone who understands the problems of “ordinary people”, articulates them and communicates with the “people” directly. Hence the conflicting nature of the term *populism*. On the one hand, it embodies democratic ideals solely on the basis of its meaning. Based on this logic, populism is a solid component of democracy. On the other hand, the “-ism” suffix suggests that the term *populism* is already an overshoot

² Kosuke Mizuno and Pasuk Phongpaichit, eds., *Populism in Asia* (Singapore/Kyoto: NUS Press in association with Kyoto University Press, 2009), 1.

³ Olli Hellmann, “Populism in East Asia,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Populism*, eds. Cristobál Rovira Kaltwasser, Paul Taggart, Paulina Ochoa Espejo, and Pierre Ostiguy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 174.

per se, one which can also work against the norms of states with modern democratic constitutions, namely against representative bodies and democratic administrative decision-making processes. Thus, there is a tense relationship between populism and democracy.

What populism has to offer is orientation, as it is a movement that “personalises” the solution to problems. Populism is a chameleon, adopting the colours of its environment.⁴ Donald Trump’s presidential inauguration speech can be regarded as a role model for the populist appeal: “Today’s ceremony, however, has a very special meaning. Because today, we are not merely transferring power from one administration to another or from one party to another. But we are transferring power from Washington, D.C., and giving it back to you, the people....The establishment protected itself but not the citizens of our country. Their victories have not been your victories.” In this sense, political parties and ideologies do not matter. Instead, Trump’s speech highlights: “What truly matters is not which party controls our government but whether our government is controlled by the people. January 20th, 2017 will be remembered as the day the people became the rulers of this nation again.”⁵ Is the “Trumpetisation of politics” a global trend?

In the Asian context, such appeals should sound familiar, at least in relation to some examples. A review of the relevant academic literature shows that much of the existing work on populism in Southeast Asia refers only to a few politicians regarded as “outsiders” and “mavericks”.⁶ Most significantly and distinctly can be mentioned Thaksin Shinawatra in Thailand, Joseph Estrada in the Philippines, and Rodrigo Duterte, the 2016-elected president of the Philippines with his tough talk on crime, crass comments on women and unpredictability. “The Punisher” Duterte—the Trump of the East⁷—portrayed himself as the authentic voice of the masses, vowing to personally lead a major law and order campaign and blasting entrenched elites. In Duterte’s case, the populist dichotomy is one between virtuous citizens versus hardened criminals—the scum of society who, for Duterte, are beyond redemption. Years before, Estrada played on the popular Robin Hood theme in Filipino cinema to develop his brand of movie populism with his nickname “Erap”,⁸

⁴ Paul Taggart, *Populism* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2000), 2.

⁵ Donald Trump, “Inaugural Address,” 2017, accessed 18 January 2018, <http://edition.cnn.com/2017/01/20/politics/trump-inaugural-address/index.html>.

⁶ Olli Hellmann, “Populism in East Asia,” 162.

⁷ Nicole Curato, “Politics of Anxiety, Politics of Hope: Penal Populism and Duterte’s Rise to Power,” *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, 35 (3) (2016): 92.

⁸ Joel Rocamora, “Estrada and the Populist Temptation in the Philippines,” in *Populism in Asia*, eds. Kosuke Mizuno and Pasuk Phongpaichit (Singapore/Kyoto: NUS Press in association with Kyoto University Press, 2009), 41-65.

and Thaksin tried to gain popular support by being an advocate of the rural people,⁹ building on three core messages:

- “I Give to All of You”;
- “I Belong to You”;
- “I am the Mechanism which can Translate the Will of the People into State Action”.¹⁰

Another similarity could be seen in an entrepreneurial approach, such as that of Thaksin, who was a successful businessman before entering politics. The example of Trump is widely discussed, but there are also some cases in Europe. Silvio Berlusconi in Italy (who entered party politics in 1994 and is just celebrating a comeback at the age of 81) can be seen as a role model; recent examples are found in the Czech Republic with Andrej Babis, elected Prime Minister, and Lithuania. New parties have been founded around these businessmen—in contrast to Trump, who won the nomination process of the Republican Party, the so-called Grand Old Party (GOP).

The growing emphasis on personal trustworthiness that we have observed in democratic elections in recent years relies on leaders such as Angela Merkel, who are regarded as honest and disciplined while serving in office. Already in 2004, a study pointed out that an entrepreneur has chances for an electoral victory if the whole political system is regarded as corrupted. The entrepreneur does not seem to be regarded as honest, charismatic and trustful. His business success in the past gives him his public support.¹¹ What is almost completely missing in the Asian context is the ideological dimension with a dominance of the right wing and the ethnical reference to “the people”. Only in Southern Europe, in countries such as Spain, France, Greece and Italy, are left-wing populist parties (very) relevant factors. In Latin America, a left-wing populism is dominating, creating an authoritarian regime around a charismatic leader, the so-called *caudillo* (Peronism, Chavism, etc.).

In Europe, populism is portrayed as a “thin-centred ideology”.¹² There are two central aspects:

- The vertical dimension as a general characteristic of populism: the dissociation from the political classes (institutions, traditional parties). The attitude is one of “us” against “the powers that be”.

⁹ Paul Phongpaichit and Chris Baker, “Thaksin’s Populism,” in *Populism in Asia*, eds. Kosuke Mizuno and Pasuk Phongpaichit (Singapore/Kyoto: NUS Press in association with Kyoto University Press, 2009), 66-93.

¹⁰ Phongpaichit and Baker, “Thaksin’s Populism,” 74-76.

¹¹ Catherine Fieschi and Paul Heywood, “Trust, Cynicism and Populist Anti-Politics,” *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 9 (4) (2004): 303.

¹² Cas Mudde, *Populist radical right parties in Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 23.

- The horizontal dimension as a specifically right-wing variant of populism: the dissociation from immigrants, aliens and criminals; the attitude of “us” against “the outsiders”.

According to right-wing populists, the national economy should principally serve the country in question and welfare state benefits should be reserved primarily for hardworking native citizens who, according to the populists, are left out in the cold by the failed immigration policies of persistently politically correct governments.¹³ In addition, Euroscepticism is a trademark of all populist parties, with their criticism of and polemic against Europe. They are against the EU as a political system, arguing that the EU is too centralised, too bureaucratic and insufficiently concerned about national sovereignty. However, recent years have seen even the formerly soft Eurosceptics turning into hardcore critics of Europe. The Brexit referendum—the first time in the history of European integration that a member state, in this case the second most important economic power after Germany, wants to leave the EU—was celebrated with euphoria.

Populism in Europe is linked with a specific party type, the so-called anti-establishment party, which has the following features:¹⁴

- the doctrine that “there is an alternative” (in terms of the EU and migration);
- the construction of a homogenous people (one people’s common interests in the sense of a *volonté générale*) and a frontline against the political elites and the mainstream parties;
- the label of an opposition party (on current issues and in the format of representative democracy, but not necessarily against the democratic system itself);
- the promise to clean up “dirty politics” (with slogans such as “we know the truth”) and to fight against corruption and clientelism;
- a cynical approach to politics (attacking either the morality or competence of the establishment).

The rise of anti-establishment parties indicates a change of European party democracy. A lot of new projects are involved. In the Czech Republic, the Czech-Japanese entrepreneur Tomio Okamura entered parliament with a newly founded party, and attracted electoral support through its slogan “No to Islam, no to terrorism”. Okamura was born in Tokyo to a Czech mother and a Japanese father, and growing up in both the Czech Republic and Japan was confronted in both countries with

¹³ Ibid., 125, 130-133.

¹⁴ Florian Hartleb, “Here to stay. The rise of Anti-Establishment Parties in Europe,” *European View* (Springer Press), 12 (1) (2015), accessed 15 October 2017, <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12290-015-0348-4>.

discrimination as being a “half-blood”. Later he became successful with a travel agency for Asian tourists and as a reality-show star. Surprisingly, given this personal background, he is propagating an anti-immigrant, Islamophobic message, knowing that this “virtual topic” emotionalises. Originally the party was based on an anti-establishment ideology, demanding punishments for “bad politicians”.

The decline of mainstream political parties is a phenomenon in most countries. In the last few years social democratic parties, especially, lost dramatically in countries such as Germany, France, the United Kingdom and Austria. For decades, social democratic identity was centred on the concept of work, out of which it derived its everyday pride and sense of self-worth. But changes in the working world and employment relationships, along with the rise of digitalisation and the service economy, have thrown everything into disarray. Nowadays, labour parties are primarily made up of retirees. The intricate network of clubs and organisations they once maintained, and that served to unify a wide range of different interests, is in shreds. Many working-class people now vote for right-wing and left-wing populists.

During the post-war era, political parties were generally stronger in Europe than in the United States: They had clear partisan profiles, high membership and loyalty levels, and strong ties to other organisations, such as trade unions. Over the past decades, however, European political parties have become weaker, membership has declined—in none of the long-established Western democracies have raw memberships fallen by less than 25% in comparison to the 1980s¹⁵—activist networks have withered, and voter loyalty has diminished, all of which has translated into higher rates of vote switching and greater political disengagement.

Even if they are sometimes unsubstantiated or exaggerated, European politicians must take into account the fact that citizens engage in politics appealed not only by material and security matters. Democracy must be prepared to protect itself from an external authoritarian regime’s information and disinformation attacks. It has been officially acknowledged that Russia has tried to deliberately weaken the United States and the EU from the inside—by using media and social networks, it adds fuel to the fire of internal problems. Russia’s financial support for the French National Front, led by Marine Le Pen, is one of the most significant examples of how the Kremlin is trying to split the European Union and the societies of its Member States. Support for both the radical left and right, as well as populists, is not related to the pursuit of the Russian elite for certain values. Russia’s intervention in the EU and US public and political processes is linked to the desire to weaken the West as a whole, in order to make Russia’s weakness less obvious. Support for populists and radicals is just a means of breaking and confusing. So far, the response to this

¹⁵ Ingrid van Biezen, Peter Mair and Thomas Poguntke, “Going, Going, . . . Gone? The Decline of Party Membership in Contemporary Europe,” *European Journal of Political Research* 51 (2011): 24-56.

problem within the EU has been a rather sporadic reaction of civic society, without a serious strategy at the EU's official level.¹⁶

III. MIGRATION—A SENSITIVE TOPIC

By now, the issue of immigration has become extremely important in Western Europe and meanwhile, even in Eastern Europe, where the percentage of foreigners is rather small (in Hungary, for example, the percentage of foreigners is only 1.6% and there is a huge lack of skilled workers in factories), right-wing populist parties and their representatives capitalise on the “the boat is full” campaign. The refugee crisis in autumn/winter 2015 with more than one million refugees and economic migrants coming to Europe helped further boost the authoritarian-nativist cultural backlash, which publicly transformed into a noisy political rebellion. This is especially the case in countries like Germany, where many migrants were able to find refuge.¹⁷ Still, until now, the EU is struggling with the idea to distribute the refugees, which seems to be rather an illusion. It will take a lot of effort to integrate them in the labour markets. As the Bulgarian intellectual Ivan Krastev puts it: “Worries over migration are behind the popularity of right-wing populism, the victory of Brexit, and the growing East-West divide within the EU that is casting doubt on the idea of ‘irreversible’ European integration.”¹⁸

The Central Eastern countries show a general hostility (refugees are portrayed as “muslim invaders and potential terrorists”)—in sharp contrast to Germany, which had demonstrated a humanitarian approach under the popular slogan “Refugees Welcome”, before the difficulties started. Another fact to note: Refugees themselves are willing to come to Germany, Austria or Sweden but not to Bulgaria or the Baltic States. The “clash of civilisations” idea comes up in the sense that European societies in general are afraid of migrants. The question of cultural identity in the welfare states affects the middle class, who have concerns about security and see refugees as a threat to their own welfare—more than any kind of economic questions.¹⁹ A good

¹⁶ Artis Pabriks and Andis Kudors, “Conclusion,” in *The Rise of Populism: Lessons for the European Union and USA*, eds. Artis Pabriks and Andis Kudors (Centre for East European Policy Studies, Riga: University of Latvia Press, 2017), 172, accessed 16 January 2018, http://appc.lv/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/APPC_Populism_2017_web.pdf.

¹⁷ Lars Rensmann, “The noisy counter-revolution: Understanding the cultural conditions and dynamics of populist politics in Europe in the digital age,” *Politics and Governance*, 5 (4), (2017): 129.

¹⁸ Ivan Krastev, “The unraveling of the post-1989 order,” *Journal of Democracy*, 27 (4) (2016): 8.

¹⁹ Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris, “Trump, Brexit and the Rise of Populism. Economic Have-Nots and Cultural Backlash” (Harvard Kennedy School, Working Paper, Cambridge, Massachusetts, August 2016), accessed 1 November 2017, https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2818659.

example is Germany, where the issue of migration alienated parts of society.²⁰ Despite the fact that the economy is booming, for the first time in post-war history, a radical right-wing party, the AFD, could enter the national parliament and polarise the political discourse. The unsolved question of migration has shaken the traditional rules of the consensual models of democracy and significantly reveals a new cleavage between cosmopolitans supporting globalisation and multi-culturalism and people partly in anger of having to adapt too fast to modernisation processes.

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán²¹ believes in the strength of the national state, which has to protect its citizens against those tendencies, and embarked on a campaign against the Hungarian-American investor and business magnate George Soros. In 2014 during a speech at a summer camp in front of students, the Prime Minister pointed out that after a national crisis, there was a need to create an illiberal state, giving the following argument:

[T]he most popular topic in thinking today is trying to understand how systems that are not Western, not liberal, not liberal democracies and perhaps not even democracies, can nevertheless make their nations successful. The stars of the international analysts today are Singapore, China, India, Russia and Turkey.... Meaning that, while breaking with the dogmas and ideologies that have been adopted by the West and keeping ourselves independent from them, we are trying to find the form of community organisation, the new Hungarian state, which is capable of making our community competitive in the great global race for decades to come.... Just because a state is not liberal, it can still be a democracy. And in fact we also had to and did state that societies that are built on the state organisation principle of liberal democracy will probably be incapable of maintaining their global competitiveness in the upcoming decades and will instead probably be scaled down unless they are capable of changing themselves significantly.²²

It seems that the model of liberal democracies is not to be taken for granted any more. A little more than a quarter-century ago, 1989, was another *Zeitgeist* (spirit of the time). The US intellectual Francis Fukuyama argued in his famous essay that

²⁰ Florian Hartleb, "It's migration, stupid! Lessons from the Elections in Germany and Netherlands in the Light of Populism," in *The Rise of Populism: Lessons for the European Union and USA*, eds. Artis Pabriks and Andis Kudors (Centre for East European Policy Studies, Riga: University of Latvia Press, 2017), 99-117, accessed 16 January 2018, http://appc.lv/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/APPC_Populism_2017_web.pdf.

²¹ Also see the article on *Orbanism* in this journal.

²² Viktor Orbán, "Speech at Tusnádfürdő," 26 July 2014, Official Website of the Hungarian Government, accessed 17 January 2018, <http://www.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/the-prime-minister-s-speeches/prime-minister-viktor-orban-s-speech-at-the-25th-balvanyos-summer-free-university-and-student-camp>.

with the Cold War's end all large conflicts had been resolved and history had produced a winner: Western-style democracy.²³

The new division is about the difference between proponents of an open society, and those of a closed one; between those who have had positive experiences with globalisation, profited from it, value the freedom it gives them, welcome the flow of goods and capital and favour immigration, and those who see all of this as a threat; fear Islamisation, rising crime, sexual attacks and terrorism, as has happened in Paris, Brussels, Nice and Berlin, carried out by networks or “lone wolves”, single actors acting in the name of an “Islamic State”. In the US and Europe there is an image of the “angry white man”, who believes in a strong leader and who propagates the idea of a national disaster in various dimensions as part of a cultural “clash of civilisations”. On this, the Frenchman Gustave Le Bon, who published the famous book *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* at the end of the nineteenth century, still offers food for thought. Crowds, being incapable both of reflection and of reasoning, possess a collective mind.²⁴ Anti-politics, the rejection of traditional politics and its practitioners, is a popular instinct today. The rising support for populist parties has disrupted the politics of many Western societies. Populist mobilisation can be defined as “any sustained, large-scale political project that mobilises ordinarily marginalised social sectors into publicly visible and contentious political action, while articulating an anti-elite, nationalist rhetoric that valorises ordinary people.”²⁵

In nearly all right-wing populist organisations, there is an assertion of a division between the locals and the refugees taking the social benefits for granted. These organisations regard European culture as being under threat, warning against the Islamisation of Europe and the danger to national identity. Culture-related questions become overheated with conflicts on values. In addition to this, there is potential here to gain political profile, in a way which is no longer possible with economic and social issues. Even basic social questions regarding abortion and same-sex relationships seem to have been resolved, at least in Western Europe. Post-materialistic values, such as feminism, gender, same-sex marriages, etc. have played a decisive role for the European electorate (with the growth of green-alternatives parties)—in contrast to many Asian electorates. Right-wing populist parties have been using nostalgic appeals, referring to the traditional family models. The interpretation is controversial. Some scholars argue with the “Asian” culture, the emphasis on communitarism, conflict avoidance and respect for hierarchy; others see a cultural shift rooted in increasing material security, which allows people to focus on post-

²³ Francis Fukuyama, “The End of History?,” *National Interest*, Summer (1989): 3-18.

²⁴ Gustave Le Bon, *Psychologie der Massen* (Hamburg: Nikol, 2016). German translation, first published in French in 1895.

²⁵ Robert S. Jansen, “Populist mobilization: A new theoretical approach to populism,” *Sociological Theory*, 29 (2) (2011): 84.

material concerns for happiness.²⁶ And here we can highlight an interesting case: Rodrigo Duterte has recently announced he wants same-sex marriage legalised in the Philippines, a move that would bring him into conflict with the dominant Roman Catholic Church. Although he has a history of making sexist remarks, boasting about his womanising ways and joking about rape, he has also had allies in the gay and lesbian community for many years.²⁷

IV. CONCLUSION: WHAT IS NEXT FOR REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACIES?

The longitudinal data of the World Values Survey indicates that there is widespread disillusion with the Western model of liberal democracy.²⁸ Citizens in a number of supposedly consolidated democracies in North America and Western Europe have not only grown more critical of their political leaders, but have also become more cynical about the value of democracy as a political system. They are less hopeful that anything they do might influence public policy and are more willing to express support for authoritarian alternatives. The authors conclude that young people are engaged in lower numbers than previous cohorts of the same age. This decline in political engagement is even more marked for measures such as active membership of new social movements.²⁹

Rethinking political participation means an inclusive, not exclusive approach. In the new world of digital politics, e-participation offers new possibilities, such as producing webcasts and podcasts; responding to surveys; participating in web-portals, chat rooms, polls and decision-making games; and e-petitioning and e-voting. The latter, first introduced nationwide in Estonia in 2005, does not automatically increase turnout, as experience has proven. Across Europe many e-participation projects have been funded in recent years, but their effects and impacts are not very clear. The extent to which people are motivated through the mobilisation strategies of both political organisations and peers within their networks via social media is an issue of some debate. The mobilisation hypothesis argues that access to digital technologies has the capacity to draw new participants into civic life, particularly among younger citizens. In reality, however, studies often find mixed results, with digital

²⁶ Hellmann, "Populism in East Asia," 172.

²⁷ *The Japan Times*, "Rodrigo Duterte says he wants same-sex marriage legalized in Catholic Philippine," 2017, accessed 18 January 2018, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2017/12/18/asia-pacific/social-issues-asia-pacific/rodrigo-duterte-says-wants-sex-marriage-legalized-catholic-philippines/#.WmUI21T1Xdc>.

²⁸ World Values Survey Wave 1–6 (2017): 1981–2016, accessed 15 January 2018, <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSDocumentationWV6.jsp>.

²⁹ Roberto Stafan Foa and Tascha Mounk, "The democratic disconnect," *Journal of Democracy*, 27 (3) (2016): 7, 11.

technologies facilitating reinforcement and mobilisation only among particular user groups of digital platforms.³⁰ Changes will be smaller than some party strategists and academics are now claiming, because parties can reform or transform their organisational patterns only to a certain extent. At the local level, because of the ageing membership complement, many parties still use the same methods as they did in the 1960s, merely replacing postal invitation letters with emails.³¹

Beginning with the refugees crisis in 2015, there is an ongoing debate about fake news and moralistic manipulations via echo chambers in democracies based on popular moods. Facebook itself has published a detailed and precise study on civic engagement that discusses possible counter-measures. It states:

The networks of politically-motivated false amplifiers and financially-motivated fake accounts have sometimes been observed commingling and can exhibit similar behaviours; in all cases, however, the shared attribute is the inauthenticity of the accounts...In some instances dedicated, professional groups attempt to influence political opinions on social media with large numbers of sparsely populated fake accounts that are used to share and engage with content at high volumes.³²

Addressing the challenge of populism only with the politics of facts, embracing new technologies, will not suffice and might be misleading. Populism symbolises a reaction against “the growing technocratisation of contemporary politics.”³³ Populism and cosmopolitanism are opposites, hard to reconcile.³⁴ What we need is a new social pact between the privileged and the vulnerable non-privileged: a pact defined by socio-economic security (based on the proud preservation of the ideals of the welfare state) and cultural openness (an international orientation against xenophobia and against introspective nationalism, but still upholding national democracy). Such

³⁰ Taewo Nam, “Dual effects of the Internet on political activism: Reinforcing and mobilizing,” *Government Information Quarterly*, 29 (1) (2012): 90-97.

³¹ Florian Hartleb, “All Tomorrow’s Parties: The Changing Face of European Party Politics,” Brussels: Centre for European Studies, 2012, 65, accessed 14 January 2017, <https://www.martenscentre.eu/sites/default/files/publication-files/the-changing-face-of-european-political-parties.pdf>.

³² Jen Weeden, William Nuland and Alex Stamos, “Information operations and Facebook,” Menlo Park, California, 27 April 2017, 8, accessed 2 September 2017, <https://fbnewsroomus.files.wordpress.com/2017/04/facebook-and-information-operations-v1.pdf>.

³³ Christopher Bickerton and Carlo Invernizzi Accetti, “Populism and Technocracy,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Populism*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 336.

³⁴ James D. Ingram, “Populism and Cosmopolitanism,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Populism*, eds. Cristobál Rovira Kaltwasser, Paul Taggart, Paulina Ochoa Espejo and Pierre Ostiguy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 644.

a pact could constitute an answer to populism.³⁵ An example could be Germany itself with its pillar of market economy and its stance as a open-minded immigration country which has overcome the “shadows of the past”. Europe also has to find a way to propagate a positive narrative about the era of digitalisation, which will cause a revolution of the global labour market.

It is true that populism, like authoritarianism and extremism, will remain a constant challenge to democracy. To counter it requires more creativity than constantly creating a scenario of danger and sharply defining it as the enemy of democracy. If one too often conjures nostalgically the good old days (*heartland*) of an understandable world, one can be trapped by populism and strengthen its already noteworthy effect, which should not be discounted as anti- or symbol-politics or hostility towards the system. In a multipolar world, obviously new political forms are being created outside of the peculiarly understandable dichotomy that we found in the Cold War. In the 21st century, global markets and transnational relationships of economies will develop. They evoke new attempts through inequality in capitalism to create a better world. The example of China obviously proves that communist ideology can be combined with capitalism. In the 21st century, the global interaction, somewhat through the Internet and the fixation associated with the Western lifestyle, will also appear to be promoting the distribution of democracy continuously. Non-transparent activities by Western intelligence services also heighten society internal mistrust and indicate that mistrust toward the government has not been surmounted. Protection of the private sphere will be put to the test over the course of the technological revolution. The relationship between the people and the political elites will further erode, which will also put pressure on the representative democratic system, still considered stable in the West, as of yet.

³⁵ René Cuperus, “Der populistische Dammbbruch. Die niederländischen Volksparteien unter Druck,” in *Populismus in der modernen Demokratie. Die Niederlande und Deutschland im Vergleich*, eds. Friso Wielenga and Florian Hartleb (Waxmann, 2011), 63-178.

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