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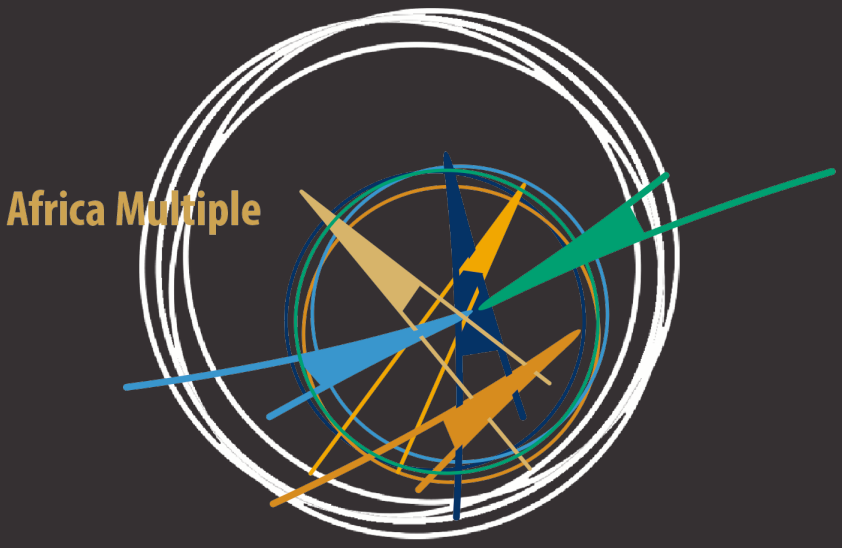

A new Age of Extremes?

Anti-political Politics and Identity Remaking in the early 21st Century

Jamile Borges da Silva, Fábio Baqueiro Figueiredo, and Patricia Godinho Gomes, 2023

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Foreword

This book is the result of the 20th edition of the Factory of Ideas Doctoral School, held at the Bahia Federal University, Salvador, in August 2019.[1] Convened (almost) every year since 1998, this advanced and intensive course was conceived as an opportunity to boost academic exchanges between Brazilian graduate students interested in race relations and renowned international scholars working on the issue from a variety of geographical contexts, to broaden the comparative horizon of Brazilian analyses – which were, then, almost exclusively restricted to the United States. Over time, although the yearly themes moved on to reflect the most pressing issues of the day, the emphasis on race relations retained its importance, as well as a strong interest in African, Latin American, and, to a lesser extent, Middle Eastern and Asian theoretical and empirical contributions. As the successive editions of the course enjoyed the enrollment of students from all over the world, this global outlook has been gradually increasing.

Hence, when the time came to gather around a table to decide on the 20th edition theme, the articulated global rise of new and exacerbated forms of anti-political politics, which have been dubbed 'populism' in the media, imposed itself on the steering committee. For a few years, we had been perplexed by the growth and entanglement of social movements self-proclaimed "alt-right"

1 For details on the historical trajectory, themes, debates and publications of the Factory of Ideas see the website *Fábrica de Ideias 2020/2021* at https://fabricadeideias.info, and the Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/escoladoutoral.fabricadeideias.

(or unapologetically "far-right"), as well by the ethical rightward drift by the neo-liberal mainstream. This mainstream started to conflate its economic agenda with public discourses on the need to moralize mores, the value of the homeland and the virtues of the family.

These forms to make politics and exercise power present themselves as absolutely new and anti-political, and hint at radical reforms of both the social-economic and cultural-religious-educational sort. They oppose outright previous projects aimed at reducing poverty and extreme and durable inequality, as well as more conventional narratives based on class. To the latter vision of society mostly centered on forms of "mosaic emancipation" or "identity welfare", they oppose new "us-them" confrontations based – mostly – on lifestyle, religious belief, the celebration of martial visions of nationhood, law and order, and some rendering of "tradition" as a rule-of-thumb for family arrangements and gender patterns. In early 2019, it seemed urgent to investigate how the new "populist" governments were affecting and possibly altering the structure of inequality, the process of identity and class formation of subaltern groups and the building of broader types of collective identities. Which were the winners and the losers in this process? To understand this, we felt the need to scrutinize the contexts of various affected countries, examine the traditional or new media and technologies being employed (social media, church pulpits, flash mobs, etc.), and identify different kinds of codes and records in use (religion, politics, the production of culture and discourse fostering hostility or violence against foreigners or LGBT people and so on). As Trumpism in the United States was then drawing most of the analysts' time and effort (scholarly and otherwise), we decided to skip it, refusing to take it as an automatic theoretical or empirical model, and rather concentrate on a broad range of different contexts that could be compared under the concept of "antipolitical politics". So, India, the Philippines, Kenya, Burkina Faso, Mozambique, Germany, Italy, Colombia, Suriname and Brazil were chosen as empirical cases to be examined by our guest researchers. We were keenly interested in understanding how the "glocal" scene intervened in the ways of doing politics, and how strategies of political reproduction of long-established oligarchies and autocracies could present themselves as absolutely new and anti-political, claiming for radical reforms in the realms of economy, society, culture and education. Also of interest was to assess the subtleties of these proposals, as well as their medium- and long-term effects in countries that had experienced colonial or authoritarian regimes during the twentieth century.

Even now, after some of the electoral victories of anti-political juggernauts have been reverted, especially in the Americas, it is hard to account for its grip on such large swathes of society all over the world or to foretell its next movements. This is the main reason we decided to proceed with the publication of this book – a project that has been, as with almost everything in the last two years, thwarted by the multi-fold disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemics on academic workflows. We hope that the reflections and questions we explored then, somewhat dated as they inevitably are, may help to better understand the complexities and contradictions of this new way to make politics, which is, unfortunately, far from being exhausted.

Writing from the United States under Trump, Brown (2019) argued that the general inability to predict, understand, or effectively challenge these movements was due to, on the one hand, blind assumptions about enduring Western values and institutions – particularly progress, Enlightenment, and liberal democracy –, and, on the other hand, the coming together of unfamiliar elements in the rising political right – with its curious combinations of libertarianism, moralism,

authoritarianism, patriotism, hatred towards the State, Christian conservatism and racism. These new forces combine some commonplace neo-liberal trends (favoring of capital, repression of labor, demonization of the welfare state and party politics as such, assaults on equality, and glorification of individual liberty) with their apparent opposites (patriotism, and enforcement of traditional morality, for example). More recently, Therborn (2021), speaking from the post-Brexit United Kingdom, asks why political responses or popular resistance have been so scarce in face of the sudden increase in inequality experienced since the 1980s, especially in the central countries of the capitalist world economy.

While it may be argued that some of the issues above are too particular to their northern, WASP-haunted setup, the link between neo-liberalism and anti-politics is something to keep in mind, though it most likely will assume different renderings and disparaged significance in different contexts. In a great part of the societies of what is now called the Global South, the implementation of neo-liberal political agendas brought about a widespread, general sense of frustration and insecurity, though construed differently by different social actors. Concurrently, marginal gains by increasingly visible and outspoken social groups historically discriminated against provided a sense of threat for "the world as we knew it". As we know, such feelings can be very easily mobilized. The fact that most of these groups were defined primarily by collective identities of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, foreign or regional origin, etc. helps conceal their intersections with class and reinforce necropolitical stances whose roots date back to relatively recent colonial or authoritarian times. Black populations, women, LGBTQIA+ communities, and dissident bodies remain the priority targets for a range of situations where anti-politics became a mainstream form of doing politics, from resilient parliamentary democracies to neo-fascist regimes whose rulers have been effectively on the move to acquire total or near total control of the state apparatus and censor dissent.

The texts gathered in this volume seek to deal with these issues, and a host of related problems, from a variety of empirical frameworks and analytical perspectives, that may be roughly divided into two blocks, which were taken into account by the editors when organizing this volume. Serving as a general introduction, the initial chapter by Jamile Borges da Silva reflects on the academic conditions of doing socially relevant research, stressing the challenges faced by progressive scholars both in personal and institutional terms, assessing past initiatives and looking for alternatives to move forward in an increasingly hostile environment. Borges da Silva outlines the main themes that were at the basis of the Factory of Ideas as an epistemic project, underlining its methodological and political dimensions in "thinking/doing science". The text explores the empirical experiences of scholars involved in the project, their resistance and resilience in teaching, producing and disseminating a situated knowledge, within and beyond the "Black Atlantic".

Having established the place occupied by this particular edition in the long-term endeavor around our doctoral school, the following six contributions focus on how politics, identity and economy intersect, helping to define, constrain and influence anti-political or populist rhetoric states around the globe, and the practical exercise of state power. The final three chapters, in turn, dwell upon how these new forms of doing politics bear on knowledge production and circulation, the value of its social relevance and political engagement, as well as the place of science (and the

different kinds of science) in political imagination, government planning, and social mobilization, in face of variegated forms of denialism.

In the opening chapter of the first block, Livio Sansone describes recent trends and shifts in the way race and ethnicity have been used as a political platform in Brazil, pointing to the limits imposed on this process by its internal contradictions and the backlash related to the rise of Bolsonarism. Several analyses on worldwide Populism follow, starting from a comparative effort by Aries A. Arugay, who traces similarities as well as differences between Duterte's Philippines and Chaves' Venezuela to build a tentative typology, focusing on performing and rhetorical styles, which the author calls "performative populists". Interestingly, Arugay discusses in his chapter the way leaders derived grievances into successful electoral mobilization and support. In a transversal way, from the most consolidated democracies to the most fragile political systems, populism seems to have progressively slowed social layers, to the detriment of the more liberal and democratic sectors. Geographically and politically located between Lula's Brazil and Chaves' Venezuela, the left-wing, power-sharing experience in Suriname is analyzed by Jack Menke, who stresses, based on historical data, the transnational embedding of such experiences, highlighting the importance of regional blocs, capital flows, border trade and investment as relevant components of its electoral success or failure. In Suriname's case, it is quite clear that international development aid did not reach the expectations of progress; as in the case of some African countries, we should maybe focus the attention on "changing our minds" about what development aid is and, as referred by Elísio Macamo in his contribution in this volume, try to conceptualize it according to endogenous perspectives and experiences. Crossing the Atlantic Ocean into another country with a relatively short history of independent government, Peter Simatei brings the focus to the intimate links of performing, representation, and the reproduction of political elites, or "dynasties" as their critics derogatorily call them. In the Kenyan case study, populism reveals to what extent ruling elites are stripped of ethical values, driven by individual and/or specific group interests, where "the people", is understood as a category of victims of populist leaders. Simatei illustrates the way local leadership did not comply national agendas, leading to a general trend of abandonment of "the people", overwhelmed by a sense of betrayal in the post-independence era. As in the case of Philippines and Venezuela, both young democracies, Kenyan case exemplifies the rhetoric of the leading elites as political strategy to mobilize supporters, in order to legitimize their political ascension and power. The matter of representation (both political and symbolic) and the conflicted, ever-shifting meanings of the nation in former colonial setups is addressed by Subhadra Channa in the context of India, often defined as the largest democracy in the world, in an attempt to trace the historical roots of recent right-wing efforts to narrow the space of citizenship in dangerous games of religious exclusivity. Channa give us a comprehensive historical framework of how colonial powers shaped Indian map, ignoring most of time, local entities and social structures. The chapter invites to reflect about the relevance to study post-colonial societies taking into account what Achille Mbembe called historical processes of "longue durée". In the case of India, it emerged its geographical and cultural complexities, where national hegemonic project have necessarily to be rethought and redraw. Closing this first block, Marco d'Eramo debates the spread and dominance of neo-liberal ideology and its multi-fold global impacts, unveiling the way transnational financial networks and capital flows toward ever-greater concentration relate to the current political landscape. The author illustrates the wicked way in which capital, allied to

religion, shaped the social fabric within a globalized economic structure detached from local realities (territories, traditions and history).

Opening the second block, Elísio Macamo examines the longer-term relationship between state and university in Africa, questioning the quest for development pursued by recently-independent nations, and the broader impacts of a funding policy that, across time, have tended to privilege applied science, while haunting it with the responsibility to find practical, reproducible, implementable ways out of poverty and underdevelopment, to find out that the problem with science and academic research in the Global South lies deeper than the current denialist push. He discusses the problematic idea of development, inquiring the utility of development as a concept, and questioning the role of social values. The central issue, for the author, seems to be the need to rethink development (and "development aid" and "sustainable development") more in terms of "when and how to help" rather than "the way we should help". Assertively, Macamo shows that development assistance cannot be separated from historical events and actions. The following chapter, by José Raimundo Santos, goes deeper into the workings of institutional and structural racism within the academic editorial ecosystem, pointing out the ways it conceals and effectively hampers the circulation of scholarship on racism and race relations, especially when produced by Black scholars, whose number has been steadily growing in Brazil in the last decades, but whose positions, findings and criticism have been hard to get through. In the volume's last contribution, Cyrus Samimi tackles one of the most pressing problems of our times, by examining how the rise of antipolitical politics in Europe – and the general denialism it entails – are affecting the possibilities of governments to act on climate change, both at the domestic and the international level.

As it has probably become obvious and should be no surprise when reading volumes resulting from seminars held on emerging, urging, complex social problems, this book does not have the intent to offer a structured theoretical or methodological framework. Neither it endeavors to establish key concepts nor limits which our academic interest should not trespass. Much rather, this volume should be taken as a brainstorm. At the time we came together in Salvador to share our views on what we thought of then as "the global rise of populism", we were moving into uncharted territory. As such, we purposefully wanted to include as much empirical data and perceived relations as possible. Even though the matters mobilized here deal with different geopolitical, economic, and social contexts, as well as diversified thematic frameworks – with some of the contributions more turned to conceptual and theoretical debates (as the chapters by Elísio Macamo or Ary A. Arugay), while others go deeper into empirical data to reflect on the effects of antipolitical politics on society, political representation, and identity within national boundaries (as the chapters by Peter Simatei or Subhadra Mitra Channa), or yet broaden the focus to adopt transnational or global perspectives (as the chapters by Cyrus Samimi or Marco D'Eramo) – the reader will inevitably come by the leitmotif of inequalities historically perpetrated (either by colonial powers or local governing elites) and their repercussions upon post-colonial, recent-democracy contexts in Latin America, Asia, and Africa. This explains, and hopefully justifies, the wide range of themes and sensibilities present in this volume.

This book, long in the making but still very much timely, is also a bet in bringing together different sensibilities from different spaces in the world, valuing especially the contributions of scholars from the Global South, and within this emerging juncture enunciation spot, from historically

discriminated social groups, including gender approaches. We firmly believe that the coming together of different and diverse sensibilities is one of the best strategies to understand the complex, global problems that we must face in this new era of extremes. May we so open paths to new eras, informed by new political-poetic relations, as Édouard Glissant would call them. We hope you enjoy the reading.

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Producing Knowledge in Extreme Times

The ethical, political, and methodological challenges of the Factory of Ideas

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1 The Factory of Ideas: Dialogues to and from the South

The Factory of Ideas doctoral school, which has been active for twenty years in Brazil, founded in Rio de Janeiro and today located at the Federal University of Bahia, represents an ethical, epistemic, methodological, and political exercise in thinking/doing science, rooted in a commitment to reflect on the tense and porous relationships between Brazil, Africa and the world we conventionally call the Global South.

In this text, I reflect on the experience of this higher education school, its impacts, and resonances for the comprehension of these extreme times, asking whether we are not faced with a new sociotechnical rationality, given the ways in which digital technologies and social media have become central to the rise of conservative and authoritarian leaders. To what extent can today's technological devices be thought of as a historical project serving the new forms of genocide and barbarism?

Recognizing that at a political and ideological level the conservative right has affirmed and defended its own common perspectives in distinct parts of the planet, it will be essential for intellectuals to create theoretical and methodological artifices to confront the model of a unique and fascist white thought that aims to resume its central role on the world stage.

Working in this direction through a variety of different and potent perspectives, the Factory of Ideas (FI hereafter) has offered devices and concepts that enable a profuse dialogue to be established with colleagues from the African continent and the Global South. These included black, Andean and diasporic female writers and intellectuals, in particular, who have denounced the Eurocentric and patriarchal default modes that continue to reproduce the discourses and sociohistorical practices within academia that have led us to the present conjuncture.

In this text I ally myself with authors working beyond the canonical centers of knowledge production, as well as seek to learn from the lived experiences of the young intellectuals who have passed through the FI and taught us so much through their own personal and professional trajectories within different disciplinary fields as an anti-colonial exercise in identifying other gazes, projects, and desires.

This chapter is anchored, then, in the life experiences of the researchers who have trained at the FI, exposing Brazil's structural racism and the different forms of combat and resistance that have emerged from these research projects, the alliances made with other movements, other forms of living and resisting that extend beyond the Black Atlantic.

This book – the result of the 20th edition of the Factory of Ideas doctoral school, held at the Federal University of Bahia, Salvador, in August 2019 – is intended as a way of stimulating debate and disseminating the reflections produced over the course, inspired by its central objective of developing analyses of the emergence of new and exacerbated forms of populism via a critical South-South dialogue as much as a South-North dialogue.

My aim here is to offer intersectional and multi-referenced readings of the role of the Factory of Ideas in the networked exchanges of young researchers, as well as those of experienced investigators whose biographies reveal a long-term commitment to sensitive issues explored by the social sciences, historiography, and anthropology at a time when denialism and anti-science discourses are gaining ground and strength with the same impetus as populist and extremist discourses.

These are fieldwork and research projects that interconnect with themes that have emphasized persistence in adversity and incited our response since 'late modernity' – issues like inequalities, racial questions, the genocide of the black population and identity politics – in an intellectual, almost artisanal endeavor to trace the interweaving connections between texts and contexts, and, simultaneously, launch new lines of inquiry for our readers and our future *fabricantes* – or 'fabricators,' as we call our graduates.

The works presented over these twenty editions of the FI show the impact of the fights of the black movement, especially the portion of this movement that entered Brazilian public universities via affirmative action policies and the quotas law that provided the opportunity for black indigenous and *quilombola* people to enter these spaces.[1] These are research projects and concerns that emphasize the protagonism of a phenomenon pushed into the background by our academies, which still essentially take the output of the Global North as their reference point.

[1] Law no. 12,711, 29 August 2012. Legislates on entry into federal universities (higher education) and federal technical institutes (medium-level education) and sets out other provisions.

They also show the persistence of 'race' and racism as an analytic key to understanding the ways in which the colonial issue and the diasporas have manifested in numerous master's and doctoral projects over these twenty editions of the FI. An array of themes and problems have been approached with such methodological diversity and critical rigor that questions deemed resolved long ago by the canons of the area have now acquired new readings and interpretations.

Mobility – 'exiles,' 'refugees,' 'migrants' – frontiers of belonging, identities, alterities and social hierarchies; the production, uses and disputes surrounding memory and historical immigration; relations between migration and politics; displacements caused by social conflicts; the criminalization of migrations; border surveillance and closures; the relations between the global political economy and immigration policies (at national, regional and international levels); as well as topics like nationalism and the nation state, coloniality and post-coloniality, race and racisms, flows of people, signs and capital, translocal practices and transnationality, globalization and glocalism, imperialism, magic, witchcraft, tradition, modernity, geopolitics, patrimony, southern Africa, central Africa, French-speaking, Portuguese-speaking and sub-Saharan Africa, music and Africanities, literature and Africa, African cinema, subalternities, Evangelization in African contexts, pan-Africanism, the resistance and power of African women, gender, African political systems, terrorism, the treatment of enslaved populations, ethnic conflicts, patrimony and repatriation, among many other themes presented for scrutiny and debate by the Factory of Ideas collective.

Here I wish to evoke the question posed by José J. de Carvalho in a text that has now become compulsory reading, first published a decade ago under the title "the ethnographic gaze and the subaltern voice." (Carvalho 2001) In his text, Carvalho (2001) sets out to comprehend how anthropology positioned itself following the profusion of disciplinary reviews and combinations, asking how the field had responded (or not) to what he called the "theoretical-political challenges set by so-called subaltern studies and by postcolonial theory." After all, he wrote, the project of "connecting to the voices of the oppressed, the subaltern, the excluded, was precisely the promise made by a previous generation of anthropologists of an ethnographic practice critical of the colonial conditions under which the discipline was shaped" (2001: 110).

My question then is: what have we done to meet the ontological and epistemological challenges involved in pursuing the difficult and labyrinthine pathways of a politically engaged and socially situated science – a task assumed in response to the extermination of populations (black, indigenous, female, river-dwelling, LGBTQIA+) and the resurgence of scientific denialism and the diffusion of fake news? How have our universities responded to the provocations of populist, anti-democratic governments, clearly inspired by fascism, which have even hinted at the closure of courses in anthropology, sociology, and philosophy?

This book proposes a set of readings of the contemporary scene, undertaken through thematic and bibliographic surveys based on the theoretical and empirical production of academics invited to this edition (2019) of the Factory of Ideas Doctoral School. From the outset, readers should prepare themselves for an intertextual journey that will involve a cross-pollination of theses and writings based on the experience of our partners, researchers, and course professors, working in universities and contexts quite different from our own. Their discursive inventiveness and epistemic courage provide us with a protective armor against the project of criminalizing art/science and knowledge located outside the white heteropatriarchal west – an armor that

demands adopting new didactic-empirical strategies to both survive and reflect on these processes.

The FI has displayed this same courage in highlighting the need to incorporate new themes and problems – such as those brought by the pandemic, for example – and the impacts on the circulation and production of knowledge in sensitive areas like the issues of race, racism, Afro-diasporic memory, violence, patrimony and memory, taking as its substrate the production of narratives and the new geopolitics of knowledge, today mediated by digital networks and the datacratic system.

More than a celebration of the twenty years of the Factory of Ideas, this chapter is an invitation to help build a transcontinental dialogue and – why not? – a manifesto against the precariousness of life.

This is a text born with a mission then: it aims to serve as the foundation for a synthesis of our activities at the forefront of the FI, the place where I have developed a prolific dialogue with colleagues and students, especially on themes central to the Brazilian social sciences like equality, difference, racism, gender, technologies, and society, on a lexical terrain that is always under dispute.

Occupying the positions of researcher and coordinator of a postgraduate program in ethnic and African studies (2019-2021), I have concentrated my efforts on responding to the innumerable demands placed upon us, especially following the global advance of the Sars-CoV-2 virus, responsible for the current Covid-19 pandemic, which has devastated the equivalent of entire countries at the moment of writing this text. And indeed, continues to advance.

Like the philosopher Preciado (2020), I believe that we need to invent a new political imaginary capable of confronting the logic of war and the hegemony of the market as a topos for knowledge production. To this end, it is essential to take as our baseline the reflections of dissident authors critical of colonial-modern rationality, offering readers an experiential journey to think collectively about the strategies and devices needed to apprehend the contemporary scenario, the pandemic and its effects on historically subalternized populations.

How should we understand the production of an analytic and existential imperative that ignores the ways in which subalternized populations organize socially? We have investigated the latter's attempts to overthrow regimes of exception, their strategies for acquiring visibility, the forms of silencing imposed upon them, and the languages that these populations have elaborated to confront inequality and pain, producing other kinds of *habitus*, other aesthetics to survive the wounds of the colonial past and the traps of the present.

Marshall Sahlins (1990) wrote that our function as investigators is to establish history as a symbolic dialogue between received categories and perceived contexts. Along these lines, we have invested in an artisanal work to place in perspective and dialogue the themes and problems foregrounded over the course of these twenty years of the Factory of Ideas' existence.

2 The Pandemic and Conservatism

Since the formal announcement of the first cases of Covid-19 globally, we have been assaulted by images and news reports that vary between sensationalism, a genuine concern with vaccination programs, and the spread of fake news, making combating the virus a Herculean task for all those involved in the multiple dimensions of the pandemic. Obscurantism has been advancing at the same speed as the spread of the coronavirus itself.

Journalists, specialists and futurists have announced that the end is near! But this is not a warning of the kind made by neo-Pentecostals amid the din and congested traffic of the big cities. The end of the world has been a theme of films, documentaries and song lyrics. Scientists in diverse parts of the world warn that we have already gone beyond the limits of good sense and what lies ahead for us now is chaos, zombie films and dermocosmetic promises to face the twilight of the planet in a state of near immortality and a surfeit of Botox.

The people of the earth – indigenous and quilombola populations and the peoples of the *sertão*, *cerrado* and *recôncavo*, who possess an ancestral knowledge of nature and culture – warn us just how quickly we are careering towards the extinction of our own species. We have transformed into the worst versions of ourselves, as in the films of Fritz Lang. The pandemic has exposed inequalities and we inertly watch the unfolding of a necropolitics of the state, producing death on a war-like scale.

We are all immersed in a scenario that involves complex and multifaceted questions. The pandemic is the result of an intersection, an overlapping of biology, technology, culture, economics, globalization, and society. Initially, though, the bio-epidemiological dimension – articulated with cultural constructs – spoke more loudly. Why? The fact that the first cases of coronavirus occurred in the city of Wuhan, China, raised a familiar specter: racism, xenophobia, and anti-immigration discourses of fascist inspiration, prompting a closure of borders and a wave of insults aimed at Asian populations rehashing the discourse that 'they' are all the same. Once again, the old dichotomy 'Us' and the 'Others,' or citing Stuart Hall (1996), the 'West' and the 'Rest' of the world.

Crises of this kind – epidemiological and viral – tend to make explicit mechanisms of segregation and to deepen structural inequalities. The pandemic is an unequal process and possesses its own geometry of power, despite the common understanding that the disease's epidemiology follows the same path for everyone. All of us face this pandemic with uncertainty, stress, and vulnerability, albeit with different intensities.

Above the noise of this strange and inhospitable world that converts life into commodities, our main task for a future-becoming should be to design technologies to remedy the unequal access to reproductive and pharmacological tools, as well as combat enduring inequalities, the working conditions analogous to slavery, and the multiple forms of oppression of gender, race, and class. Inequality also defines the fields in which our technologies are conceived, constructed, and legislated. This injustice demands structural, machinic and ideological reforms. "Nothing is at the right scale," as Bruno Latour would say about this feeling that haunts our era.

As though this scenario were not bad enough, in Brazil today authoritarianism, the terror conjured by the media, and the desire of the Casa Grande to return to the time of slavery all grow unchecked,

manifest in racist attitudes, assaults on the freedom of expression, the curbing of all forms of intellectual production diverging from its discourses of hate. These have incited defamatory campaigns on the streets, in the newspapers and on social networks against intellectuals, artists, writers, academics and diverse categories of workers historically committed to policies for the social, economic, and intellectual advancement of the poorest sectors of society, black people, women and LGBTQIA+ communities.

A carefully orchestrated movement to smash political institutions, promote the dismantling of the State and privatize our greatest patrimony: education, health, natural resources and much more, shredding our dreams and utopias, produced after long periods of dictatorship and colonization.

We live in difficult times when mainstream newspapers and magazines systematically attack the working class, especially workers in higher education and researchers from public universities, persuading some of the population that privatization of education is a solution to the economic mismanagement of the leaders of Brazil's 2016 congressional coup. Law bills passing through Congress propose the end of labor relations and, despite the pandemic, mobilize government efforts to suck the life out of the country's Unified Health System (SUS).

A project is under way to eliminate public universities and shut down all programs for social inclusion, promotion, and entry onto postgraduate programs, while cutting research grants and participation in international events. The future being unveiled is hardly the most promising.

Anyone paying attention to the direction taken by politics in Brazil over recent years will be well aware that Brazil's foreign policy agenda shifted to privilege diverse missions to the United States of America under the Donald Trump government, as well as Israel under the sway of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Brazil failed to attend the climate summit organized by the United Nations in 2019, alongside Japan, Australia, Saudi Arabia, and the United States, which stated its wish to withdraw from the Paris Climate Accords.

Still on the conservative policy agenda, Brazil has allied with Islamic countries at the United Nations on issues relating to sex and family. Itamaraty, Brazil's foreign office, supported Pakistan's idea to remove sex education from the UN resolution and also backed the proposal to declare that sexual and reproductive rights do not exist, as well as ban the expression 'gender' from its agendas.

For us, this prospect for the future is a clear step backwards, especially because the FI consolidated a series of partnerships from 2010 onwards with countries and research institutions in southern Africa and with Portuguese-speaking countries (PALOP), seeking to construct, in the wider context of the South Atlantic, a network of research, education and exchange of researchers, stimulating the development of international partnerships. It was as part of this support and incentive that I spent time from 2010 to 2014 in Maputo, Mozambique, Cape Verde, and Bissau/Guinea-Bissau to realize a series of training, exchange, and technology transfer activities with the Historical Archive of Mozambique (AHM), the Eduardo Mondlane University, and the National Study and Research Institute/INEP in Bissau. The aim was also to establish a target plan to consolidate the partnership between these countries as part of a bilateral cooperation program between Brazil and Africa.

Over the last decade this network has expanded with the incorporation of projects and researchers from countries with which Brazil, especially Bahia, has very little history of academic relations, such as India, the Philippines, East Timor, or São Tomé and Príncipe.

These partnerships proved fundamental to generating a cycle of positive feedback among a network of researchers who believe in what we call 'digital generosity,' looking to democratize access to sources, collections, and document archives. We believe that such networking can be a powerful tool for research institutions in the context of the Global South.

The FI has converted into a space for debating an anti-colonial anthropology, inviting researchers, scientists, and institutions to dialogue with the colonial past, an anti-colonial present, and an uncertain future. It presents itself as a field alive with political, aesthetic, and discursive possibilities, affirming new and tense relations of internationalization with cooperation agencies on both sides of the Atlantic.

We know that the atavistic memory of these two 'worlds' is filled with silences, ambiguities, ancestral loves, and continental rancor. But it also contains affects, histories, memories, the circulation of signs and flows of people, places, and projects that, far from exhausting their symbolic potential – as an element of research and academic-literary production – still comprise for us a well-spring of aesthetic, discursive, poetic and political possibilities.

3 Building another Geopolitics of Knowledge

Keeping a doctoral school like the Factory of Ideas running for twenty years signifies pursuing an arduous path of thinking/making science in an era when the theoretical edifice of the social sciences is being shaken for political but also now epidemiological motives.

On one hand, we see the world with its crises (epistemological, ethical, identificatory, sanitary) and, on the other, a technopolitical revolution under way that engenders new ways of thinking about social, labor and cultural relations. In this sense, the very intelligibility of the real seems to be compromised, along with the epistemological apparatus providing access to it. To comprehend this complex panorama that has opened up, we must reflect on concepts already in circulation and others now emergent, exploring their limits and their ethical, aesthetic, historical and political significations, including, for instance, the ideas of 'pandemocracy' or 'health leviathan.'

The utilization of new and multiple technologies based on platforms and data processing, already dubbed surveillance capitalism (Zuboff 2021) or platform capitalism (Srnicek 2017), while allowing the redesign of the worlds of work – like the imperative of home office working – has increased our uncertainty about the prospects of a less unequal future more accessible to everyone. A future of heterotopias instead of the old and worn utopias and promises made by the unfinished project of modernity, concurring with Habermas.

Intellectuals who have already taken part in other editions of the FI like Boaventura de Souza Santos (2004, 2006, 2008) have launched severe critiques against the imperious imposition of hegemonic reason against the 'epistemologically subalternized' peoples, counterposing the idea of an "epistemology of vision" to an "epistemology of blindness," creating a tension between knowledge, regulation and emancipation taken as intrinsic to modernity. However, Mignolo (2000) – who also participated in one of our editions of the FI – argues that instead of proposing

a "Sociology of Absences," we should perhaps speak of a "sociology of the silenced" in their submission to the hegemonic imaginary.

Ramon Grosfoguel (2006), a Porto Rican intellectual and a partner who has collaborated with the FI more than once, argues that decolonizing knowledge entails a challenge to the Cartesian "ego-politics of knowledge" of the Western sciences, opposing the latter to the "geopolitics and body-politics of knowledge" of subalternized subjects, defying the logic of epistemic racism.

With Angela Davis, present at two editions of the FI (2008 and 2009), we were institutionally urged to place the university in direct dialogue with society, representatives of civil society and black movements. We successfully caught the attention of the print and digital media (with the eye-catching headline: *activist of the Black Panthers gives a lecture in Salvador*),[2] who, perhaps for the first time, were forced to recognize the combination of racism-misogyny-sexism and patriarchal capitalism.

The city was also set buzzing when, at the peak of a Brazilian soap opera on India, we welcomed two participants of Dalit origin. This stirred the popular imagination, already infused with the fictional TV narratives, provoking curiosity about the presence of the young students in a city still provincial in its customs.[3]

Our belief, therefore, is that another geopolitics of knowledge is revealed at this moment – an epistemological and methodological path especially interesting in terms of the production of another identity politics, counter-hegemonic to those that always privilege Eurocentric knowledge and traditions in a racist world that inferiorizes and disqualifies everyone on the global 'periphery.' It is here that anthropology can help restore the subjectivity of the old anthropological 'object' par excellence: native peoples around the planet.

Ribeiro (2006) highlights the increasingly important role that non-hegemonic anthropologies play in the production and dissemination of knowledge at global level. According to him, many anthropologies are ready to participate in this new scenario. Indeed, their increased international visibility is a prerequisite for us to achieve a more heteroglossic and egalitarian community of world anthropologists and more complex forms of creating and circulating theory and knowledge at global level.

Ribeiro appeals for "a critical anthropology of anthropology" – that is, a perspective that decentralizes, rehistoricizes and pluralizes what has been considered 'anthropology' up until now. This entails questioning not only the content but also the methods, concepts, and fields of anthropological research. *Monologic, hegemonic anthropology must be replaced by heteroglossic anthropologies to weaken the authority of reified custom and tradition* (Ribeiro 2006).

What always guided the work of the FI as a school was the endeavor to provide spaces of research and the circulation of theories and approaches that encourage locally-developed concepts and

2 http://www.reparacao.salvador.ba.gov.br/index.php/15-cmcn/405--sp-653146251.

3http://bahiaja.com.br/cultura/noticia/2009/07/29/ativista-angela-davis-em-salvador-para-workshop-ceaoufba,17396,0.html.

theories to emigrate to other cognitive places, allowing them to be employed outside their context of origin.

Put otherwise, our methodological approach encourages participants to wave goodbye to familiar but no longer convincing or secure conceptual, theoretical, and epistemological places – a farewell made in search of a better life, moving to other places where optimism is better founded and where knowledge can once again become an enchanted adventure.

4 For the Perspectives of the Future

In this text, like the Senegalese Felwine Sarr (2019), I declare myself to be neither an Afro-pessimist nor an Afro-utopian but rather an Afro-realist. I imagined this text in close proximity to the notions of becoming, futures, transformations, assemblages and bricolages, seeking to articulate physical and discursive technologies from the perspective of indigenous, quilombola and subalternate peoples in order to as a means to understand the predictions and possibilities for pedagogical and political synergies – or, in other words, to produce possible utopias.

Twenty years! So many histories and horizons! My belief was that we need to speak about the future to understand how we arrived here in the present.

To speak about the future setting out from this old and beautiful city of Salvador. The future entered our agendas and conversations definitively in the twentieth century from the years after the Second World War, although our horizon still offers more distrust than possibilities. We mortgaged the future in various ways and produced a kind of "theory of time" that sought to explain how societies have related to the future. It was Max Weber, the German sociologist, who said that the meaning of politics, for example, was to "manage the future and assume responsibility for it."

My interest here has resided in establishing a kind of mediation between the legacy of the past, the priorities of the present and the challenges of the future so as to understand how a postgraduate course like the Factory of Ideas could survive such gloomy prospects for the future. As the philosopher Daniel Innerarity (2012) says, the "*future has terrible advocates in the present and suffers from chronic weakness*." (Innerarity 2012)

Every time we wanted to discover the future, we consulted oracles, seers, tarot card readers and spiritist tables, seeking out different forms of prediction as a kind of analytic offering or an anthropology of sorcery, conceiving new tools to understand how to manipulate the idea of the future in the present.

A kind of temporal myopia exists that impairs our capacity to represent tomorrow. We only succeed in discerning the future when we associate it with the discourse of technological innovation, as if the future were the abode of triumphant modern progress alone. We live under a kind of tyranny of the present in which some groups savor the nostalgia of the colonial past. Something akin to a "temporal coloniality" in which a few determine the space and territoriality occupied by the many. When the future horizon of some groups is maintained under the scrutiny of others in a temporally dated perspective, we run the risk of remaining subject to the tyranny of decisions in which the past imposes itself on the future.

It is not a question, then, of predicting the future in this conversation but of transforming the future into an element of reflection, with all its uncertainties, to create new paths and project meanings for diverse social groups and for the resistance of the Factory of Ideas.

Over the last twenty years, we have seen the birth of Facebook and the death of Orkut; Wikileaks released its first reports and the world of journalism changed dramatically; we witnessed the dawn of the era of Luis Inácio Lula da Silva (2003-2011) and the coup of 2016 that ousted Dilma Rousseff; the advance of conservatism and the first transwomen to complete doctorates at public universities; we saw insects play the lead role in movie blockbusters while other creepy-crawlies were given government posts; we were startled by 9/11 and the fabrication of media wars; natural and human-made disasters and tragedies foretold; the Wachowski brothers of the Matrix trilogy became the Wachowski sisters and inaugurated a new era in science fiction cinema; women led revolutions and feminisms extrapolated the algorithms, leading to the emergence of thousands of young girls and women leading movements for emancipation, autonomy, respect and the overthrow of patriarchy.

Over its 20 years of existence, the Factory of Ideas has reflected on notions of color, race, and the history of the African diaspora, while simultaneously contesting white western utopias/dystopias, seeking to understand and rework classical notions like identity, interconnecting intellectual production along a South-South axis, producing an epistemological revival as an antidote to worn-out concepts and discourses. We have offered an intersectional perspective on possible futures through a perspective rooted in the history of the black population.

From Belém to Bissau, Macapá to Maputo, Tocantins to East Timor, Porto Alegre to Portugal, Cape Verde to Cuiabá, Johannesburg to João Pessoa, Salvador to Senegal, hundreds of students, lecturers, and professors have passed through the Factory of Ideas, making this doctoral school one of the most innovative and internationally acknowledged programs for reflecting on global transformations in recent decades.

In our Atlantic crossing, we have been marked by the course of the ocean, carried from one shore to the other while our enemies continue to try erasing our traces at the bottom of the sea. If our history takes place between shores, how should we approach the third shore? Like Guimaraes Rosa (2001: 14-48) by narrating, fictionalizing, portraying, performing, encountering cracks where erased memories can dance in the counterflow, evoking other memories to exorcize the violence that has marked both originary Atlantic shores.

Over these 20 years, the Factory of Ideas has traversed oceans with its networks of former 'fabricators,' stimulating young students to fabricate other rhizome-like narratives, uniting people, projects, and institutions in equidistant points of the world, like a young Indian man, our former student, and our students originating from the quilombos of Bahia.

With our colleagues, speakers, and students, we seek to learn other epistemological tools capable of helping us understand the complexity of the equation between ethnic groups, nation, and identity processes in extreme times, making opportune use of a rich, novel, and dense conceptual itinerary.

We are being challenged to react to the current setbacks and retain hope in an era of crisis. The Factory of Ideas is an epistemological adventure. It would be a long and exhaustive task to

delineate here the contributions of everyone who has collaborated over the years to the political and pedagogical survival of the FI. We have had the honor of welcoming some of the most prominent names from research in the humanities over the last fifty years. Names that have reinvented the historiography, sociology, anthropology, and political thought on the processes of liberating the countries of the African continent in their process of self-determination. Intellectuals who force us to revisit our own history and develop/consolidate the field of ethnic studies from the starting point of Bahia.

This text is a challenge, therefore, to imagine tomorrow. To expand the frontiers and horizons of knowledge production. A challenge to escape the conceptual tricks and traps of the present and the nostalgia for the colonial past.

Thinking about populisms, nationalisms and extreme times means recognizing that, just like people, concepts too migrate, move about, demanding from us the endeavor to map their historical trajectory. Like us, some concepts resist and stubbornly persist, sometimes over a long period. Other times, they are revealed in a state of suspension, epiphenomena indicative of a time. They become dated and, in certain cases, generate noises and obstacles, a din that is not always easy to decipher and interconnect.

It will be necessary, therefore, to rethink the future as a scenario of liberty, a promise, in which our utopias can become concretized. May the Factory of Ideas transform into a place of resistance to obscurantism, fascism, and the attempt to silence the university, and may the city of Salvador host the seed for the next editions… in Brazil or anywhere where hope is renewed.

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The Intermittent Fortune of Ethno-racial Identity in Brazil

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1 The intermittent Fortune of ethno-racial Identity in Brazil[1]

Both multiculturalism and affirmative actions are cause and effect of what I call the "identity wave", which in the last two or three decades has meant a general transformation and dynamization of identity processes in this country. The great sociopolitical change we are going through forces us to deeply reflect on sectorial identities and inequalities and, more specifically, the relatively short but impactful trajectory of multiculturalism and reparatory policies regarding the population historically discriminated against in Brazil. Here I want to rethink the last 30 years, 15 of which were with a government led by the Workers' Party (PT).[2] This also means reviewing the development of research on this theme, in awareness that in Brazil the identity configuration is, once again, in motion.

It is necessary to start by pointing to the fact that the terms "ethnic" and "ethnicity" has become part of popular culture and the languages of the State and the media, in fact, in a relatively recent period in Brazil. As is known, we had an ethnophobic past. There was a denial of a racial issue after 1888, the year of the Abolition of slavery, although the intellectual elite in the Old Republic

1 The core of this essay was presented at a seminar organized by the Graduate Program in Social Sciences of the Pontifical Catholic University of Minas Gerais (PPGCS/PUC Minas), in November 2018. I want to thank the anonymous reviewers for the suggestions, as well as Felipe Bruno Martins Fernandes and Sueli de Souza Borges, for their careful review of the text and of the concepts used in it.

2 A confession: this window of time corresponds also to my experience in Brazil, where I live and I've been working since 1990. Well, if it was always important to ask who and why we investigate a topic, this is even more important when the theme is ethnic identity and its relationship with socioeconomic status, with class, and in a country with strong tensions along ethnic and racial lines like ours. It's also worth noting that the fact that I'm white and born and raised in Italy, although long engaged with anti-racism in Brazil, puts me in a particular position in the debate on anti-racism and the kind of multiculturalism we want for this country. This is a debate in which, implicitly or explicitly, we all participate and within which, to paraphrase Geertz, we are all "natives" – – we all participate in it with both our brain and guts.

was preoccupied with three dilemmas that did not support the notion of progress: the fact that Brazil was almost all located in the tropics, a large part of the population was of African origin and there was a growing number of mestizos. The Berlin Conference of 1883-1887 had established that civilization was not inherent in the Tropics, that Africans needed "help" to develop, and that the mestizos, when not simply ignored, would be "inappropriate" from a civilizing point of view because they did not fit into the racial geography of the time, in which each, so-called, great race (white, yellow, red and black) was from a certain continent. The context changed radically, when, as from the 1930s, based on modernism and with greater force in the Estado Novo, the State promoted the narrative (or myth) of racial democracy in a discourse that, substantially, was also used by the 1964 Military Dictatorship.

After the Second World War, in terms of both the identity policies themselves and their studies, we have had several phases. The first phase starts approximately in the early 1950s and goes on to the re-democratization process in the mid-1980s. These are the years of substantiation, in fact, of the myth of racial democracy by most of the anthropological research that, starting with the great Unesco/Columbia Project, in the state of Bahia in the years 1950-1953 (Wagley 1952; Maio 2000; Pereira and Sansone 2007), argues that Brazil would be a country with strong cleavages of class, but weak racial division and discrimination. Although some sociologists involved in the same project (Roger Bastide, Florestan Fernandes and Luís Costa Pinto) emphasized the relevance of racism in the organization of social hierarchies, even for them, the process of emancipation from racism did not go through some kind of resurgence of ethnic-racial identities. In fact, for almost everyone, with few exceptions – Clovis Moura (1959) and Abdias do Nascimento (1978)[3] –, Brazil and the rest of Latin America, until the 1980s, was described as one of the most "ethnophobic" regions in the world. For the North American sociologist Talcott Parsons, Latin America was the rest continent from the point of view of ethnic processes (Parsons 1968), contrary to a worldwide trend. In this part of the world, he argued, the feeling of belonging of an ethnic nature would have less strength and there would never be identity politics because of the force of Catholic (ecumenical) thought that would not favor them, a long time tradition of miscegenation and popularity - both among the subalterns and, although in a different light, in the elites – the discourse centered around belonging to a class. It was the discourse corroborated by most US and European philanthropy[4] (Dzidzienyo and Casal 1979; Davis 1999).

In those years in Brazil, as in most other contexts, having an African appearance, being discriminated against and being poor was not, in itself, enough to "become black". In the same way, being of indigenous descent did not make the individual, let's say, automatically, an indigenous person. A black community, a black vote or a black movement were not – and still are not – a natural fact, but creations of certain contingencies; something similar would apply to the indigenous people. That is why in Brazil one could and still have blackness without ethnicity (Sansone 2003a), as well as in other contexts, especially in the United States, where one could also have a black ethnicity without blackness – without Africanisms, as already pointed out by Melville

3 For texts that are more specifically academic, but with a great impact on black activism, see the work of sociologist Octavio Ianni and, further on, the paradigmatic book by Carlos Hasenbalg (1915).

4 For a good example, it is interesting to follow the reports of the organization Minority Rights Group, based in Great Britain. Initially in print, in recent years these reports have been available at https://minorityrights.org/country/brazil/. Accessed 11 May 2020.

Herskovits, in the 1940s. For new black and indigenous identities to emerge massively in our context, they needed something more, an "ethnic chemistry" that was not always available.

With the re-democratization, above all due to the pressure of the new black movement (which includes political organizations, carnival associations and Afro cultural groups, Pastoral do Negro – blacks groups within the Catholic church), a new wave of denunciations of racism and an opinion campaign around themes like "black is beautiful" or "don't let your vote go blank". From approximately the mid-1980s onwards, there is one more general change. In a process both quick and surprising, several nations in Latin America have become the part of the West where in recent decades there has been more experimentation with redistributive measures or affirmative action in favor of ethnic and/or racial discriminated groups, and where many interesting projects have emerged in terms of production and revitalization of ethnic identities of both indigenous and African matrix. I am referring to changes of the legal nature, with the gradual incorporation, from 1990, in the wording of the text of the constitution, of the term "multicultural" and even "multiethnic" (in the constitution of, at least, Colombia, Nicaragua, Mexico, Argentina and Ecuador), as well as to the increase in cultural production associated with ethnic-racial identities. I think, among the many examples available, of the new "Aimarist" style and fashion in Bolivia (Maclean 2019) that developed along with the rise and consolidation of the indigenous and Aymara president, Evo Morales, until his violent deposition in 2019 (Pennain 2018); or the huge growth of self-produced humorous films by Quechua-speaking comedians in Peru that circulate by YouTube.[5]

There was, in fact, a rapid and complex change of meaning of icons and terms associated with indigenous and black identities, such as clothes, ways of wearing hair, speeches, musical genres and even consumer styles. Quickly, these icons stopped being a burden – stigmas historically associated with practices of exclusion and racism – to become a bonus – factors that can positively contribute to a broader process of social inclusion and that can be associated with new collective rights. I refer, for example, to a new set of land-rights for quilombolas (maroon communities), riverside dwellers and indigenous groups recently recognized by the State as such or to the preservation of a certain aspect of cultural heritage associated with popular and/or Afro culture, even in museums (Santos 2004).

The Fernando Henrique Cardoso government had the merit of publicly acknowledging that Brazil has a racism problem. It organized a conference in Brasilia to announce this to the nation and, in 1995, established the Interministerial Working Group for the Empowering of the Black Population (Sales 2014). It was, however, with Lula in the period from 2002 to 2016 that great changes took place (Lima 2010), with the gradual transformation of what was historically a burden – things African and the black race – into a bonus – Africanity and being black. Characteristics such as blackness, which historically have been experienced as a burden or a stigma factor, began to be presented as possible bonuses. It is, of course, a process that is not free from contradictions. It is necessary to reflect on what it means, for those who have always been discriminated against and forgotten in the organization of the official narrative of a country and its regimes, becoming an

5 See, for example, comics in Quechua during the Foncodes Contest (Andahuaylas, Apurímac). Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PzHf_mmkDiI. Accessed 13 May 2020.

interesting phenomenon, deserving support, preservation and even musealization. It was often a transition from invisibility to new visibility, sometimes hypervisibility (Sansone 2019).[6]

Well, things can change and, in the current contingency, Brazil is about to move into another ethnic configuration. After the ethnophobic posture of the 1964 Dictatorship and the more ethnicity-prone attitude of the FHC Era and, above all, Lula/Dilma, Brazil is moving towards a third configuration, characterized by a new authoritarian version of the universalist discourse and a much more violent denial of the right to diversity.

2 Ethnicity

To continue my reasoning, we need to establish some common understanding around two important terms: "ethnicity", or its synonym, "ethnic identity" – terms the sudden popularity of which in the Humanities from the 1950s owes a lot to the fact the term was emphasized by Unesco in its famous and striking statement about the non-existence of races (Unesco 1950).

For Unesco, the term "ethnic group" would be the most appropriate way to define those population groups that until those years were easily labeled with the term "race (s)" (Sansone 2014). From the late 1960s onwards there has been a consensus in the Social Sciences that ethnicity is one of the possible forms of collective identity (Barth 1969; Cohen 1974; Da Carneiro Cunha 2009). Like all identity processes, nationalism and ethnicity are always more relational and "impure" than how they present themselves in their public discourse. This is also since ethnic identity is always combined with other forms of collective identity, especially those inspired by class, gender, age or generation. In other words, a person is never just black, white or Indigenous, just as no one is just straight or gay. The same thing goes for class consciousness, something that has a lot to do with the process of identity formation. I think of Marx's notion of class in and for itself (Sansone 2003). Class does not exist as a "natural" fact, but arises or is produced as class consciousness in certain contexts and moments – but not in all.

Ethnicity can be based on behavior, language, religion or biotype and a combination of all of these. It is characterized and distinguished from other forms of collective identity because it almost always has to do with the idea of an origin and/or common history or journey, with notions such as blood, ancestors and territory. Therefore, in this process, there is always a political use of history, which is selectively rediscovered depending on the priorities of the present. Ethnicity and the use of the category "race" – is a way of doing politics or it can be a language mobilized to give voice to concerns that, in other contexts and moments, would be characteristic of the class condition or that in another configuration of power they would be represented as an expression of workers' culture (Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies 1982: 341). As in all identity processes, for this to develop, an internal perspective is not enough, but an external gaze is needed - what the others think and say about you and your group (Arruti 2014).

6 The popularization of the term “ethnic” was quick and powerful. As an example, I'll tell you a personal episode. In 1992, shortly after my arrival as a visiting researcher at the Federal University of Bahia (UFBA), during an interview about the civil war in the former Yugoslavia, live on TV, the journalist asked me, candidly, what was ethnicity and what was the remedy against it, giving me 30 seconds to answer. Less than a decade later, I came across in my bathroom the fact that the term "ethnic" had already migrated to the world of beauty creams and shampoos. This change was due, to a large extent, to our incipient experiment with multiculturalism.

Furthermore, in the processes of ethnic identification, there is always a social and symbolic dimension. The social dimension can be based on a territorially limited community or, on the contrary, even a diasporic connection; it can manifest itself in everyday life, but also predominantly on weekends or nights (in the domain of leisure). For the rest, ethnicity is the use of diacritical symbols to constantly redefine the "we" versus the "them" category – something that can be done intensely or, so to speak, part-time, episodically.

Late modernity, or hypermodernity, theorists argue that today ethnicities tend to be more and more deterritorialized, eclectic, and complex: community less identities, networked identities (Castells 2000), intermittent identities. These neo-identities would tend to be less absolute, more easily combined with the rhythms and obligations of modern urban life. The success of many of the new large ethnic projects (Agier 2001) is due precisely to the fact that they are less centered on the roots, genealogies, being rooted in local history and a given territory, the socio-cultural idiosyncrasies of a given population group, and more on routes, networks, the aesthetic of difference that is intelligible to all those "outside". The preservation of localized heritage - the memory, the secret or the precepts that characterized various identities of a more communitarian type, for which participating was constantly referring to the past or remembering - has become less important. There is a new investment in the aesthetic and the spectacular in these new forms of ethnicity, which are theatre-like identities, the strength and attraction of which come more from horizontal movements in space, such as the search for alliances with other communities in different regions, than from some specific ability to show a depth – vertical – connection concerning a specific territory, time and history. The political use of the ethnic-racial difference in the struggle for civil rights in Brazil in recent years has created better conditions for the construction of "new communities", new forms of social organization around ethnic difference the aim of which is the struggle for (new) rights, rather than strengthening and cohesion of old communities and expressions of historically discriminated groups – although these neo-community forms have often invoked as part of their identity the celebration of ancient traditions or genealogies (French 2009; Lifschitz 2011).

In short, ethnicization processes are always relational – they need an adversary group for them to manifest – and phenomena in constant change and movement. So, ethnicity does not develop in a vacuum, but in a context determined by history and contemporary circumstances – a set that I, paraphrasing Norbert Elias, call "ethnic configuration", that is, a field of (in)possibilities that develops its ethnic-racial habitus. This would be a certain situation that defines both the limits and the opportunities for the identity processes. Not all times or epochs are equally fertile for the emergence of new identity processes of an ethnic, racial or nationalist nature. Furthermore, although they are constitutive of the ethnicization processes, which always present themselves as unique, eternal and holders of a long and glorious future, not all ethnic or nationalist projects have a long life, quite the contrary. It follows this reasoning that ethnicity is not, therefore, something natural or perennial, but something that manifests itself under certain conditions, when actors, as theorists of Rational Choice Theory (Banton 1983) or "transactionism" would say (Barth 1969), think that mobilizing the ethnic charter is worthwhile.

3 Multiculturalism

It is now necessary to place multiculturalism in its historical context, even if in a summarized way. Multiculturalism can be understood as a set of discourses and/or practices that emerged, in the first place, in societies and cultures with myths of origin, different from Brazil, which over the last century has emphasized miscegenation and the myth of racial democracy. As described elsewhere (Sansone 1998; 2003; 2007, this phenomenon emerged during the 1980s as an ideal in European countries (especially Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands), but also in Canada, Australia and New Zealand, which are often identified with the notion of plural society and that were trying to deal with ethnic, racial and cultural difference through a set of public actions. These are countries that, in addition to having internal minorities or those from the former colonies, have received strong immigration, especially after World War II. These are countries where an organic relationship between discourse, law and multicultural practices is verified.

At the basis of this multiculturalism, there are three classic sources: social pact (the commitment of the State and part of the elites to take care of the excluded and the poor); colonial past (that is, how the organization and sometimes even the militarization of confrontation in the face of cultural diversity proceeded in the colonies); and tradition (which concerns the ways of dealing with the internal ethnic and regional differences of these European countries). Some of these countries assert themselves as a nation-state based on their liberal stance towards regionalism, through the public celebration of a commitment to regionalized cultural differences, redistributing resources and political power to minorities and internal "colonies". I refer to the Catalans, Basques, Britons, Welsh, Sardinians, Corsicans, etc. Not every country in Europe is affected in the same way by these three phenomena. A given country may show generosity and tolerance towards the social pact, but not towards regionalism and vice versa.

Although multicultural measures have also been taken in public employment and the world of advertising, it is in the world of education that the process is centered. The essence of these measures is the reconfiguration of school curricula, the hiring of teachers specialized in resolving ethnocultural conflicts among students and in the relationship between parents and school, the psycho-pedagogical teachers counseling, students, parents and, more generally, activities in the direction of what can be called "education for inter-ethnic tolerance" (and sometimes about discriminated groups such as homosexuals, the obese and the disabled). What is common to these countries is the centrality of public primary and secondary education in the development of practices, methods and cultures of multiculturalism. Multiculturalism reached the universities after or along with a process that began in schools and local and national articulations of the welfare state. It is, therefore, a process interconnected with the history of the welfare state and its ways of controlling and, somehow, mitigate the impact of social inequalities. A process by some even described as a political-cultural movement, which peaked between 1980 and 2000 and then became one of the great enemies of the new conservative right in Europe, as well as in the United States and Australia. These (new) conservatives accuse multiculturalism of not favoring the cultural integration of immigrants into the mainstream of society and of encouraging disunity and even racial hatred, especially when multicultural measures were associated with forms of redistribution of scarce resources (housing, jobs, gratified functions in public employment, etc.). For thinkers of the right, the State should be much more reticent in this area, abandoning affirmative action and leaving it to the invisible hand of the market, while limiting itself, at most,

to the promotion of diversity, for example, in the command positions of large companies or universities. Preaching in favor of diversity, insisting on improving and making more tolerant the internal culture of a company or university, but without questioning structural and systemic racism and without a direct link to affirmative action measures, characterizes, especially in the United States, the conservative shift towards the position of the State towards ethnic-racial minorities, which started with the Bush administration, but was consolidated and radicalized during the Trump administration[7].

In short, anti-racism, affirmative action, multiculturalism and diversity management have been different but interconnected phenomena with different degrees of radicality and impact on extreme and durable inequalities. In general, Social Democratic governments, more interested in using the State as a mediator of social tensions, have invested much more both in affirmative action, as a remedial measure, and in the multicultural approach to managing the relationship with their ethnic or racial minorities. It should therefore come as no surprise that the relative crisis of social democracy and laborism in Europe – and also in Australia – is related to a certain crisis of multiculturalism. In the last decade, countries that had been champions of multiculturalism, such as the Netherlands, have even introduced "cultural integration" exams as a requirement not only for obtaining citizenship but even for the renewal of residence permits for immigrants [8].

What we have had in Brazil, but also and with greater strength in other Latin American countries, from the 1990s onwards, has been the development of multicultural practices and affirmative action of a different nature, because they are generally detached from the State social policies and concentrated in the university environment, much more than in schools. Although there had been a set of pilot experiments in schools in the main capitals promoted, above all, by activists of the black movement, it was as a result of the approval, in 2003, of Law No. 10,369 that there was a great and until then in schools and universities unprecedented increase in interest in the history of Africa and of African descendants in the Americas – and, shortly thereafter, due to yet another law, in the reality of indigenous populations.

Furthermore, there was a synergy relationship between multicultural practices and affirmative action measures. Between 2003 and 2016, there were two programs in schools that created conditions for multicultural activities, those promoted by the Secretariat of Continuing Education, Literacy, Diversity and Inclusion (Secadi), which created the new National Curriculum Guidelines for Basic Education Diversity and Inclusion and promoted the campaign "Gender and Diversity at

7 There is already a field of research in the United States often called "trumpology", with numerous scientific and journalistic publications, including those concerning affirmative action and diversity. One of the so many interesting sites is available at: https://www.emeraldgrouppublishing.com/archived/realworldresearch/world_events /inclusion-and-diversity-in-the-age-of-trump.htm. Accessed 11 May 2020. On that same date, there were more than 50,000 entries in the voice Trump in the Amazon catalog.

8 For someone like me who lived for 13 years in the Netherlands and did a master's and doctorate there in the 1980s-1992, the change in policy keywords is particularly shocking about the flow of immigrants. In the early 1980s the State slogan was “integration with the maintenance of the own culture and identity", by the mid-1990s, the emphasis had shifted to the "assimilation process" (inburgeringsprocess).

School", and the ProExt program, both of the Ministry of Education (Fernandes 2011)[9]. Quotas and other measures for historical reparation, together with a great effort to increase the number of places at universities, made them much more inclusive from both a class and ethnic-racial point of view.

In recent years, affirmative action has reached the admission Master and Ph.D. programs, representing a new advanced frontier in the struggle against inequalities. With the significant increase in the percentage of black and indigenous students, better bases were given for a reform of education in the direction of multiculturalism, introducing new content, knowledge and practices. Unfortunately, in recent years there has not been enough investment and support from the Ministry of Education (MEC) for this synergy to flourish in the best possible way.

4 Four " Revolutions "

The "identity wave", which I talked about before, makes up the ethnic revival which, in turn, forms part of a broader process that encompasses at least four more "revolutions". These are typical of a society in rapid transition to new forms of modernity, in which identities are gradually more chosen, as part of a new process of recognition than, say, inherited because they are derived from the experience of statutory relations within relatively cohesive communities (Melucci 1996; Honneth 2003). It is about the demographic revolution, which has rapidly reduced the number of young people and opened up opportunities for the emergence of youth consumption, also of culture, styles and technologies. This kind of opportunity only happens in societies where fewer young people receive more attention from parents and adults in general - youth as a category and sociological type is something more recent than many people think.

There has also been an educational revolution whereby more young people are in school, although this is probably less important today than in the past, in terms of shaping students' personalities, with the school having to compete with peer groups and social media. Within this increase in schooling, in Brazil, as in previous decades it had already happened in the black population of the United States and throughout the Caribbean (Davis 1981; Mac Donald and MacDonald 1978), the gender gap has increased. In the lower strata, it is already evident that women are better educated than men. However, the gap between women of different ages has also increased: illiteracy is concentrated among elderly women, while among young people, especially in the poorer classes, women have better school performance. The third revolution consists in the fact that there is, or there was, an advance in the quality of life and the consumption pattern of the lower layers. This is, in itself, a major factor in changing the identity process about gender, generation, ethnic-racial identity and, above all, class: it changes the horizon of that which is possible and desirable. It is a phenomenon that frightens the elites for whom the masses always want more! And we know that Brazil has a gigantic social deficit, being one of the most unequal countries in the world and, certainly, the most unequal in the region. This change in perspective on work is associated with a revolution in expectations and the globalization of desire in terms of possible consumption – which becomes global much faster than actual opportunities. Fifteen years ago, I published a text in a collection organized by Carlos Hasenbalg and Nelson do Valle Silva (Sansone 2004a) whose

9 On 13 May 2020, I noticed the page Secadi on the MEC site had been deactivated and that the ProExt page was no longer updated as of 2016.

central argument was that the phrase "they no longer make housemaids as they used to". This popular say, which is heard in many contexts, reveals some real change in Brazil. The text went on to indicate that, concerning the perception of work, there was a large and growing generational difference. Faced with a generation that struggled to have a work permit, there is a new generation that "does cleaning", but does not consider themselves a house cleaner and often, rather than taking any job offer, chooses for waiting for a "proper job" that allows them to dream of citizenship, consumption and modernity. The identity wave did not leave perceptions about work and class position untouched, also because a profound change is taking place in the world of work itself, afflicted by a further process of precariousness, within a context characterized by a historical precariousness of a large part of the workforce, by many today called "uberization", summarized in the idea of (micro) entrepreneurship as a survival strategy.

There is yet another revolution in the field of communications technologies. It went from the community telephone to the public telephone, from the popularized family subscription plans for a landline at home to the cell phone and the smartphone (with applications that soon acquire a "native" name like "zap" (for Whatsapp), or that become popular with exponential force, such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and TikTok). Today, the world is no longer divided between those who have and those who do not have a phone, but, more and more, between those who have a smartphone with or without credit. What today divides the world is no longer access to communication technology, but rather the ability to know how to surf the waves of this new globalization of lifestyles and expectations. This process says a lot about social change in most of the Third World (Sansone 2017) and because of that, also in Brazil, where social relationships become more individualized, but communication and mobility are increasingly important – regardless of the quality of communication itself (in fact most, for example, "zap" or activity on Facebook is with people who live close by and who think alike). We need to reflect deeply on Information Technologies, without demonizing them: if the WhatsApp application was decisive in the vote in favor of Brexit and the election of Trump, Modi, Duterte, Duque and Bolsonaro, Facebook was also decisive in the Obama campaign and has already been considered by many progressives as an instrument of a new global conviviality.

Although I do not agree that social media are, in themselves, villains of democracy, it is clear that interference in important electoral campaigns of companies, such as the famous Cambridge Analytica, with robots that shoot in mass fake news, and alt-right's strong presence on the internet forces us to take a more critical stance as regards the field of mass communication and the way to do politics and win elections in the era of social media.

It is curious that, in this context, another value inversion has taken place with the term "globalization". For the so-called Sovranists, today the term "globalization" has become almost an equivalent of "Marxist culture", although when it began to be used in the Social Sciences, around 1990, it immediately aroused the harshest criticisms of social movements on the left – we think of the movements No Logo (Klein 1999) –, which identified it as the highest point of the project of expansion and universalization of capitalism. Finally, but without claiming to have exhausted the list of possible "revolutions", I cannot fail to refer to the authentic revolution of intangible heritage, the process of empowering popular cultures and ethnic identities through the patrimonialization of intangible culture by various state agencies. A little more than ten years ago, the Brazilian Federal Supreme Court's voted in favor of the territorial claims of indigenous and quilombola

communities and unanimously approved the constitutionality of affirmative action policies in access to higher education. This indicated that a new horizon for emancipation and the formation of identity was in sight. Here, for the sake of brevity, I have highlighted the most relevant changes, but it is evident that, concerning the past, there are both ruptures and continuities.

Assessing a posteriori the movement that started with affirmative action, aiming at a multicultural intervention in schools and universities, I see a set of obstacles. There has been a ferment in terms of new multicultural experiences in the curricula, although there have been relatively few antiracist campaigns and little education for tolerance. The State, more than promoting anti-racist projects and education for tolerance, found it easier to educate for identity, producing in past years an interesting new vocabulary in themselves: diversity, territories of culture and identity, practical knowledge, masters of traditional knowledge, intangible heritage, points or hubs of memory/heritage, etc.[10] It can be argued, with good reason, that this was what could be done and that it was important to make the then restricted Brazilian universities more inclusive, that the non-white population is the majority and that is why it was necessary to quickly take some compensatory measure.

There is no way to disagree with this, but I emphasize that part of the problems we have been facing and that we will face, for example, about the relatively difficult popularization of education associated with Law No. 10.639, is precisely the result of the partial character of our multiculturalism, the lack of connection with redistributive measures, its little insertion at the core of the school curriculum and its excessive emphasis on the need to strengthen identity processes of an ethnic type – something which tends to fail when it is part of public policies designed in a centralized way, instead of emerging from below, based on local demands. It concerned that phenomenon that Martins Fernandes (2011) has called the "Inducer State": a State that promotes not only economic development, but also certain social groups. Martins Fernandes, in his doctoral thesis (2011), uses as an example how the Lula government "induced" the creation of a political group named "LGBT youth", which was non-existent in the movement and was created for responding to government policies and open applications or calls. In terms of analysis, three orders of problems can be considered:[11]

a) the movement towards affirmative action and multiculturalism cannot serve as a way to avoid the broader issue of the extreme and lasting inequalities that seem to characterize the modernity of some countries, including Brazil. As Nancy Fraser (2002) has already indicated, in her reply to the theses of Axel Honneth (2003), deep down there cannot be recognition (a determining element in identifying the beneficiaries of affirmative action measures) without redistributing resources and without fighting for the improvement of the common good, just as we cannot speak of ethnocultural diversity disconnected from the issue of the-racial and social inequalities;

b) the rhetorical-ideological dimension of action affirmative, because I am concerned about the theatrical dimension of the debate around affirmative action, especially during the

10 In 2018, the State Planning Secretariat of Bahia divided the territory of Bahia into 27 Territories of Identity. Available at: http://www.seplan.ba.gov.br/modules/content/content.php?content=17. Accessed 11 May 2020.

11 For a breakdown of my position on this, see Sansone (2007).

presidency of Fernando Henrique Cardoso. Today, when quotas are a reality, albeit threatened, it is perhaps worth thinking that a project for the effective incorporation of Federal Law No. 10.639 into the academic world - the biggest multicultural project for the time being - will work much better if it is thought of as an anti-racist education project for tolerance rather than as de facto ethnic project, centered on strengthening sectoral identities through the culturalization of diversity;

c) the type of content to be given to the eventual transformation of curricula in a multicultural sense – what is understood, for example, by Afro-Brazilian culture or indigenous culture? When it comes to icons loaded with values and emotions such as Africa, Africans, "races", blackness, racism, being Indian and indigenous thought, I think it is crucial to emphasize plurality, rather than insisting on talking about culture and identity in the singular.

The reconstruction of the curricula should take place in the sense of showing the variety of cultural forms and identity processes, making, precisely of such variety, a factor of strength and creativity. According to the most current interpretations in the humanities, "culture" and "identity", more than as concrete entities or products, should be seen and analyzed as projects and processes. Therefore, it is not worth insisting on defining what would be, for example, Afro-Brazilian culture through endless lists of items and traits that never manage to incorporate the immense variety of orientations of the large Afro-Brazilian population[12].

Rather than making something that is always in motion static, it seems to be more interesting to develop methods that illustrate how different actors have produced culture, resistance and identity in different contexts. The real challenge is to apply these more modern notions of what culture and identity are at all levels of education, escaping the praxis that has left intellectual sophistication to the university, and making primary and secondary schools an environment where culture and identity, when approached, are treated in a too traditional and rigid way – contributing to a loss of interest in these themes among many students who, with a more dynamic teaching method, could very well be interested.

Teaching, for example, African stories and cultures can be very fun and stimulating, but it can also be something quite "boring", as students say, if done without the proper sophistication.[13] In addition to this multiplicity, it is also worth insisting on greater attention to individuality and individuals. I consider it inappropriate always and only to speak of Afro-Brazilians or indigenous peoples as populations, because this suggests that blacks and Indians only function as collective entities and never also as individuals, with all the uniqueness that characterizes the human being. A language is needed in teaching the theme of African history and cultures and Afro-Brazilian history and cultures that account for both collective demands and experiences and individual trajectories and desires. There are, of course, exemplary characters (for example, illustrious figures like Milton Santos or Manuel Querino) of blacks and Indians, as well as many common people, until now "without a name". This has led to an authentic contradiction. The vocabulary of

12 This is what some manuals produced by the Palmares Foundation of the Ministry of Culture in the 2000s tended to do.

13 I saw this in my research in public schools in the cities of Salvador and São Francisco do Conde, Bahia.

multiculturalism is centered on the notion of majority versus minority, as well as community and ethnic identity because it originates in societies where these practices are thought of as a way to deal with and incorporate those practices into civil societies that where there are groups defined as ethnic minorities, who are supposed to organize and behave as a community, if not residential at least in terms of behavior.

In the Brazilian context, however, where the mixed-black population represents, in many regions, the majority, or at least a large percentage, it is difficult to take advantage of the term "community" or "minority". In the field of ethnic studies, the term "identity" has historically been used more to refer to (search for a) national identity than to refer to specific groups. Perhaps it is necessary to think of a terminology centered around the notion of exclusion-inclusion: it is necessary to think of Brazil in a culturally, in addition to socially, more inclusive way.

Once again, perhaps the strongest bias should be that of education in and for tolerance, rather than an emphasis on cultural diversity on the part of this country's population. When emphasizing cultural diversity, care must be taken about how to define notions such as "Afro-Brazilian culture" or "indigenous culture". There are strong regional differences, as well as between urban and rural and between different social classes. Notwithstanding this, the iconography of blackness, present in documents, manuals and publications associated with the proposal of the Fundação Cultural Palmares of the extinct Ministry of Culture, in the years 2002 to 2015, reflects mainly the reality of two cities, Salvador and Rio de Janeiro and, almost exclusively, the lower social classes.[14]

Due to the need to guarantee a plurality of expressions and not force, once again, people to identify with representations from without of what it means to be black or Indian - that are external to these people's reality -, I am convinced of the need to think about the identification process as little as possible as a matter of state. In principle, I am in favor of granting (new) rights and also cultural rights to all those groups and individuals who have had a history of ethnic-racial discrimination and organize to claim such rights. However, I would like the groups and individuals themselves to be able to say which cultural rights to demand and in what form. My impression is that, in most cases, they will call for equality rather than emphasize the fact that they are (culturally) different. In this sense, the State must pay attention to these demands, but not anticipate them.

5 From the inducing to the repressive State

After having schematically evaluated the processes and changes that led to what I have defined as a wave of identity, it is important to make some considerations about the current, new and tense configuration that is being outlined around the ethnic-racial issue in Brazil. We need to learn to deal with this new complexity. A possible solution proposed by black or non-white feminism has been the intersectional approach. This, which can be considered the main feminist paradigm of the last decades, has been affirmed above all since the Women World Conference in Beijing in 1995. The term points to the multiple discriminations that a subject tends to suffer (because of

14 Just browse the issues of the Palmares Magazine, published between 2010 and 2015 and accessible on the website http://www.palmares.gov.br/?page_id=6320. Now, starting with the Temer government and with more force in the Bolsonaro government, the Palmares Foundation drop that active role and unfortunately has become a sad simulacrum of what once was.

gender, race/color class, age, etc.), which can accumulate and create a set of impossibilities or blocks (Segato 2012), but can also result in forms of resistance co-produced by two or more identity conditions (Bachetta 2009). Several authors postulate that emphasizing intersectionality raises the question of alliances as a project and method to transcend the barriers erected by oppression and can boost cooperation, in the organization of resistance of what could otherwise be a potential zero-sum game. This would be the competition between identity projects inspired by ethnic or class selfishness, by which each group fends for itself. Against these corporatist identities, it would be possible and desirable to create coalitions of conscience, an expression of intellectual activism (Hill Collins 2013: 242). However, radical critiques such as Houria Bouteldja (2016) or Sirma Bilge (2015) point to a growing "white" use of intersectionality, used by white feminists, in fact, as an instrument to question the centrality of racial cleavage in society, including among women.

Although it is undeniable that discrimination is always multifaceted and that it determines – negatively – the course of life, and that the functioning of discrimination needs to be analyzed, I see some limitations in the intersectional discourse: a) it tends to be ahistorical because it does not focus on the relationship between identity processes and the development of opportunity systems and ethno-racial configuration and habitus; b) it tends to be cumulative and always presuppose a context, in which the discrimination would be constantly growing – there would be no negotiations and adjustments as a result of political pressure from the discriminated groups, which would be condemned to the status of eternal losers; c) it does not account for the evidence that the identity process, in addition to being a reaction to discrimination, can also be a creative project, through the incorporation and simultaneous or intermittent use of various costumes and identity images; d) although I find it useful and necessary to think about the interface between the various ingredients of an individual's identity project (class versus race/color etc.), what bothers me is enunciating the complexity of the identity process, without effectively attempting to explain and understand how color/race, class, generation and gender and sexuality, but also styles and models of consumption, are interrelated. As mentioned before, there is no way to understand what drives the identity process without an empirically based qualitative and quantitative perspective, diachronic and not only synchronic, and that also highlights the opportunities and limits provided by the current ethnic-racial configuration.

Furthermore, I don't know if we can generalize and say that Brazil is a more ethnic country today than it was three decades ago. Without the shadow of a doubt, more people define themselves as black, but also, as an analysis of the last three censuses points out, there is an increase in the record of miscegenation even, at, long last, in the middle class - thus, in what seems to be a contradiction, there are, at the same time, more browns and more blacks.[15] Notwithstanding this important change in self-declaration of color/race, until recently there was no noticeable increase in any kind of ethnic-racial polarization – in 2014, all three main candidates for the office of the president were in favor of affirmative action. However, from the preparatory phase of the 2018 elections, this changed radically. If in the recent past there was a new protagonism of blacks and Indigenous, with great and objective advances, today there is a political context that represses the masses that

15 Data from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics show the increase in the percentage of people who declare themselves *pardos* (brown) in the National Census that goes together with the increase of people who define themselves with the term “black” (negro) in more qualitative surveys.

claim indigenous and quilombola rights, quotas and affirmative actions are questioned, investment in education is contained, and there are new tensions and violence in rural and urban areas. These new barriers create a different context, which is not in itself a simple return back to the past: this society in recent decades has experienced strong identity movements and ferments, the awakening of affirmative action measures, the promotion and even the patrimonialization of popular culture and the expansion of rights associated with the condition of indigenous peoples and quilombolas. Those collective movements and projects have had, moreover, a strong impact on the individual trajectories of many black and indigenous people, especially in the young generations, who in these years have changed their perspectives on various spheres of life, consumption patterns and styles, ways of dressing or using hair and enjoying their leisure time.

Repressing this wave of identity after a long opening season, damming the collective protagonism into individual confinement, with virtual socialization as almost the only and partial relief, can lead to great frustration and new social tensions. What is the near future of Brazilian-style multiculturalism, of Law No. 10.369/2003 – which enabled the strengthening of African studies and greater cultural openness in the curriculum – and affirmative action that, with the availability of quotas and scholarships for needy students, meant more inclusion and better conditions and opportunities in undergraduate and later also graduate higher education? Of course, promoting social and racial quotas within a generalized growth of university vacancies is much easier than implementing quotas in graduate studies with far fewer scholarships than before. The deconstruction of affirmative action and the process of inclusion in universities by the government has provided us with new challenges. Are we going into a hideous zero-sum game of competition between minority and majority or even between minorities, as is often the case in the United States? Are we are moving towards a movement of mors tua, vita mea – does my strength and identity grow if yours weaken?

What answer can and should we give? First, I suggest carefully analyzing what was built and developed during the identity moment, from its beginnings in the FHC era until its consolidation in the years 2003-2016. We have to make greater efforts to make the enforcement of Law No. 10639 interesting, useful and fun – so that it fits the language and priorities of the young generations – more than insisting that they identify with the proposal and philosophy of the law, as tended to happen in the PT government, also due to the mistakes of many of the activists who developed their plans in a very centralized fashion from Brasilia. We need to learn to explain and show why studying and getting to know Africa is important. After all, this kind of interest has always been the result of political economy and never a natural fact.

Therefore, we need an ethnographic and anthropological look at the phenomena related to this process that I would call "New Dissatisfaction". It is in this sense that the research by Rosana Pinheiro Machado (Machado 2019; Machado and Scalco 2019) goes, freed from a useless tone of condemnation, while driven by the desire to understand what is behind this (new) conservative behavior or posture and the relative support they have received even by the popular sectors.[16]

16 I've been thinking, in these times, how it could be interesting to repropose in Brazil, and perhaps in other countries tormented by the same authoritarian convulsions, a type of quantitative and qualitatively survey inspired by the famous F Scale (F of Fascism), the psychological test developed by Theodor Adorno and his collaborators in 1947, in the United States, to measure the quantum of authoritarian personality that can be identified in various groups of individuals or ideal types. Research in this direction, although without the same sophistication, carried out recently in University of

These ways of doing politics and exercising power are completely new and anti-political and propose radical reforms of both socioeconomic and educational-cultural-religious nature. In various countries and continents, they are frontally opposed both to the previous projects for the reduction of extreme and durable inequalities and, above all, to the projects that I would call "emancipation by mosaic" and identity welfare. This is a welfare system in which the condition of "ethnic minority" is somehow rewarded and rights and resources depend, to a certain extent, on the ability to perform, aestheticize and preserve the diversity of an ethnocultural nature.

It is necessary and urgent to ask how the new populist governments affect the structure of inequalities, the identity processes of subaltern groups and the broader construction of collective identities. Which are the winners and losers in these processes? We will need to detail the analysis by identifying both global traits and singularities by context or country (India, Philippines, Colombia, Brazil, etc.), by traditional or new media and technologies (social media, flash mobs, religious cults, etc.) and by the specific domain of society (religion, politics, cultural production or intolerance - for example, violence directed at foreigners and the LGBT population). For this, it is necessary to create collaboration networks with the most outstanding researchers who face what can be called the "new era of extremes" in countries such as India, Colombia, the United States, South Africa, Italy, the Philippines and Brazil.[17] Unfortunately, in terms of possible international exchanges, the context has also changed and for the worse. In terms of international policy, Brazil moved from multipolarism and a certain emphasis on South-South relations to a strange and singular alignment with Trump.[18]

The question is how all of this affects the panorama of identities and their construction in Brazil and what will happen with the rapid decline of the so-called "identity wave", that is, the period of the revival of social identities based on gender, ethnicity and generation during which the term "diversity" ceased to be a burden associated with inequalities to become a term associated with egalitarian and redistributive measures. This wave started to take shape around 2002, during the most exciting stage of the first Lula government but entered into crisis with the consolidation of the Temer government in 2017. As in all radical processes, there was a conservative counter-reaction and the country quickly changed its official narrative, from an emphasis on the positivity of (new) identities of subaltern groups to their complete denial. Just think of the change that means moving from the federal government slogan "Brazil, a country for all", in the PT governments, to Bolsonaros' slogan "Brazil above all, God above everyone". The most extreme

São Paulo, in the capital of São Paulo (See Folha de S. Paulo, October 23, 2019), indicates the complexity of this relatively new context: the population is relatively progressive in social terms, including with university quotas for blacks and the needy, but conservative in terms of identity, with greater approval for the hardening of sentences as a way to fight crime and high rates rejection of abortion and the granting of more rights and visibility to the LGBT population – whereby rejection is even stronger in the most popular layers, where the mestizo and black population is overrepresented.

17 A successful attempt in this direction has been the 20th edition of the advanced course Fábrica de Ideias, held in August 2019, in Salvador, whose theme was "The new era from the extremes". Our intensive and advanced course aims at discussing in a progressive key and through a South-South as well as a South-North dialogue the emergence and growth of new and particularly exaggerated forms of populism. Available in: www.fabricadeideias.info.

18 I wonder how this conservative shift might affect projects such as the Interdisciplinary Studies Graduate Program Ethnic and African (Posafro) at the Federal University of Bahia (UFBA), whose thematic area, ethno-racial and regional studies (Africa), ceased to be a priority already in the Temer government to become the focus of verbal and political aggression in the Bolsonaro government.

evidence of this reactionary attitude is found in the anti-identity posture coalesced by the super-conservative presidential candidate - and later President Bolsonaro - and in the climate of hatred towards the rights of minorities fed by fake news circulated on numerous websites that commented on the most important political assassination of the last decade in Brazil, that of Marielle Franco. If an important part of the population recognizes itself in Marielle's personality and even revere her, many others reject her precisely because they consider her biography too much centered on identity.

This new tension between (new) progressive and conservative identity processes does not only concern Brazil, but also other Latin American countries, as shown by the mobilization against the externalization of indigenous culture and identity within the process that led to the violent removal from power of President Evo Morales in Bolivia in 2019, or the defeat of the referendum in favor of the peace process in Colombia in 2017. In that country, there was strong opposition to the peace process and the amnesty project proposed by the Santos government, especially in the interiors and among the neo-Pentecostals. The discourse of opposition to the peace process was a conglomeration of slogans against any type of minority, such as homosexuals, feminists and Indians (Restrepo 2019). The real increase in religious intolerance against any form of religiosity of African-American and indigenous origin, in a region, that until not so long ago had been considered relatively tolerant in terms of religious freedom, is worrying. It can be understood, at least in part, as a reaction to the process of inclusion from the part of the State's of narratives of this religious experience of minorities that occurred over the last two decades as a component of a new and growing multicultural posture developed in general by progressive governments.

Indeed, it is necessary to debate the relationship between, on the one hand, the identity policies and the (new) demands of citizenship and, on the other hand, the State, party politics and the democratic system more generally. Latin America is experiencing a radical and populist rejection of the State itself, as well as its codes, language and rules[19]. This rejection ends up negatively influencing and disempowering multicultural policies, which are identified by many, even in the lower social strata, more as an integral part of the state machine – the establishment – than as an expression of the will of subordinate groups that have historically been discriminated against, or as a way to remedy old injustices.

In Brazil, as in Trump's United States and elsewhere in the Americas, we need to learn to deal with the evidence that the new formats of conservative populism are essentially opposed to practically any multicultural experiment that tends to be seen as the result of an all-too-close association between progressive policies and the promotion of new sectoral identities – even when they were thought of as measures in favor of population groups that have historically been discriminated against. This is of course a challenging contradiction and is no coincidence that one of the best-selling social science books in the United States in the Trump years received a subtitle that makes a lot of sense: After Identity Politics, by author Mark Lilla (2017).

In short, I believe that today there is no way to think about more inclusive and democratic cultural policies on the part of the State without a careful analysis of the opportunities and failures of the

19 It is worth noting that it appears to be characteristic of this new right-wing populism in Latin America a dual movement by which, within electoral rhetoric, they deify elections, but party politics are demonized.

new Latin American multiculturalism. I confess that, after a few years of enthusiasm with the emancipatory power of both affirmative action and multiculturalism in the Brazilian context, I am now more pessimistic. I have become, again, an ethno-skeptic (Sansone 2004 and 2007). Although I certainly recognize that Brazil still presents not only a social deficit but also an identity deficit (the new identities in question are an expression of subordinate groups that claim for very just rights and due and legitimate recognition), I am not (anymore) convinced of the intrinsically emancipatory and anti-racist power of ethnic-racial identity politics. The problem, in my opinion, is not itself, the radicality of the identity projects in question, but their genesis. More than the aestheticization of these projects – the exterior forms and the rhetorical style in which these projects manifest themselves – what matters is why and through whom they are created. Its emancipatory character depends on this. We need to problematize the path of identity politics and its process of reification of words and categories, as it was experienced in Brazil, and focus our efforts on thinking about anti-racist education and practice, against intolerance. If it is necessary to highlight the new citizenship demands embedded in these collective identities, it is equally necessary to learn to deal with the new set of contradictions they present to our Latin American modernity.

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Diehard Fans or True Believers?

Performative populism and societal mobilization in the Philippines and Venezuela

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1 Introduction

Populism is considered by some as democracy's greatest challenge in the 21st century. It has led mainstream media and academics to quickly paint a gloomy picture for the future of democracies old and young. Just like democracy swept the world in the 1970s described best by Huntington's idea of a global "third wave" of democratization (1991), there seems to be a reverse wave of populism across the world. From democracy's bulwark in Europe and North America to regions where it remains fragile and immature such as Africa, Asia, and Latin America, populism has attracted mass publics to the dismay and despair of democrats with mostly liberal leanings worldwide. And while populists achieved power in these countries mainly through the ballot box, they have been considered summarily as an existential threat to democracy. The term "populist" provided the pejorative and impulsive label to a myriad of political leaders as diverse as Trump, Erdogan, Duterte, Morales, Wilders, Thaksin, and Chávez. Despite differences in style, ideology, and policy leanings, these populists are often depicted as detrimental to democracy, particularly its liberal-representative form (Diamond 2016).

How do populists successfully defend themselves from challenges in young democracies? The conventional wisdom painted familiar stories that overwhelmingly privilege structural-oriented explanations for successful populist takeovers of democratic regimes. Such conducive conditions include economic crises, failed democratization, regime stagnation, sociopolitical exclusion, among voters (de la Torre 2010). But while alienation toward exclusionary and ineffective democratic regimes provide ripe conditions for populism to germinate, there is less attention to

how leaders successfully translate these derived grievances into successful electoral mobilization and support. While populism does not float freely in any democracy, not all crisis-ridden, poorly institutionalized, and unresponsive polities necessarily allow populist leaders to capture state power through elections. In other words, demand for populists could create a supply of populists but not all of them gets to lead or govern (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2011; Kaltwasser and Taggart 2016). To paraphrase Hawkins (2010), a populist candidate may activate the populist leanings of voters, but how can he successfully attain a mass of electoral support critical enough to win elections?

Part of the answer might lie in the ability of populists to form or tap into existing organizational forms drawn from civil society. But what could account for the variation in the durability and strength of populist organizations? Existing literature tends to focus on what the populists do such as the adoption of redistributive policies, the utilization of personalist appeals, the mobilization of state resources, and pre-existing social networks tapped by populist leaders (Mudde 2007). But not all populists were elected with a priori social organizations as some archetypes rely more on political parties and media as transmission belts for their appeals. This is particularly evident among performative populists who cater largely to audiences (the actors that the populist speaks to) rather than constituencies (the actors that the populist speaks for) (Moffitt 2016).

By focusing on a subset of populist leaders who mainly rely on performative acts, this chapter argues that populist organizations can be formed either through ideological support or charismatic appeals. It examines the evolution of support mechanisms for this particular populist sub-type in the cases of Joseph Estrada in the Philippines and Hugo Chávez in Venezuela. Despite differences across a host of factors, both cases illustrate the ability of their governments to carve out a segment of civil society through organizational improvisation in order to sustain their populist appeals. In both of these young democracies, the populist leaders' blatant incursion into civil society created conditions for pernicious polarization and democratic instability.

Using a most similar comparative case study design that utilizes fieldwork data and interviews with Filipino and Venezuela political elites and civil society leaders, this chapter argues that while both populists provided a means for marginalized sectors to receive political support and recognition, the leaders used this support as a defense mechanism against oppositional elites. This chapter mainly analyzes the role organizational civil societies during episodes of legitimacy crises that confronted these populist leaders. The durability of support afforded by populist organizations may differ in this particular type of mobilization given the nature of the event as a crisis that often results from a polarized political atmosphere.

This argument is mainly borrowed from the Roberts (2006) which posited that the nature, type, and intensity of populist mobilization greatly depends on the nature of the conflict between populist and the existing elite. Estrada's weak campaign against the existing elite made its populist organizations mainly of a defensive nature that failed to prevent his extra-constitutional removal from the presidency in 2001. On the other hand, Chávez's strong populist organizations emanated from his well-orchestrated strategy of overhauling Venezuelan democracy and his successful use of distributive patronage inspired by ideological appeals. Not only was the Venezuelan populist a reinstalled in power after a brief exit in 2001, Chávez mainly relied on many different kinds of populist organizations to carry out his plans.

This chapter proceeds by discussing the extant scholarship that links performative populism and the different organizational forms that are tapped to sustain this mode of leadership. It then provides a simplistic typology of populist styles and societal mobilization. After this, it compares the conditions and outcomes between the Estrada and Chávez cases. By way of conclusion, this chapter provides some insights on both countries' current populist leaders – Rodrigo Duterte and Nicolás Maduro – and their strategies to mobilize civil society for their own brand of performative populism.

2 Populism as a Performance: *Populism Lite* as a Subset

Populism remains to be one of the most contested concepts in the study of politics despite its growing centrality in the contemporary political milieu. The variety of ways in which scholars have defined and explained populism simply underscore the term's conceptual vagueness and operational malleability. The extant literature on populism can be divided into five main categories:

(1) as a catch-all ideology that separates 'the pure people' from the 'the corrupt elite';

(2) as the logic of 'the people';

(3) as an anti-status quo discourse;

(4) as the preferred organizational strategy of personalistic leaders; and

(5) as a 'political style' that is performed and enacted by populist leaders.

As revealed in the succeeding discussions, each definition highlights particular aspects of the phenomenon while simultaneously masking the other aspects. Mudde's ideological conception of the term, has been the most widely used definition of populism. Based on his formulation, populism is 'an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, "the pure people" versus "the corrupt elite" (2007: 23).

Given the narrow scope of ideas that fall under its command, as well as its relatively limited complexity and ambition when gauged against 'full' ideologies, Mudde (2007) claims that populism must be viewed as a 'thin-centered' ideology that cannot be grasped or understood in any pure form. Rather, the populist ideology is 'always present in mixed iterations with other ideologies' (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2011: 5). Other scholars who have adopted the thin-centered ideology thesis like Canovan (2002), even went as far as suggesting that populism could be interpreted as the ideology democracy.

However, this notion of 'thin-centeredness' has been criticized by several political and social theorists who question both the appropriateness and utility of labeling populism as an ideology. For example, Aslanidis (2016: 101) argues that the incorrect genus used to categorize populism has ushered in 'an unneeded amount of normative baggage into the study of populist phenomena, entrenching scholars behind ideological barricades and sharply impairing standards of objectivity in the literature.' Meanwhile, Laclau (2005a; 2005b) and Mouffe (2005a; 2005b), point to the misplaced emphasis being put by proponents of populist ideology on the concept's ontic content, which according to them explains failure of the definitions that have emerged from this intellectual practice. They argue that the focus should be on securing populism's ontological status

by shifting away from the empirical political reality to the processes in which societies are established. That is, from the tangible matters of 'politics', to the abstract level of 'the political' (Mouffe 2005a: 8–9).

Accordingly, Laclau (2005a: 47) claims that populism is best understood if viewed as structuring logic of political life, or more precisely, as the logic of 'the people'. But as with the supporters of populist ideology, the proponents of populist logic have also faced major criticisms that pointed to the problem of conceptual slippage, to the dilemmas presented by empirical counter-examples and methodological applicability (Moffitt and Tormey 2013: 384). According to these critics, equating populism with the political makes the concept even more vague and slippery, thus, further undermining its theoretical and methodological value when analyzing concrete empirical cases (Moffit and Tormey 2013).

Nevertheless, not all populism scholars share the same views regarding the perceived lack of practical application of Laclau's earlier works on populism. For example, the members of the Essex School discourse analysis have drawn on the key elements of the Laclauian framework in putting forward their idea of populism as a discourse. The school's key arguments are captured by Panizza's (2005: 3) definition of populism as 'an anti-status quo discourse that simplifies the political space by symbolically dividing society between the people (as the 'underdogs') and its other.' Other scholars have also experimented on the function of populist discourse by developing qualitative frameworks that measure the level of populism within specific sets of discursive texts (see Hawkins 2009; Jagers and Walgrave 2007); and quantitative models that employ statistical software analyses of large sets of texts based on the appearance of certain key terms (Reungoat 2010; Pauwels 2011). However, similar to the ideological and logical interpretations of populism, the discursive view of populism also faces substantial criticisms. While some highlight the unreliability, irregularity and bias of the discursive approach (see Pauwels 2011), others question the discursive method's ability to provide a workable theoretical model as it merely validates the accuracy and applicability of the Laclauian framework it utilizes. Thus, despite the capacity of a discourse-centric strategy to contribute to the advancement of populism scholarship, it cannot be the primary theoretical tool for understanding the phenomenon (Moffit and Tormey 2013: 386).

Another widely cited interpretation of populism that has been applied in a number of empirical studies is based on Weyland's (1999: 14) view of populism as 'a political strategy through which a personalistic leader seeks or exercises government power based on direct, unmediated, uninstitutionalized support from large numbers of mostly unorganized followers. One of the major issues with Weyland's formulation is its problematic tendency to categorize other modes of organization found across the political continuum as 'populist', including the various forms of social movements and community politics (Hawkins 2010). Furthermore, as Moffitt and Tormey (2014: 386) have pointed out, it is erroneous to suggest that populism only develops in political contexts in which the degree of institutionalism and organization is weak. The emergence of populist politics in places that have traditionally strong party discipline and organization (the US, France and the Netherlands), and in regions where multi-class urban alliances are a commonplace (Latin America), disprove such myths. As Hawkins (2010: 39) argues, the heavy emphasis being put on the material aspects of populism – coalitions, historical preconditions, and policies – can only mean that such accounts are lacking.

Finally, Moffitt and Tormey (2014: 394) have put forward a conception of populism as a political style, that is, 'a repertoire of performative features which cuts across different political situations that are used to create political relations'. The underlying belief here is the centrality of performance in politics. For the proponents of performative populism, politics is performance, and performance is politics. This view is particularly relevant within an increasingly mediatized and stylized milieu of modern politics, where aesthetics and performative components of politics are being highlighted more. Moffit and Tormey (2014: 290-294) identify three core elements of a populist performance, namely:

(1) appeal to 'the people';

(2) perception of crisis, breakdown and threat; and

(3) coarsening of political language or 'bad manners'.

Instead of purely relying on the content provided by a populist ideology, or the organizational structures generated by a populist logic, special attention is placed on the role of performative repertoires vis-à-vis the interactions between populist leaders and their supporters (Moffit and Tormey, 2014; Moffitt, 2016).

It must be emphasized that these performative elements of populism do not exist in isolation from one another. As Moffitt and Tormey explained:

> Each element is not in itself populist...The model should thus be considered as the sum of its parts, not the parts themselves…Nearly every mainstream politician in the Western political landscape speaks in the name of "the people" at some point, but again this does not mean that he or she is a populist (2014: 391).

By conceptualizing populism as a political style, the performative dimensions are pushed at the center of the analysis, thus enabling this chapter to investigate and theorize on the intricate connections between populist style and societal mobilization during episodes of political crises.

More recent literature on populism as a political style have departed from the more "top-down" approach of focusing on leaders. While populism is still seen as a particular "manner of acting and speaking that serves to cultivate popular identification", it could be seen a not simply the property of the leader (Garrido 2017: 648). In a groundbreaking work on populism in the Philippines, populist style is seen as a relational concept between leaders and supporters based on a collectively recognized coherent performance. This chapter uses this analytical frame but instead of focusing on individual supporters for performative populists, it integrates this "bottom-up" perspective from the point of view of societal organizations that consume this kind of populism.

3 Populism and organizational Forms in comparative Perspective

While journalists and other social sciences have already spilled ink on the role of personality, charisma, political savvy, and skill of populists, political science scholarship has so far paid less attention to the role of agency, whether at the individual or collective level in explaining populism's allure to the electorate (Samet 2017; Mouffe 2016). A noteworthy exception from this supply-driven scholarship is the literature in populist organizations in Latin America. Roberts (2006) provided a springboard in the analysis of populist organizations based on structural

factors such as partisan conflict and extant power structures but also an equal focus on the importance of the capacity for civil society organization. Based on this study, different variants of populism are the result of the level of partisan organization as well the depth of organization from civil society.

Table 1: Organizational Sub-types of Populist Mobilization (Roberts 2006: 131).

Organization of Civil Society	Partisan Organization: High	Partisan Organization: Low
High	Organic Populism (Mexico under Cárdenas)	Labor Populism (Peronism)
Low	Partisan Populism (APRA)	Electoral Populism (Velasco Ibarra, Fujimori)

Ultimately for Roberts, it is what populist leaders do after populist mobilization. If a particular brand of populism challenges traditional power centers and embarks on radical policy changes, it then engenders specific types of populist mobilization. In other words, it is what populists make of their time while at the top that determines the character and forms of social mobilization necessary to realize its agenda but also the counter-organizational forms that will attempt to stifle these reforms.

This chapter uses Robert's conceptual typology of populist mobilizational forms as a foundation rather than a foil in a number of ways. It also focuses on a specific type of populist leader – one that embodies the performative aspects of populism as identified by Moffitt (2016). Particularly, it compares populist leaders who appeal to people, have bad manners, and invoke some notion of crisis, breakdown, and/or threat. Second, this chapter's focus is a particular type of populist mobilization that involves a defense of the populist government against legitimacy challenges from the opposition. This includes coup attempts, massive protests, military adventurism, and other contentious forms of leadership challenges that are mostly unconstitutional in nature. During these extraordinary political moments, the strength and intensity of societal mobilization are severely tested given what is at stake is the legitimacy of the populist government. One can say that during this heightened level of contestation, conflict, and crisis, triggered by the actions and policies of the populist leader, the true extent of the successful formation of a societal mobilization force can be seen.

This chapter argues that a successful defense of a populist leader by the societal organizations he mobilized rests upon two factors: the strength and cohesion of the *oppositional coalition* against

him and the sources of *mobilizational power* by his civil society defense shield. This second factor makes conceptual differentiation between ideological and material sources. While in reality, most populist mobilizations are driven by these two sources of power, this chapter argues that successful populist defense through civil society mobilization emanate from a commitment of its followers on a more ideological basis than a more personal or charismatic appeal. This chapter labels more ideologically-motivated mobilizers as *true believers* while *diehard fans* are those primarily driven by the charismatic lure and image conjured by the populist leader.

The next section compares two cases that provide empirical evidence in this typology of populist performances and societal mobilization during times of severe crisis. The first case illustrates the unsuccessful societal mobilization resulting in the extra-constitutional removal of Joseph Estrada from the Philippine presidency in 2001 from his mostly charismatic supporters or diehard fans. The second case is about the successful defense of Hugo Chávez from political opponents during the April 2002 crisis given his army of true believers motivated by a subscription to *chavismo* as well as beneficiaries of democratic innovations such as the Bolivarian circles and the missions.

4 The Populist as a Celebrity: Joseph Estrada and his "Diehard Fans" in the Philippines

In 1998, Joseph Ejercito Estrada, a movie actor turned politician, was elected the 13th president of the Philippines by garnering 40 percent of the national vote. His victory invalidated the ever-reliable formula for winning the presidency – a strong and extensive political machinery and patronage network – by directly appealing to Filipino voters (Hedman 2001). In a state where parties are merely window dressing for political clans, Estrada challenged the exclusive oligarchic arena through a combination of sheer charisma and populist appeals that resonated among lower classes that formed more than 70 percent of the country's population.

Estrada also defied the typical mold of a Philippine president. In the past, the Filipino electorate conventionally chose between candidates who are well-educated, morally upright, politically pedigreed, and economically affluent. His background and track record were belittled by the country's upper classes but was emphatically embraced by the poor masses. Intellectuals sympathetic to Estrada interpreted his rise as an indication of the oligarchic elite's loosening grip over the country's politics (David 2001). Far from a mere Marcos proxy seeking a return to exclusivist authoritarian rule, Estrada set his sights on redrawing the map of Philippine politics in a more deeply inclusivist democratic mold.

4.1 Estrada's Populist Excesses and the 2001 People Power Uprising

The newly-elected president wasted no time and started his administration by espousing proposals construed as highly contentious, unpopular, and potentially polarizing. For example, Estrada's proposal for the burial of Marcos at the National Heroes Cemetery with complete military honors was met with severe public criticism (Doronila 2001).

Further provoking his critics, the president flouted the idea of amending the 1987 Constitution. A product of the anti-dictatorship struggle, the charter largely represents the bare democratic consensus mostly shaped by political establishment. His proposal sought to eliminate the constitutional provisions protecting national patrimony by allowing foreigners to own land, extract resources, and equally compete with domestic business, a move that can severely threaten

oligarchic economic interests. Opposition quickly formed with the aid of civil society groups that rallied public opinion against the move. His declining satisfaction ratings accompanied by the massive mobilization of social forces led by former president Corazon Aquino, the Catholic Church, middle classes, and the political opposition forced Estrada to scrap this project (Arugay 2004). These two instances highlighted how Estrada's legitimacy, sourced from the marginalized sectors of Filipino society, was beginning to be challenged by the displaced members of the country's post-authoritarian political establishment.

Estrada's involvement in rent-seeking in illicit activities was the peak of his executive domineering. He was allegedly receiving millions in "kickbacks" for allowing illegal gambling operations around the country (de Dios 2001). Opposition and civil society leaders used this allegation, made by the president's former ally, as a rallying cause to demand accountability. It generated a great deal of public outrage and in turn, changed the populist leader's fate for the worse.

The civil society-led coalition against Estrada was led by political veterans from the 1986 People Power Revolution such as Archbishop of Manila Jaime Cardinal Sin, considered the leader of the Catholic Church and ex-president Corazon Aquino. The demand from these credible moral leaders revived the dormant and dispersed opposition led by Vice-President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. Previously weak and fragmented, minority parties found themselves united in challenging the incumbent's legitimacy. The extent of corruption Estrada allegedly committed also led some of his party mates to desert his coalition. All of these contributed to a highly charged political atmosphere by October 2000, a condition some civil society groups used to their advantage. A formerly small group, the anti-Estrada movement instantly swelled to a broad societal coalition (Arugay 2004). The stage was set for a confrontation between two blocs with Estrada, the entire government apparatus, and his loyal mass supporters on one side and Arroyo, middle-class civil society, Catholic groups, and progressive social movements on the other.

Estrada and Arroyo became the centripetal forces behind these two highly polarized blocs that was not solely defined by an ideological, social, ethnic, religious, or class cleavage. Their first confrontation was in the streets of Manila with each bloc occupying a major demonstration cite in the metropolis. This instigated pendular mobilizations across the country.

The conflicting Arroyo and Estrada blocs competed for popular support. The Arroyo bloc, mostly composed of the country's oppositional elite, only represented one segment of the country's dense and robust civil society. Estrada's government was similarly successful in eliciting support from other segments of civil society. In one major rally, Estrada gave a fiery speech that accused the elites of conspiring to unseat him but also made a promise to face the corruption charges against him at the appropriate time and venue.

In this regard, civil society itself was a political arena that was divided between the two blocs with those harboring more liberal visions of democracy and supported by the oligarchy vis-à-vis a more grassroots but less organized segment of civil society protecting the electoral mandate of a president they put in power. While the Arroyo bloc at least momentarily had the upper hand in the mobilizational arena, the incumbent president still had the full support of the Philippine military and other political institutions. The top brass of the armed forces continued to respect

Estrada's electoral mandate while recognizing that an emerging bloc of plural social and political actors was bent on challenging his legitimacy.

In Estrada's view, he was a victim of the elite's penchant for oppressing the people's leadership choices. He reduced the brewing polarization into one based on class, albeit one portrayed in populist rather than Marxist or left-right terms. A deeper gaze however could transcend the populist's oversimplication of the Machiavellian conflict. The allegations of corruption focused on Estrada's accumulation of wealth, real estate property, and other assets for himself, his family, and cronies which could have been used to help his poor constituency. Estrada downplayed being subjected to horizontal accountability as he refused to address the allegations. In turn, the populist overly emphasized his electoral mandate sourced from the ballot box, presenting himself as the *sole* representative of the people.

The rival mobilizations had historical resonance to the previous polarized conflict between the Marcos and Aquino blocs that resulted in the 1986 People Power uprising. This time around however, these blocs were engaged in a Machiavellian conflict in which democracy was careening rather than being restored. Both sides saw the other bloc as the enemy of democracy and their own bloc as democracy's saviors. But instead of being based on class cleavages, the dichotomy was along the lines of whose vision of democracy should triumph and which democratic institutions should prevail. In other words, Philippine democracy was deadlocked by two equally powerful political blocs insisting on their own version of democracy with one skewed toward oligarchy while the other embraced the precepts of populism (Slater and Arugay 2018).

The impasse in the streets led the Arroyo bloc, which had been increasing in density and strength by the day, to shift the site of struggle toward the country's institutions of horizontal accountability. Presidential impeachment constitutes the most important mechanism of horizontal accountability in Philippine democracy. The implosion of Estrada's coalition in the House of Representatives paved the way for his impeachment and allowed the Senate to conduct a trial to determine the president's guilt over corruption charges. By this time, Estrada's populist organizations have not been fully tapped to defend the president though sporadic protests were seen in urban poor enclaves (Kusaka 2017).

The sheer stress and pernicious sociopolitical polarization engendered by the first ever presidential impeachment trial in Asia eventually led to institutional gridlock. The Senate, a 24-member body, was likewise polarized between the Estrada and Arroyo poles. While it was difficult to secure the two-thirds vote necessary to convict the president, the Filipino public patiently allowed this horizontal accountability mechanism to run its course until a critical point. This was when members of Estrada's bloc among the senator-jurors suppressed important evidence that directly linked the president to corruption. With a single stroke the impeachment process unraveled. The Senate President immediately resigned while the prosecution team abruptly left the court's premises to show their common disgust. The abandonment was a clear symbol of the breakdown of the impeachment process as the sole constitutional means to settle the conflict that already paralyzed the entire country (Doronila 2001).

The unraveling of the impeachment process proved that formal institutions designed to constrain executive power failed within the context of a polarized conflict. Both blocs representing oligarchy and populism mutually decided to withdraw from the only constitutional means of resolving the

crisis. But rather than an outright military coup from the conservative right, a violent revolution by the communist left, or an *autogolpe* by the incumbent government, the outcome followed a familiar outcome – a reinstatement of oligarchic-liberal order through the modality of people power (Thompson 2008).

Apart from the dramatic display of collective action, the Arroyo bloc with the help of civil society figures brokered a seemingly solid pact with Estrada's other political enemies as well as groups with extensive linkages to the military and the judiciary. These two veto players proved to be critical chess pieces in an otherwise deadlocked game between the two poles. This extra-constitutional resolution to the Machiavellian conflict demonstrated how unelected veto players in Philippine politics can decisively shift the balance of power between oligarchic and populist forces in Philippine democracy.

4.2 Estrada's weak Populist Mobilization and the Poor's People Power

People power in 2001 was subjected to positive appraisal at home but fierce negative criticism abroad. Many summarily judged Estrada's ouster as a "popularly-supported coup" conjured by political elites, the military, and opportunist business groups against a duly-elected executive (Mydans 2004). While this nonviolent upheaval was deemed extra-constitutional, the leadership change it occasioned did not result in democratic regime breakdown. Estrada's opponents were seeking to restore the oligarchic-liberal order through alternative means of seeking accountability in the face of captured and feeble political institutions (Arugay 2005).

Far from resolving political conflict, the country was subjected to further political instability. Rather than "re-equilibrating" Philippine democracy, Estrada's ouster opened the floodgates for more contentious politics, a crackdown on political freedoms, weaker institutions, and a more politicized military (Hutchcroft 2008).

Among the violent episodes in this long-drawn conflict between defenders of Philippine cacique democracy and counter-elite challengers with populist tendencies was a massive protest of pro-Estrada supporters in May 2001 with the objective of re-installing their fallen populist leader. Though their short-lived uprising was brutally repressed by the military, it displayed the mobilizational power of the Filipino people who felt aggrieved when their elected president was extra-constitutionally removed by the elites (Garrido 2008).

This populist mobilization was triggered by Estrada's arrest. His mass supporters perceived this as treatment undeserving from an elected but deposed leader. This seemingly spontaneous popular outburst converged along the streets of Manila, the same site where an elite-led coalition of elite politicians, religious civil society groups, military officials, and militant social movements displayed their collective power to forcibly remove a sitting president. The mass action lasted for several days with the help of logistics provided by Estrada's family and friends as well as the warm bodies mobilized by urban poor social movements and Christian churches close to former president's government. On its third night, several pro-Estrada senators, some of them seeking reelection in the upcoming legislative elections, gave fiery speeches calling for the resignation of Arroyo and the re-installment of their fallen leader back to the seat of executive power.[1] Their provocations alluded to the conspiratorial nature of Estrada's removal, the degrading treatment

1 "Lacson to 'Edsa III': victory is nearly ours," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 30 April 2001.

Estrada's people had received from the elites who toppled him, and the necessity of taking action to re-claim Philippine democracy and "people power". It was certainly noticeable that Estrada and his cabal has no ideological, class, ethnic, religious, etc. affinity with the majority of the crowd who amassed in Manila's main urban thoroughfare named Epifanio delos Santos Avenue (EDSA).

While media labeled the mass action as *EDSA 3*, political commentators, civil society elite groups behind *EDSA 2*, and even the newly-installed Arroyo administration, hastily dismissed the demonstration as an aberration perpetrated by the country's "great unwashed". In a condescending tone, they firmly believed demonstrators were paid to go out in the streets and their limited intelligence was being exploited by Estrada and his political allies.[2] It further agitated the crowd, many of whom saw the protest as an opportunity to express deep-seated frustration toward an unresponsive and exclusionary political system. In their eyes, Estrada's undignified albeit lawful arrest symbolized their own personal struggles within a highly unequal and unjust society controlled by political elites (Schaffer 2008).[3]

The highly emotive nature of the protest unavoidably turned the gathered crowd into an angry mob that wanted to storm the presidential seat of power. After inducing the resort to violence, members of the Estrada bloc suddenly went into hiding with only members of the urban poor left to carry out the siege. Some rioting incurred that included the destruction of vehicles owned by mass media known to propagate anti-Estrada news and commentary: in their view the Arroyo bloc's political propaganda against their leader. As the new president with the backing of the armed forces, Arroyo deployed a couple of thousand military soldiers to protect her fragile government that lacked any popular electoral legitimacy. A "state of rebellion" was officially declared, allowing for numerous warrantless arrests of members of the Estrada bloc who incited the siege.

Estrada's populist challenge had deep roots in the Filipino's public consciousness as citizens living in an oligarchy-dominated polity. Its violent turn also demonstrated the ugly side of collective mobilization in the Philippines whose narrative is dominated by the nonviolent version of people power in 1986. Machiavelli was validated when he stated in the Discourses that the popoli raise up in arms when they feel aggrieved and oppressed. And while Estrada turned out to be an ineffective populist, *EDSA 3* represented the resentment and longing for another vision of democracy previously untapped by the country's democrats. For the masses that belong to the Estrada bloc, his prosecution for plunder was an unfair and selective application of democratic accountability since the deposed president was not the only guilty party of corruption in the country's oligarchic democracy.

What is absent in the analysis is the role of civil society organizations heavily supported by Estrada and his family. One of the largest mobilizational contingent has been the urban poor movement called People's Movement Against Poverty (PMAP). This existed prior to Estrada's rise and is a part of a large network of urban poor movements mostly concentrated in the slums

2 "Sin laments desecration of Edsa Shrine," and Belinda Olivares-Cunana, "'Pera ng Masa'," [Money of the Masses] *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 28 April 2001; Randy David, "The third time as farce," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 29 April 2001.

3 What seems unclear to the poor who went out to protest Estrada's arrest is his failure to implement poverty alleviation programs during his administration. For an analysis of his economic performance, see Balisacan (2001).

around Metro Manila. In her study, Karaos emphasized the unprecedented situation where the urban poor connected with a Philippine president with such "unwavering mutual loyalty based on identity" since he "stood for a person in the eyes of the urban poor that makes him worthy of being their 'president'" (2006: 72).

In such a polarized conflict, those representing populism also succumb to the pressures of elitist principles as established in Michel's iron law of oligarchy. The Estrada bloc was at best another faction of elites who wanted to wrestle power from the oligarchs that comfortably dominated Philippine politics. Their mass supporters were the pawns or foot soldiers in a game where they remain the powerful. According to journalistic accounts, the politicians who whipped up the crowd and turned them into a raging mob were also behind a planned power-grab. The plotters, mainly ex-military politicians guilty for past coup attempts against Cory Aquino's government, sought to establish a civil-military junta to replace Arroyo. The new ruling group would exclude Estrada and oversee new presidential elections.[4]

This "Machiavellian conflict" that started in Estrada's successful populist challenge was not resolved by *EDSA 2*. Rather, it further inflamed the conflict. The "soft coup" that ousted Estrada and installed Arroyo released a series of events that intensified the conflict, emboldened all political actors, and further polarized the country around these hostile yet non-ideological blocs. The *EDSA 3* episode however also revealed the impurities associated with populist challenges. As the challenger bloc did not possess a coherent ideology or shared identity that could push for a meaningful alternative to oligarchic democracy, it also succumbed to the same elitist, undemocratic, and exclusionary features that feed into the resentment against a democracy dominated by the country's elite (Arugay and Slater forthcoming).

The failed case of populist mobilizational defense against Estrada was due to the mainly charismatic linkage between the deposed president and his "diehard fans". While they are attempts to build and support a civil society-based movement, his premature exit from office prevented this. A full-blown populist movement could have successfully defended Estrada but also provided him with a buffer to embark on major policy reforms that could address the demands of his constituents. By the time Estrada needed their help, his supporters were still in the mode of being an audience of his populist performances rather than a constituency which he shares mutual interests with.

5 The Populist as an Ideologue: Chávez and his "True Believers" in Venezuela

Hugo Chávez was previously a former lieutenant colonel who led a failed coup in 1992 in Venezuela. His presidential victory symbolized the end of the *Punto Fijo* era as he won over the candidates of the two major parties that have dominated of Venezuelan politics since 1958. Like other populists, his rise to power was associated with popular discontent to the existing political class and by running on a campaign that sought to restore the dignity of the Venezuelan masses through what is known as a socialist "Bolivarian" revolution. For political analysts, the election of

4 "Why power grab failed," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, May 1, 2001; Glenda Gloria, "When noise outgunned firepower," *Newsbreak*, 15 May 2001.

Chávez reflected the backlash of the subaltern classes and the popular sector that have been marginalized by the political system (Trinkunas 2005). With no strong political party machinery to support him, he used his charismatic appeal as a way to communicate his populist agenda directly to the electorate. More importantly, Chávez promised to use the country's bountiful oil revenues to combat poverty and social inequality, something that the political establishment was unable to address.

The new president wasted no time implementing his vision of a new Venezuelan democratic order. According to McCoy and Myers (2004), a series of measures and decisions made by Chávez constituted the "unraveling" of liberal and representative democracy in the country. His plans to revise the constitution and prosecute former officials for corruption, intervention in the organization of trade unions, and antagonism toward the critical media made him a highly polarizing leader among the populace (Coppedge 2005). Civil society, mostly from the middle class and other traditional power structures in Venezuela such as business associations and Catholic Church started to mobilize against the government. In their view, the political transformation *chavismo* was responsible for undermined the democratic regime and closed all options within the bounds of constitutionalism and the rule of law.[5]

On the defensive, Chávez hit back at his opponents. Relying on his firebrand rhetoric and taking advantage of his access to media, he unabashedly confronted his enemies and refused to moderate his views to appease these people he called *escuálidos*[6]. In an attempt to counter the mobilizational power of the opposition civil society, the president announced the formation of *Círculos Bolívarianos* (Bolivarian Circles), associations that could be organized at the village or neighborhood level. Its autonomy from the state was surely suspect but the implied objective behind their creation is obvious: to defend the revolution (Salamanca and Pastor 2004). Chávez wanted to convince the populace that the collective action against him do not represent a civil society of the *pueblo* but rather of a displaced oligarchy. The effective way to deal with this was for the state to encourage the organization of a people-centered civil society, one sympathetic to the plight of the country's poor and intimately related with the state (Hawkins and Hansen 2006).

Orphaned by political parties, civil society organizations became the locus of the conflict between pro and anti-*chavistas*. The bifurcation within civil society is further proof that in most developing democracies, it is not a monolithic actor but rather an arena of competing interests penetrated by more powerful forces within state and society. Additionally, the proactive organization of these civil society groups manifested the multiplicity of perspectives on what civil society means in Venezuela. Both sides referring themselves as *the* civil society in Venezuela ascertained the desirability of embodying this sphere of collective action within a democratizing regime. One the one side, mobilizations against the government's undemocratic measures were carried in the name of civil society with the goal to defend or restore a democratic regime defined by the rule of law, accountability, and executive constraints. On the other hand, the *círculos* argued that they also represent the people and the support of a government elected by majority rule. Civil society

5 Chávez's government arguably maintained political rights and freedoms unlike other traditional autocracies. It has not incarcerated its political opponents, outlawed opposition parties, and censored the press. To a certain extent, the freedom of expression and assembly were intact (Nelson 2009: 151).

6 This term means weak, pale, or thin and used by the president to call his political enemies.

was evidently polarized into two camps both backed by powerful political forces. In April 2002, their inevitable clash resulted in the temporary downfall of Chávez. The swift disintegration of opposition civil society however paved the way for his return to the presidency two days later.

Almost like a scene in a political drama, the triggering event was set in Venezuela's most economically and therefore politically important institution: the national oil company (PDVSA). In early April, the president fired several high-level executives of the nation's oil company and replaced them with his close supporters. For the opposition, this breach was interpreted as blatant mismanagement of the country's source of wealth and therefore the welfare of the entire *pueblo*, a risk that Chávez was willing to take to stifle his political opponents. (Coronil 2011: 43).

On April 11, 2002, these opposition forces and their other allies in civil society mobilized what many then thought was the largest protest march in the country' history. While the demands were explicitly directed to cease and desist undue political intervention within PDVSA, the mobilization expressed long-held grievances against the administration. To many, its ultimate end-game was radical in nature: to create the conditions for Chávez's forcible resignation, if not ouster.[7] Chants of "¡Chávez Fuera!" (Out with Chávez) inevitably met those of "¡No Pasaran!" (They Shall Not Pass!). Estimates of the warm bodies in the protest ranged from 300,000 to 1 million, a large enough crowd with a capacity to exert enormous pressure for either the president to resign or encourage the military to intervene and resolve the political standoff (La Fuente and Meza 2004: 80-88).

The prospects of an impending clash between civil society groups loyal to the government and the protesters were elevated into a national security issue. The deaths of protesters became the impetus for Chávez to lose political support and legitimacy. Opposition forces crystallized against the incumbent and simultaneously called for his resignation for the sake of the country. For their part, private media outlets, sworn enemies of the president, released what would later be exposed as false footage of alleged *chavistas* firing at the supposedly anti-government crowd in the form of a spliced video taken from multiple sources at different point in time (Ellner and Rosen 2003: 10). The top-brass of the military rebelled against their commander-in-chief by holding him in custody and announcing his resignation on April 12. This act of military intervention blamed the president for the violent repression in the protest demonstration by implementing *Plan Avila*. (Nelson 2009: 157-158).

Self-appointed president Carmona's radical measures were perceived by scholars as the "coup within the coup" (Encarnación 2002). Even though there was a broad alliance between civil society organizations, private media, and several military officials with the aim of removing the president, there seemed to be a smaller circle within this coup coalition planning for a post-Chávez transition with them at the driver's seat. Disgruntled and disgusted, the military generals, labor leaders, and other moderate civil society groups swiftly pulled out their support from the new president. This represents the weak nature of the oppositional coalition that is responsible for the successful re-installment of Chávez to the presidency. By April 14, the ousted president was

7 Earlier that day, Gen. González González, a military official allegedly was part of the civil-military alliance, appeared on television to relay an ultimatum for Chávez to resign. He implied that it was the military high command's responsibility to force the president to step down. In Maurice Lemoine, "Venezuela's Press Power," *Le Monde Diplomatique*, August 2002.

welcomed by hundreds of his loyal followers gathered outside the seat of executive power in Venezuela (Wilpert 2007: 24). His amazing comeback was not only due to the fatal mistakes committed by his political enemies but was also the result of the unwavering support of his *pueblo*, the true source of Chávez's power (Ciccariello-Maher 2013).

Existing research on pro-Chávez civil society organizations attribute the defense of the populist leader with the significant amount of attention, resources, and support given to the Bolivarian circles (Hetland 2014). They played "a key role in the demonstrations that followed Chavez's temporary removal from power in April 2002" (Hawkins and Hansen 2006). Though *chavismo* created other parallel civil society organizations and the lack of centralization within the Bolivarian circles meant that they cannot be relied upon for all tasks relating to the upkeep of the revolution. And while the charismatic lure and populist performances of Chávez played an important role, his vision of revolutionary transformation with democratic characteristics coupled with the infusion of state resources was equally important. In fact, the defensive shield from *chavista* civil society organizations would also be seen in the failed "oil coup" from 2002-2003 (McCoy and Diez 2011; Martínez Meucci 2008).

6 Conclusion and Prospects

This chapter has three tentative conclusions. First, it showed that populism can be analyzed within the lens of performativity where leaders are collectively recognized by both their supporters and enemies as displaying a particular political style, rhetoric, appearance, and image. However, this chapter shifts the gaze away from the leader to how its populist performances can help conjure, buttress, or shape organizations of support and defense from civil society. Successful populists are quintessential performers but these actions need to be effectively communicated, perceived, processed, and recognized by supporters are part of organizational formations. Only then can populism rely on organizational forms from civil society can help sustain performative populism.

Second, this chapter compares two cases that had divergent outcomes. The unsuccessful defense of populist organizations when President Estrada from the Philippines was being challenged by the political opposition showed its underdeveloped and the mainly charismatic linkage between the former celebrity and his diehard fans. Without a more pronounced vision and the mobilization of resources, the popular outrage was not able to be translated into effective mobilization structures. Estrada was not only removed from office in grave violation of constitutional rules, there was also a failed attempt to put him back to the presidency during *EDSA 3*. In. sharp contrast, Chávez and his Bolivarian Revolution created new civil society organizations, tapped existing societal associations, and infused revolutionary ideals in order to become partners in his journey to reshape Venezuelan democracy. When traditional institutions and opponents of the firebrand leader challenged these maneuvers, there was a reliable source of support and defense. Also important in this case was the weakness in the cohesion of the opposition coalition which unraveled as soon as Chávez was removed from office. Since then, *chavistas* became the government's line of defense but also a source of support to realize radical policies.

Finally, both the Philippines and Venezuela currently have another crop of performative populists that resemble some characteristics from Estrada and Chávez. Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte is embarking on an ambitious political agenda of change for a country long captured by the oligarchy and dynastic elites. Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro is faced is a crippling crisis

but has not given up on implementing *chavismo*. Using the insights from this chapter, one can speculate that the fates of these two populist leaders rely on their successful political performances and to what extent can they transform their audiences into support and defense constituencies. This requires a coherent transformative vision as well as a steady supply of resources and support. But it also relies on the nature and behavior of the opposition coalitions bent on challenging their agenda.

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Behind the Altars of Populism and Power Sharing

Explaining power shifts in Suriname

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1 Introduction

The regime shifts of left populism and consociationalism (power sharing) in Suriname raises the question as to whether the policies pursued by the two regimes work in favour of the people.[1] This article explains power sharing and left populism in Suriname, and the economic power and ideological constructs behind these political regimes. The traditional ethnic parties - related with Creole, East Indian and Javanese - dominated Suriname's politics from 1949 to 1980 and established a power-sharing tradition, particularly from 1958-1973. Left-wing populism in Suriname evolved during the first military regime (1980-1987) and was continued by the National Democratic Party (NDP) emerging from this regime and led by the former military leader Desiré Bouterse. This political party had the lead in the 1996-2000 government, and monopolized power from 2010- 2020. After an electoral victory in a political combination in 2010, the NDP as a single party, won the 2015 elections with a landslide and obtained a majority of the parliamentary seats. This marked a power shift, at the expense of the traditional ethnic parties that dominated from 1949-1980. In the post military period 1988- 2020 the political hegemony of the traditional ethnic parties was continuously contested by the populist NDP. After the first 2010-2015 term, the challenge for the NDP was to continue the social policies in the second term (2015-2020), and guarantee an affordable standard of living amidst increasing budgetary deficits, debts and inflation. However, the implementation of novel 21st left-wing populism was shortlived as the

1 I use the concept "consociationalism" interchangeable with "power sharing" as conceptualised by Lijphart (2008).

NDP regime was defeated in the 2020 elections amidst a ruined economy, mega corruption scandals, increasing budgetary deficits, debts inflation and non sustainable social policies.

After the general elections in 1987 Suriname experienced fluctuating electoral outcomes, resulting alternately in left populists and traditional coalition regimes. Of the eight elections held in the 1987 -2020 period, five resulted in power sharing and three in populist regimes. The novel analysis in this article takes account of the changing economic contexts and its relation with political power and elite formation. The central question is how economic power, political discourses and implemented policies, influenced the volatility of power sharing and populist regimes in Suriname, and the achievement of development goals.

The analysis this article begins with the emergent power sharing politics of the traditional ethnic parties in the 1949-1980 period. This is followed by analysing the origin and decline of the military regime (1980-1987). Next the rise and fall of the political hegemony of traditional ethnic parties from 1991 -2020 are addressed. The analysis focuses on how the economic power base of the traditional ethnic parties eroded, due to the declining bauxite-alumina production and Dutch aid, and how a new economic power base evolved with gold as the new economic pillar for elite formation. The rise and the fall of the power sharing and populist regimes are explained by critically analysing the relation between economic and political power, and untangling the underlying values and preconditions.

2 Power sharing in the pre-military Period

On the eve of the first general elections in 1949 the Surinamese society was composed of multiple ethnic and religious minorities. The fact that none of these groups had a demographic majority influenced the political system that emerged after the Second World War. The major traditional ethnic parties - NPS (Creole), VHP (East Indian) and KTPI (Javanese) - represented the interests of their ethnic rank and file. After the first general elections of 1949 in Suriname a political tradition of consociationalism emerged and dominated politics particularly from 1958-1967 (Menke 1991: 59). Consociationalism or power sharing is a multi-party coalition system based on the cooperation between political elites related to the major ethnic, or groups with another important affiliation and their respective political parties via an informal brokerage system. In the case of Suriname power sharing evolved particularly between elites of the major ethnic parties, the VHP, KTPI and NPS. In a situation of poorly developed entrepreneurial economic classes, the state in addition of being an instrument to execute political power, also became a source for the ethnic groups to acquire economic wealth and vertical social mobility. This contributed to the emerging 'ethnic state' with state resources being distributed along ethnic lines, in particular positions within the government administration and state enterprises (Menke 1991: 63). The 'ethnic state' was also reflected in the allocation of public funding and development aid in distinct economic sectors, which was made available by Holland since 1948.

The political independence of Suriname in 1975 coincided purposively with a golden handshake, reflected in an extraordinary aid agreement between the Dutch and the Surinamese state. However, despite the 3.5 billion Dutch guilders granted with the golden handshake, the development objectives - such as improving employment, a more equitable distribution of income, and a higher standard of living - were not achieved (Mhango 1984). This inability -according to the military leaders - was an important motive for committing the military coup in 1980. The

military who seized power further justified the coup by pointing to the ethnic politics, ineffective civilian democracy, corruption and Dutch neo colonialism (Menke 2000a).

3 The Rise and Decline of the military Regime

The first military regime (1980-1987) appointed 8 governments in less than 7 years, aiming to reform the political system, the economy, education and the social system. Despite a few success stories - like the implementation of local government - key objectives such as improvement of the standard of living, were not achieved. The poor performance, together with the violation of human rights - the low point of the December 1982 killings of 15 prominent Surinamers - contributed to the declining legitimacy of the military regime. This was reflected in labor strikes, social protests and memoranda of professional organizations. The suspension of the Dutch aid in 1982 and the crisis in the international bauxite industry had a negative impact on the standard of living. The response of the military leadership to the eroding legitimacy of the military regime was to initiate a dialogue with leaders of previous traditional "power-sharing" coalitions towards redemocratisation in 1983. The military leaders were able to select the oppositional groups that would guarantee the best deal from a military perspective. This paved the way for incremental changes towards a new constitution and general elections in 1987. The "power-sharing" initiative for a dialogue with the leaders of the traditional ethnic-based political parties, was considered necessary for a balanced withdrawal of the military while assuring also the reservation of state power in the aftermath of the 1987 elections. The reservation of state power particularly in the areas of defense and internal security, meant that the power should remain in the hands of the military (Menke 1988). This was laid down in the decree "National Army" prior to the elections of 1987. The military claim of state power went beyond defense and internal security, for another important task of the army in this decree states: cooperation with the aim of maintaining and safeguarding the continuation of the revolutionary process and, in relation to this, supporting the government. Petras (1986) argues that military regimes often opt for dialogues with civilians who prefer juridical-political changes to socioeconomic changes. In the redemocratisation of Suriname we also found that the military leaders opted for civilian dialogue partners who were willing to focus on juridical-political issues. The adoption of a new constitution and organizing general and free elections also resulted from the dialogue between the military top and the leaders of the ethnic political parties.

4 The Rise and Fall of traditional Power-Sharing and left populist Regimes

The 1987 elections marked a regime shift when the *Front for Democracy and Development* (FRONT), a political combination of three traditional ethnic parties[2] (VHP, NPS, and KTPI) won these elections with a landslide, by getting 87.1 per cent of the national votes cast (Table 1). This victory was followed in the 1990s and beyond by electoral instability, a decline of the traditional power sharing ethnic parties and the collapse of their hegemony.

2 Historically many political parties in Suriname have been affiliated with one ethnic group. This means that ethnicity has been playing a major role in politics. However, in the post military period some political parties have been evolving more or less towards multiethnic organizations. (See Sedney 1997).

4.1 Electoral Instability

Electoral instability is calculated by comparing the votes cast per political organization between two elections. In terms of parliamentary seats in Suriname a nation-wide measure is officially not justified, for the available seats are assigned according to a proportionate electoral system per district.[3] Although Suriname has a proportionate system by district, an analysis at the national level has the advantage that one can determine the national electoral support as well as the changes related to the previous elections. The instability index, ranging from 0 to 100, is helpful to assess the decrease or increase of the percentage valid votes cast between two elections. An index of 0 indicates no instability, thus no change. Nation-wide the electoral instability for the traditional power-sharing coalitions of the major ethnic parties was -35.8 per cent in the 1987 - 2020 period, which means that between the two election years the procentual valid votes lost is 35.8 per cent (Table 2). Most remarkable is the steady decline of the percentage votes cast by traditional ethnic parties from 1996-2015; During five successive elections the percentage of votes cast remained below 50 per cent and even reached a lowest 32 per cent in 2010.

Table 1: Electoral Instability nationwide 1987-2020.

Year	FRONT (traditional ethnic parties)	NDP/ Millennium	Other parties	Total
1987	87.1%	9.3%	3.7%	100%
1991	54.2%	21.9%	24%	100%
1996	41.7%	26.2%	32.1%	100%
2000	47.5%	15.1%	37.4%	100%
2005	39.4%	22.2%	38.4%	100%
2010	32%	40%	28%	100%
2015	37%	45%	17%	100%
2020	51.3%	23.9%	24.9%	100%
Loss (-) gain (+) 1987 -2020	-35.8%[4]	+14.6%	+21.2%	100%

3 The number of parliamentary seats in the respective districts is not proportionately related to the number of voters in the ten districts. The required votes per seat differ between the ten electoral districts, and shows that the three interior districts need far less votes per seat than most of the seven coastal districts.

4 1.6% of the political party SPA that was not in the FRONT in 1987 is included in the figures of FRONT. V7 is the new name of the FRONT political combination in the 2015 elections, complemented with the political parties PL and BEP. Sources: 2015: http://www.dna.sr/verkiezingen/uitslag-verkiezingen-2015/; 2010: Centraal Hoofdstembureau, Officiële verkiezingsuitslagen 2010 (CD- ROM); 2005: Centraal Hoofdstembureau, Officiële verkiezingsuitslagen 2005 (CD- ROM); 1987- 2000: Menke, Jack (2000a).

4.2 Electoral Rise and Fall of left-wing Populism

The 1987 landslide by the three major traditional ethnic parties (VHP, NPS, and KTPI) went at the expense of the NDP with only 9.3 per cent of the national votes cast. This turned in the 2015 elections into the opposite, when the NDP contesting as a single party, won the parliamentary elections with 26 of the 51 parliamentary seats, a landslide of 45 per cent of the national votes cast (Table 1). In the 2010 elections the Mega combination with the NDP as the lead party obtained 40 per cent of the national votes cast and a majority of seats in the National Assembly.

Characteristic for the left populist governments (1996-2000 and 2010-2020) are the excessive expenditures that went hand in hand with excessive corruption. The seeds for the decline of the two-term Bouterse government (2010-2020) were sown during the first term (2010-2015). What on first sight appeared to become a success story due to the increased social security "bought" to win a historical election with a landslide in 2015, turned into the failure and demise of the NDP in the 2020 elections. The 2015 NDP election victory occurred during the downturn of the Surinamese economy after 2013. While gold and oil prices, as well as government revenues fell sharply from 2013 - 2018, social benefits (including pensions, child benefits and after-school care) were increased significantly just before the 2015 elections. This contributed to the NDP's historic electoral victory in 2015 with 45 per cent of the national votes cast, versus 37 per cent for the predominantly traditional parties united in the oppositional V7 combination (Table 1). At the same time, the excessive social security expenditures by the populist government, was accompanied by a huge increase of the exchange rate for foreign currencies and a high inflation.

The most serious failure of the NDP government was the breakdown and weakening of key institutions. This was accompanied by replacing experts from key institutions by political confidants affiliated with the ruling political party. Most dramatic was the institutional collapse of the Central Bank, where technocrats in the top management were replaced by political confidants, resulting in a financial and moral abyss through serious violations of the banking law. This, together with an increasing foreign currency exchange rate, debts and inflation negatively affected voters' confidence in the ruling NDP.

5 Explaining the Rise and Fall of Power-Sharing and populist Regimes

It is important to understand why the economic power base of the largest traditional ethnic parties - the NPS and the VHP - declined in the post-military era (Menke 2000a). First, the traditional power formation of these parties, to some extent based on clientelism and Dutch development aid in the 1970s, declined after 1987. This was due to stricter requirements and direct control of aid funding by Holland, but also because a part of the aid was provided to institutions outside the control of the Surinamese government. Second, a few important finance groups of the NPS and the VHP disappeared or moved to other political parties. Third, many state-owned enterprises, that traditionally were within the sphere of influence of the NPS and the VHP have been severely weakened due to mismanagement and failure to respond to the major changes in the restructuring of the global economy (Menke 1998). While the economic power formation within the NPS and the VHP declined, an increasing economic power evolved in and around the NDP. This is addressed next.

It was observed earlier that in the redemocratisation process prior to and after the 1987 elections the military leaders opted for juridical-political changes rather than socioeconomic changes. This also enabled the military to reserve state power through the decrees "National Army" and "Charter for Military Officers" to guarantee their internal security and the continuation of the revolutionary ideals.

In addition to the reservation of state power the military leaders (who became the political leaders of the NDP) reserved state power outside the elections and the state (Menke 2000b). The former military leaders became actively involved to shape a new economic elite in a society with a historically weak entrepreneurial class. Participation in the formation of a new economic elite was clearly expressed on the eve of the 1987 elections. The leader of the military regime proclaimed the 'economic revolution' and in the late 1980s begun to incorporate in his network sections of the emergent and existing capital groups of the old ethnic parties, including the VHP. This process was continued in the 1990s and became crucial to strengthen the economic base of the NDP. The urge to unite economic and political power (that were relatively delinked after the1980 military coup) is directly related to the electoral instability and political fragmentation of the 1990s and beyond.

5.1 The 1996 Turning Point: Instability, Fragmentation and new Coalitions

The 1996 elections mark a turning point in Suriname's political history as the most drastic fragmentation of political parties and power shift in the post-military period of Suriname occurred around these elections. There was an urge to unite economic and political power and to enhance the emancipation process of ethnic groups that were politically in a disadvantaged position. The political fragmentation is reflected in two ways: the split of existing ethnic political parties or political combinations; and the representation of each ethnic group by more than one party in the National Assembly.

The 1996 election was held amidst of a structural adjustment program of the incumbent Nieuw Front coalition government (1991-1996), that did not succeed to obtain a majority to extend with another five year term. This was followed by a remarkable fragmentation of existing political combinations and parties after the elections. Three political combinations that suffered most from the splits are the Nieuw FRONT, Alliantie and DA91. The ruling Nieuw FRONT (VHP, NPS, KTPI and SPA) that had won 24 seats in parliament - less than half of the 51 parliamentary seats - did not reach consensus to extend the existing coalition through support by other political organisations. This coalition found itself two months later to have lost 10 seats due to fragmentation. The traditional East Indian based VHP lost 5 elected seats of members who founded a new party. The KTPI, a Javanese party with 5 seats withdrew from the Nieuw FRONT coalition and joined the oppositional NDP, like the VHP dissidents. In addition, two other coalition partners, Alliantie and DA91, lost seats due to the mobility of elected members who also joined the new coalition led by the NDP that won 16 parliamentary seats (table 2). The NDP succeeded with support of the members who withdrew from other political combinations, to elect the President and vice-president, followed by the formation of a new coalition government in 1996. The finally formed non-traditional coalition comprised the NDP (Left populist), PVF (Left agricultural workers), HPP (Center left) and center or center-right parties BVD, KTPI, OPDA (Table 2).

Table 2: Political Organisations by parliamentary Representatives before and after Fragmentation in 1996.

Political organization	Elected representatives	Representatives		Final representatives	
		Lost	Gained	Opposition	Coalition
Nieuw Front	24	10*		14	
NDP	16	0			16
Pendawalima	4	0		4	
Da91	4	2[5]*		2	
Alliantie	3	3		0	
BVD	0		5		5
KTPI	0		5	1	4
OPDA	0		2		2
HPP	0		1		1
PVF	0		1		1
BEP	0		1	1	
Total	51	15	15	22	29

Why do the 1996 elections and the non-traditional coalition government mark a turning point? First, the nature and the way this coalition came into existence makes it a remarkable government with very diverse political signatures. Second, in the electoral history of Suriname since 1949 it is the first time that traditional ethnic parties together obtained nationwide less than half of the votes cast and less than half of the parliamentary seats. This raises the question which factors influenced the emergence of a non-traditional coalition in 1996?

There are two important factors influencing the drastic party fragmentation and non-traditional coalitions in 1996 and beyond: the urge to unite economic and political power; and the urge for completing the emancipation of the ethnic groups that were politically disadvantaged.

The first explanation, the urge to unite economic and political power, stems from the military coup in 1980 when political power came in the hands of the military top and was temporarily separated from the existing economic power groups. In order to re-unite economic and political power, new economic groups emerging since the 1980s across ethnic and capital groups, searched for alliances with politics and vice versa. It is remarkable that after the 1996 elections important capital groups moved away from the major traditional ethnic parties and joined the new populist NDP government.

5 Elected members who withdrew from Nieuw Front and DA91 and went into a NDP coalition Sources composed of data from Egger (1996).

Because of the absence of a developed entrepreneurial economic class and the reduced Dutch aid, taking control of the state became crucial for the formation of capital-rich economic classes and to exercise political power. During and after the military regime in the 1980s, the military leaders gradually transferred state power into political power while facilitating economic opportunities by founding a civilian political party, the NDP (Menke 1991). This has been an important pull factor for both the new and old economic elites to prefer an alliance with the NDP. A push factor for the old economic elites to withdraw from the traditional ethnic parties is related to the reduced Dutch aid inflows since the 1980s, which has been a principal source for the power base of these parties in the past. In addition, due to changed and stricter procedures compared to the 1970s, the possibility to use Dutch aid for political patronage has been reduced significantly.

A second factor that may explain the fragmentation of political parties is the urge for completing the emancipation of ethnic groups. The time of traditional ethnic voting in terms of persons from a particular ethnic groups voting for their respective ethnic party, is over to some extent. That's why in parliament members of a particular ethnicity are represented across the different political parties in parliament, also parties that focus primarily on other ethnic groups (Schalkwijk 1996). Illustrative is the composition of the 1996-2000 parliament, showing five parties with East Indian representatives, five parties with Creole representatives, three with Javanese, and another three parties with Maroon representatives.

There is a certain sequence in this process that is referred to as 'ethnic delinking' and emancipation. The Creole and Mixed group were the first to experience fragmentation in the early 1950s, followed by the East Indians in the 1960s, with a climax in 1996.[6] So far non-Javanese parties have not succeeded yet to attract significant portions of the Javanese electorate. This indicates that the emancipation process of this group has not been completed yet (Schalkwijk 1996).

6 Gold and the new Power Elite

Besides party fragmentation, the 1990s also demonstrate a gradual erosion of the economic power base of the traditional ethnic parties, particularly due to the declining bauxite-alumina production and the reduced Dutch aid. At the same time the economic power formation in and around the NDP increased. Against the background of a historically weak entrepreneurial class the former military leaders, now the political leaders of the NDP, evolved towards a new economic elite in the Surinamese society. They took advantage of taking state power through elections in 1996, 2010 and 2015.

The 'economic revolution' that was proclaimed in the late 1980s by the leadership of the military regime was accelerated in the 21st century. The economic power base had shifted towards gold production and export, and had surpassed bauxite and oil as the economic pillars of the economy.[7]

6 The 2000 elections show a further fragmentation in terms of splitting of existing political parties. The difference with the 1996 with fragmentation after the elections was that the fragmentation in 2000 occurred before the elections, resulting in 5 new political parties.

7 In January 2017 Alcoa Corporation announced that it will permanently close the Suralco alumina industry and bauxite mines in Suriname, which has been curtailed since November 2015. The Bauxite - alumina that started in 1916 had a very low export value of 7.1 million Us$ in 2016 (Central Bank Suriname).

The gold export peaked in the 2015-2020 period and reached a historical high export value of almost 2 billion USS$ in 2020, representing 93 per cent of the total export of the most important mineral goods (Table 3). Even during the flowering years of Suriname's bauxite - alumina industry in the 1970s, this astronomical annual export value was not reached.

Table 3: Export value mineral Products Suriname 2006-2020 (millions of US$).

Product	2006		2010		2015		2020	
	Absolute	**Percent**	**Absolute**	**Percent**	**Absolute**	**Percent**	**Absolute**	**Percent**
Alumina	559.3	54%	427	23%	232.7	18%	0	0%
Oil	57.2	6%	267.2	14%	156.4	12%	154.4	7%
Gold[8]	410.1	40%	1175	63%	916.2	70%	1959.5	93%
Total	1026.6	100%	1869	100%	1305.3	100%	2113.9	100%

Apart of the informal and illegal economies, the question now is how political power and economic power were united, and how the new power elite took advantage of the growing production and export of gold.

First, the leadership and related networks of nontraditional parties, particularly the NDP and the ABOP,[9] acquired various concessions for gold exploration and exploitation in gold-rich areas. They became involved in medium- and small scale mining, which represent an important share of the total gold production. In 2015 the official medium and small scale gold production - with a share of 63 per cent of total production -was higher than the large scale gold production of the two foreign-owned enterprises (Table 4).

8 non-monetary gold.

9 The ABOP (Algemene Bevrijdings- en Ontwikkelingspartij, translated: General Liberation and Development Party), is a party with many Maroon followers, was founded in 1990 and chaired by Ronnie Brunswijk.

Table 4: Gold Production and Processing (1000 kilogram)[10].

Production type	2015		2016		2017		2018		2019	
Large-scale	9.39	35.4%	12.93	46.1%	25.85	62.4%	25.97	62.2%	25.69	61.8%
Small/medium scale	17.10	64.6%	15.12	53.9%	15.55	37.6%	15.77	37.8%	15.91	38.2%
Total gold production	26.49	100%	28.05	100%	41.40	100%	41.74	100%	41.60	100%

The economic power base with gold as the pillar was accelerated during the two Bouterse governments from 2010-2020. With a favourable global financial environment for this precious metal the emerging new Surinamese power elite took advantage in two ways. First by making new deals with large gold multinationals. And second, by granting gold concessions to the ruling political party elites and related networks. In the context of an international gold price of over 1600 USD/ oz. the Canadian IAMGOLD Corporation had reached a definitive agreement on November 26, 2012 with the Government of Suriname which was approved On April 13, 2013 by the National Assembly.[11] This deal occurred in the context of a high international gold price and a historical high export value for gold in Suriname of 1,708.9 million US$ in 2012 (Stichting Planbureau Suriname). The ruling political elite reached and signed the questioned agreement amidst of fierce parliamentary and public debates whereby the government was accused of selling out the country's gold resources, corruption and clientelism.[12]

[10] Source: Stichting Planbureau Suriname.

11 With the 2013 Agreement, IAMGOLD will maintain all of its existing entitlements in the Rosebel operations and in the Gross Rosebel exploitation concession and will extend the term of its existing Mineral Agreement by 15 years to 2042. The Agreement will further establish a new joint venture growth vehicle (the "JV") under which Rosebel would hold a 70% participating interest and the Government will acquire a 30% participating interest on a fully-paid basis. The source of the official list of concessionaires and maps of the concessions issued in the "area of Interest Surgold" is the letter of 7 June 2013 addressed by the President of Suriname to the President of the National Assembly. The JV area has been defined as a circular area extending 45 km from the Rosebel mill, but excluding the Gross Rosebel concession, for a net JV area of approximately 6,190 km^2.

12 Prior to the National Assembly's approval of the final agreement in 2013, the incumbent government issued many concessions in the so-called "Area of interest" of the New Mont gold company, while the Geological Mining Service (GMD) was bypassed (Starnieuws 17 June 2013). The official list with names of concessionaires and maps of issued concessions in the "area of Interest Surgold" according to registration of the Geological Mining Service, contained 77 issued concessions ranging from 200 to 28174 hectares. Among the names on the list were the president's attorney, and the chairman of the political party ABOP, which was part of the 2010-2015 government. The opposition raised a few other objections against the "Area of Interest". First, this term does not occur in the Surinamese mining law. This law is the basis for issuing mining concessions to national, international and multilateral companies where "Area of Interest" of Iamgold and Surgold (joint venture between Suralco and Newmont) was introduced by the Bouterse government. Another concern raised, regards the fact that many habitats of traditional peoples are located in the "Area of Interest". The forest management law of 1992, the L-decree of 1982 and the nature conservation law of 1982, states explicitly that residentials and habitats of the traditional people's areas may not be allocated to third parties. Members

An official 2011 government list of gold rights, combined with data from the Chamber of Commerce and Factories, founders, directors and officers of gold companies, tax data and the list of members of the Gold Sector Ordinance Committee, other public information on ancillary positions, provides a picture of the economic power elite in the gold sector (Parbode 2012). In the top ten positions are the two high ranking politicians Ronnie Brunswijk and Desi Bouterse, both leaders of two non-traditional parties, the ABOP and the NDP.[13]

In 2011 a total of 31 thousand kilos of gold was exported with a world market value of over one and a half billion US dollars (1,550,000,000 US dollars). Of this amount the Surinamese government received about twelve percent in tax, royalties and consent law from the gold sector, which amounts to only 180 million US dollars (Parbode 2012). While gold became the government's main source of income in the 21st century, the gold sector itself earns many times this amount. A large share of the money value of the gold production goes as income for the estimated 30,000 mostly informal small goldminers, as profits from thousands of suppliers of goods and services for small and large-scale gold production, and as income for the concessionaires and gold dealers (Ibid). The informal small goldminers, the majority of whom evade fiscal and environmental regulations, are important in the political mobilisation and voting power, particularly in the interior electoral districts that are politically largely controlled by the NDP and the ABOP.

7 Comparing Power-Sharing and populist Regimes: Theory and Practice

This section explores and compares the characteristics of the power sharing and populist regimes in Suriname and their limitations. It is also discussed why both regimes failed to put the country on a development track.

7.1 Pre- and postmilitary Consociationalism

According to Lijphart (2008: 273) Suriname is a good example of a consociational democracy based on power sharing, particularly in the pre-military period 1958-1973. He observes that from 1973- 1980 a predominantly Creole government replaced the previous traditional grand inter-ethnic coalitions with leaders of the major ethnic groups (Creoles and East Indians). This majoritarian government came to an end by a military coup in 1980. Lijphart raises two opposite explanations for this regime shift. The first - more likely explanation according to Lijphart - is that the coup reflects the failure of the majoritarian government with mainly Creoles from 1973-1980 that excluded a traditional inter-ethnic coalition. His second explanation is that the military coup „demonstrates a failure of the consociational system and that the coup was essentially a delayed

of the political opposition in The National Assembly named eight companies and individuals who had received concessions but were not on the list of concessions issued, and thus questioning the completeness of this list.

13 In 2011 the politician, member of parliament and businessman, R. Brunswijk had six of the nine small mining rights in Brokopondo, Para and Sipaliwini, while he also had exploration rights from NV Robruns on more than seven thousand hectares on the Marowijne River. After 2011 he obtained several other gold concessions. Desi Bouterse did not formally appear in 2011 on the list of concessionaires in the position of founder, director or owner. However, he strongly influenced the gold sector as a politician and president. For example, the Gold Sector Ordinance Committee was under his authority, and many members of his political party, the NDP, are working in the gold sector (Parbode 2012).

consequence of this earlier failure“ (Ibid: 274). Unlike Lijphart's argument their appears to be more evidence for the failing consociational system, as the grand inter-ethnic coalitions were defeated three times in the post-military period 1988 -2020.

Let's take a look at the key elements of the consociationalist system, as opposed to the majoritarian Westminster system (Lijphart 2008). Consociationalism has four requirements that are also conditions for the pacification of supporters in so-called plural societies:

> (a) support for the formation of coalition governments to ensure more inclusive participation;
>
> (b) proportionality in both elections and representation;
>
> (c) segmental autonomy and decentralization of authority to enable and ensure that minorities are able to exercise authority over their group related affairs with a degree of geographical autonomy where possible;
>
> (d) mutual veto to ensure that minorities are able to prevent unacceptable impositions on them.

In Suriname the five traditional power sharing coalitions in the 1988 -2020 period included the major ethnic parties, which to some extent met these requirements. Why then these parties did not achieve democratic stability and sustainability. And why were they defeated in three out of eight elections in the post military era by a political bloc or single party (NDP) with a left-wing populist nature.

Consociationalism with its elite-focus has often been criticized for its inaccessibility to the elite and non-involvement of the middle and lower rank party members. Research on internal party democracy in Suriname indicates that both traditional mono-ethnic and leftwing multiethnic parties demonstrate a lack of access of party members to the party leadership, while not complying with the elementary standards of party democracy (Menke 2004). In addition, most advisory or policy bodies of these parties lack the capacity to formulate long term strategic policies. Thus, the contributions by both parties of traditional power-sharing coalitions and left populist parties do not reach further than formulating short term goals, rather than longterm strategic objectives to put the country on a development track.

We observed before that emphasis on juridical-political issues and neglecting socio-economic policies for the poor, contributed to the electoral decline of the traditional power-sharing coalitions of ethnic parties in 1996, 2010 and 2015. These coalitions focused on juridical-political policies to cope with the perceived 'threat' of a growing potential political power of the NDP, that incorporated multi-ethnicity within the party, led by exponents of military regime of the 1980s. At the same time, they implemented orthodox economic recovery programs, of a monetarist type, while neglecting to formulate a comprehensive and integrated program with inclusion of a sustainable social safety net. Illustrative is the 1991-1996 Nieuw Front government for implementing a monetarist structural adjustment program that lacked comprehensiveness and failed to reduce poverty, resulting in a deteriorated socio-economic situation (Menke 1998). This contributed to the declined electoral support for the traditional power-sharing ethnic coalition and their defeat in the 1996 elections.

7.2 Characteristics of left Populism

Contemporary populism is a two-edged sword with 'on the one side is the voice of the people, on the other edge voices of fear, anger, hatred, and revenge' (Brunello 2018: 110-111). The voice of the people points to a high esteem for the virtues of common person, while the voice of anger and hatred are against the elite. Conceptualisations of populism changed overtime, depending on the global and national relations in the world. In the 1960s, for example, Worsley (1975 [1964]) conceptualized populism from a Third World perspective in the context of the anti-colonial movement.[14]

In the context of 21st politics this article conceptualises populism as a way of exercising political power, in which the opposition between "the people" and "the elite" is perceived to be important, whereby the populist leaders identify with and take the side of "the people". Populism can be found globally in various regimes ranging from left to right, so that one can distinguish left populists, right populists and other types. Therefore, populism is not a political system like fascism and socialism, but a way of mobilizing followers and exercising power.

Left populism in Suriname evolved during the military regime (1980-1987) and was elaborated by the National Democratic Party (NDP) that originated from this regime. We found populism to play a significant role in post-military Suriname, while at the same time has been contesting the traditional consociationalism based on power-sharing coalitions led by traditional ethnic parties. This raises the question why left populism could contest consociationalism in the post-military era?

The relatively successful mobilisation of the NDP – apart of uniting political and economic power - is due to the way populism-related values are translated in easy to understand narratives (Table 5Table 5). Illustrative are the narratives that represent negative values such as the anti-elitist communication approaches via the state-owned radio stations, and the popular narratives "bakra basi keba" (Anticolonial nationalism saying that Dutch colonialism is over) and "Neks no fout" (Anti Rule of Law).

Table 5: Common Values of Left Populism in Suriname.

Negative values	Positive values
■ Antielitism ■ Antiparliamentary ■ Anticolonial nationalism ■ Anti Rule of Law	■ National capitalism ■ National culture oriented ■ Appreciation of Indigenous culture ■ Appreciation Suriname's "bromki jari" "flower garden")

14 Populism is conceptualized by Peter Worsley from a Third World perspective in the 1960s. He stresses the ideological aspect of populism and counters the Marxist notion of 'false consciousness'. Populism constitutes an ideology in so far as class divisions exist in the Third World. But in many of these countries, classlessness is a reality, classes are poor developed, the major antagonism is between the local people and foreign capitalists.

The threat of populism for the wider society is not in the populist leader as such, but in the presentation and defending of antidemocratic values such as antiparliamentary values and anti-Rule of Law as illustrated in table 5. Antonio Gramsci's concept of 'hegemony' considers ideological control the key for dominance (Gramsci 1999). The expressions and words used by the leaders have been constructed by social interactions in the course of the history of the society concerned and are shaped by the dominant ideology. The framing of these expressions with a certain cultural meaning, conditions followers to think in the constructed frames of the given time and circumstances.

Another question is: what contributed to the defeat of left populism in 2020? There is evidence that the NDP paid a high price for short-term and ad hoc policies in the 2020 elections. The left populist governments (1996-2000, and 2010-2020), in the absence of a clear development strategy, opted for combining 'development by national financial resources' and 'high-interest foreign loans' which resulted repeatedly in huge internal and external debts.

The seeds for the demise of the second Bouterse government (2015-2020) were sown by bad macroeconomic policies during the first Bouterse government (2010-2015). The 2015 NDP election victory took place amidst of an economic downturn since 2013. While gold, and oil world market prices as well as government revenues fell sharply, social benefits (including pensions, child benefits and after-school care) were significantly increased just before the 2015 elections. This contributed to the NDP's historic electoral victory in 2015 with 45.5 per cent of the national votes, versus 37.3 per cent for the oppositional V7, a traditional combination of mostly ethnic parties. At the same time, the populist government policy entered into a so-called „Social contract". This policy targeted the poorer strata and was accompanied by excessive social expenditures, resulting in a scarcity of foreign currencies and a high inflation. A second problem relates to widespread corruption, the undermining and breakdown of key institutions, and the frequent replacement of ministers. In the 2015-2020 government a total of 39 ministers have been appointed at 17 departments. Highest ranks the Ministry of Justice and Police by 5 ministers, followed by Public Works by 4 and Social Affairs and Housing, Trade and Industry, Agriculture, Livestock and Fishery, Sports and Youth Affairs and Spatial Planning, each with 3 ministers. The degradation of core institutions across vital sectors and resources is reflected in the frequent firing of professional experts through criminalisation and their replacement by political confidants. Illustrative is the Central Bank. The governor of this bank was replaced by a political confidant, who became involved in malafide practices, with a negative impact on the sustainability and confidence of the entire financial sector. Due to a disastrous financial policy and corruption within the NDP government, the Central Bank became technically bankrupt. This bank was already unable to meet its foreign exchange obligations on the eve of the 2020 elections and was forced to steal from its currency reserves, among other things. The Central Bank of Suriname has used about $ 100 million of the cash reserves of the commercial banks for government spending, without the knowledge of the private banks. Another example is the *Gold Sector Regulation Committee*, that was established in 2011, but is being undermined by the conflict of interest of high-ranking politicians and business persons involved in the gold business.

A third problem was the serious undermining of the rule of law by the NDP government. With the many attacks on the rule of law, such as the adoption of the amnesty law, the second Bouterse government (2015-2020) sowed the seeds for its own downfall. This controversial occasional law

that indemnifies suspects of the 1982 December murders from criminal charges, was passed in DNA on April 4, 2012, and has been characterised as a black page in the parliamentary history. The silent march held by civil society and church organizations on April 10, 2012 was the first widespread protest against the controversial amnesty law by civil society and authoritarian institutions expressing concern about attacks on the rule of law.

8 Conclusions

Both consociationalist and left populist regimes in post-military Suriname generally did not succeed to achieve the development goals, which raises questions about the nature and ability of these regimes. Consociationalism seems to be concerned primarily with the pacification of supporters within the traditional power sharing lines of ethnicity. In fact, consociationalism is an elitist political representation of political practices, through which the delegation of power from the people to the elites of the different ethnic groups is legitimised. The elites, on behalf of the ethnic groups, authorise themselves to negotiate on the sharing of appropriated power (Menke 2012).

The relationship between political and economic power, processes concerning authoritarian regimes and political party fragmentation are not dealt with in consociational theory. However, in reality the state can be temporarily disconnected from its social class and economic base. This was evident during the military regime (1980-1987), particularly when the Dutch development aid was suspended and the economic spin-off of the declining bauxite industry was reduced. This became a push factor for the old economic elites to withdraw from the traditional ethnic parties. The leaders of the military regime gradually transferred state power into political power and created conditions for future economic opportunities by founding a civilian political party, the NDP. For segments of the new and old economic elites this has been an important pull factor to prefer alliances with the NDP over the traditional ethnic parties.

The left populist regimes in Suriname have common features with the new developmentalist regimes that emerged in Latin America in the early 21st century, like Brazil during president Lula and Bolivia during President Evo Morales (Petras 2010). Developmentalist policies are often based on alliances with global and national mineral, agro-industrial elites. They aim at maximising investment and economic growth, while neglecting sustainable redistributive policies or changes in property ownership. This is also evident for Suriname's left-wing populist regimes that forged alliances with global and national goldmining elites.

The NDP used left populism as an effective strategy to spread the idea of the political leader who identifies with "the people" based on values that are communicated through easy to understand narratives. The principal institutions are the (social) media, family, and religion through which the society endorses and confirms the “truth”, the moral values and constructed reality of the power elite, that at the same time rejects oppositional views and actions as elitist, neocolonial and oppressive. The left populist regimes presented a new way of exercising political power by constructing broader types of collective identities to capture the poorer groups, through the construction of class-based narratives. However, this experiment which aimed to reduce poverty and inequalities, also failed.

The power sharing and populist regimes show important differences on strategic policy issues. The recurrent strategic policy issues of the power sharing coalitions are: Restoration and abiding *the Rule of law, Good governance* and *Structural adjustment policies*. The principal strategic policy issue of the left populist regimes is the *Social Contract* that at the same time disguises the *developmentalist* policies based on alliances with global and national mineral elites. However, despite differences in strategic policy issues and codes of behavior, the traditional power sharing and populist regimes in Suriname have in common that they did not provide sustainable responses to the 21st development challenges.

The regime shifts in the post Second World War political history of Suriname show once again the reversal of the classic relation between economic power and political power in the state formation in ex- colonial societies. Sankatsing (2016: 192) points to the reversed process in these societies where economic power is acquired after seizing political power and the state, which is contrary to the state formation in the developed capitalist countries. The case of Suriname learns that both populist and consociational regimes have been using the state for narrow party interests by means of clientelism and corruption, with a detrimental impact for the economy and society. It demonstrates how due to its fragile political and economic base, the state continues to degenerate into a central source for political power and short term acquisition of economic wealth by the ethnically diverse and poorly developed entrepreneurial economic classes. In the end, both the power sharing and populist regimes have maintained an inefficient and ineffective public sector along ethnic lines and maintained many loss-making state-owned companies to secure their electoral and political power base.

Having completed the comparison of left populism and power sharing regimes our analysis heads towards the near future. The current 2020-2025 power sharing coalition government, when keeping the status quo of the public sector institutions with a non-developmental, patrimonial character and a strong focus on clientelism, will not have created the necessary conditions for attaining the goals in the coalition agreement.[15] When like the preceding left populist regime (2010-2020) the focus remains at maximising investment and economic growth based on alliances with global and national mineral (particularly goldmining and oil) elites, and neglecting sustainable and redistributive policies, the observed ideological differences between left populist and traditional power sharing regimes will appear to be insignificant.

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Populism and its Performance in Kenya

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1 Introduction

The title of a recent book by a Kenyan diplomat—*Kenya's 50 Years of Diplomatic Engagement: From Kenyatta to Kenyatta* (Cheluget 2018) —inadvertently captures the anxieties associated with the Uhuru Kenyatta succession come 2022: will it be a clean break from the Kenyatta-Oginga-Moi axis or will it remain within the axis through either former prime minister and opposition leader Raila Odinga or Gideon Moi, (Oginga's and Moi's sons respectively) who have already declared interest in succeeding Uhuru Kenyatta. Growing political rapprochement between Uhuru Kenyatta and Raila Odinga (in March 2018 the two who had been bitter rivals following the disputed 2017 general elections, signed an accord under what they called Building Bridges Initiative) and Kenyatta's ever close camaraderie with Gideon Moi has upped this anxiety especially among those who feel excluded despite their proximity to the centre of power. But even if come 2022[1] there will be a break from this select set of families that has controlled the country since independence, the alternative would still be composed of politicians who have been part of the establishment, as former ministers, or current governors. This latter coterie has coalesced around Kenyatta's deputy, William Ruto. The latter has not only rubbished the Uhuru-Raila détente (popularly known as the Handshake) but has forcibly come out to oppose any arrangement that may confine power in the hands of what he calls the dynasty,[2] that is, "those

1 This paper was written before the 2022 elections which was won by William Ruto. The court challenge of the results by Raila Odinga was thrown out by the Supreme Court. As I write this footnote President Ruto speedily replacing Kenyatta's appointees but true to my predictions the replacements are composed of of politicians who have been part of the establishment, as former ministers, or current governors who had coalesced around Willian Ruto. In reality there is no radical shift in political realignments under President Ruto.

2 Dynasty here is used to refer to the families of Kenya's first President Jomo Kenyatta, his first Vice president, Jaramogi Oginga Odinga and Daniel arap Moi, Kenyatta's third Vice President who ended up succeeding him who have had stranglehold over postcolonial Kenya since independence in 1963.

whose fathers were President or Vice President and have "benefited from royalty" to stay in the top echelons of Kenyan politics." (Nyon'go 2019).

2 Populist Strategies and the Performance of the "Hustler Nation"

Reading after Laclau, Benjamin Moffit posits that "populists do not speak to or for some pre-existing 'people' but . . .bring the subject known as 'the people' into being through the process of naming, performance or articulation…" and that this process is what constitutes populism. This act of calling the subject of the people into being is akin to what Judith Butler calls 'a performative', which is "that discursive practice that enacts or produces that which it names." (Butler 1993: 13) Umberto Eco likewise disputes the existence of the category known as 'the people', except as a construct; the people is a phantasm. He argues that the populist appeal to the people merely involves a construction of a fictitious entity and ". . . since the people as such do not exist, populists are those who create a virtual image of the popular will." (2008: 130)[3], or in the words of Ekström et.al, "a fictive, homogenised public, 'the people' (2018: 4). As La Torre, expounds further, "(T)he people" is a not a primary datum but a discursive construct, a claim made in struggles between politicians, activists, and intellectuals." (2018: 743). Populist discourses are performative in this sense then; they produce what they name.

In the Kenyan case, such populism begins by painting the ruling elite not just as an elite in power that does not serve the interests of the "people," but as one that has transformed itself into a dynasty whose monopoly of political power is guaranteed through a rotational arrangement. But this process of imagining a dynasty into existence goes hand in hand with constructing the category of the "the people" as victims of dynasty and the populist leaders' articulation and performance that align their identity with the people and claim their exclusive representation. What this form of populism creates in this process as far as contemporary Kenyan politics is concerned, is a false dichotomy of what has become known as dynasty and the Hustler Nation. The chief architect of this dichotomy is William Ruto, Uhuru Kenyatta's current deputy, who sees Kenyatta as one of the beneficiaries of royalty.

So, what is Hustler Nation? In English dictionaries, the term "hustler" refers to a person who tries to "earn money or gain an advantage from situations they are in by using dishonest or illegal methods." (Collins 2022). In other contexts, it also means a male prostitute. Not so in Kenyan political and social parlance where the term refers to persons who have made it to the top (political office and riches) by sheer wit and tactical manoeuvres as opposed to those whose wealth and political influence are a function of their connection to the four families that has ruled Kenya since independence. The term also imagines and constructs a world of the common people, the struggling, powerless, disconnected, in short, the hoi polloi. In this category is also heaped the youth which are given prominence in the populist scheme of things because of two reasons: first, it is the majority, and secondly, it is assumed that the youth is detached from the polarising ethnic-based politics that has shaped political alliances since independence or at best, it is considered to have no sense of history and it is therefore an easy target of populist manipulation.

3 On the non-existence of the people, Eco states, "In reality, the "people"—understood as an expression of a sole will and identical sentiments, a quasi-natural force that embodies morality and history—do not exist." (2008: 129).

Constructed this way "the people" are then pitted against an equally constructed Other, the Dynasty. The Dynasty is imagined as a behemoth constituted by skilled, connected, experienced, powerful, and affluent individuals. This Manichean binary in turn yields a populist discourse of Us vs Them and turns politics into an aggressive game with enemies who the people should contain. Enacted in Kenya's socio-political terrain that lacks a clear class stratification, the Us vs Them divide slips into the rich versus the poor, which is also a problematic categorization because poor and rich are not only relative but very subjective terms. To a *Mkokoteni* (Handcart) pusher, the teacher who has saved money from his meagre salary to buy a jalopy is in the category of the rich. While this scenario approximates Margaret Canovan's understanding of populism as "an appeal to the "people" against both the established structure of power and the dominant ideals and values of the society. . ." (1999: 2), the ambiguities in the poor versus rich discourse that underlie the "hustler" populist project creates instead antagonistic relationships among people as the "hustlers" begin to see anyone who is well off as a reason why they are poor.

Although this is not the first time in Kenya that a populist agenda that pits "the people" against the elite has been pursuit, the current project is not only bereft of an ideology, its objective is, as one local newspaper commentator put it, to "whip the 'hoi polloi' to overthrow the power elite in the land and install a new set of individuals who are raw, malleable and spineless to create a new 'dynasty'", (Chesang 2019). This is different from the populism of yesteryears. The most memorable post-independent populist strategy is that of the doyen of opposition politics in Kenya and the first vice president, Jaramogi Odinga Oginga, who styled himself as the voice of the *Mwananchi wa kawaida* (the ordinary citizen). His populism tended towards a socialist de-legitimation of the nation-state and against the bourgeoise capitalism gripping Kenya.

Odinga campaigned for the return to the people of the lands and wealth that the colonialists had appropriated and accused the Kenyatta regime of reneging on the promise to empower the ordinary person economically. His populism targeted neo-colonialism, a general trend at the time given the citizen's overwhelming sense of betrayal by the post-independent regimes across Africa. He opted for populist politics that foregrounded the national underdogs: the ex–Mau Mau fighters abandoned by the new African government, displaced by colonialism and who should get free land, and the African shopkeepers in need of loans for business expansion. Oginga's populist/socialist contestation of Kenya's neo-colonial order continued through to the Daniel Moi regime, where he became the embodiment of the struggle for multi-party politics in what became known as the "Second Liberation," which was a coalescence of disparate forces with a desire for pluralist politics as a binding cord. In the Jomo Kenyatta days, JM Kariuki, the wealthy Kikuyu politician, embodied a populist stance that clearly pitted the poor against the rich his riches notwithstanding. "Around him gathered a coalition of representatives of the poor and landless, critics of Kiambu dominance and those opposed to Kikuyu settlement in the Rift and Coast." . Like Oginga Odinga, JM Kariuki was "a radical nationalist and opponent of the government's pro-Western, growth-focused strategy (who also) called for expropriation of the remaining white-owned land, the abrogation of the British loans, ceilings on land holdings, and the nationalisation of industry" (Hornsby 2012: 225).

As a political strategy, populism in Kenya has a long history and has taken different forms depending on the purposes of its deployment. Early forms of populist strategy are identified in the anti-colonial rhetoric of liberation well espoused by liberation leaders in rallying followers

against the colonial regime. Through populist discourses that pitted the people against the colonial regime, the leaders of anti-colonial nationalist movements sought to rally the people against the colonial government and legitimize their ascension into power in post-independent Kenya. These populist discourses of liberation that defined nationalist projects imagined for the people a postcolonial ideal where independence and self-governance would usher in what is known in Kenya as *Matunda ya Uhuru* (Fruits of Independence)—unfettered economic and political gain. However, this did not happen for, as Atieno Odhiambo puts it, "the ultimate achievement of African nationalism was merely to land African workers and peasants into situations of neo-colonialism and internal decay" (2003: 37).

In its current form, populism in Kenya patterns itself on and is an appropriation of the global trends in populisms witnessed in recent years. In these cases, populist leaders' claim to speak and represent the interests of the ordinary people does not only involve mobilizing against the elite and the system it runs, but also entails a kind of self-fashioning achieved through enactments of the 'ordinary' or what Moffitt refers to as "performances of ordinariness" (2016: 65). To identify with the people, populist leaders' play the people', come down literally to mingle with them in their impoverished spaces, relish their food in dingy kiosks that usually serve *Jua Kali*[4] artisans and mechanics, join them in their 'hustles' by occasionally stopping to lend a hand to a *Mkokoteni* pusher. Their social media handlers capture these gestures in camera and video and edit the images to project leadership at home with the ordinary folk. The politicians would later share the curated content via their social media handles with political statements that claim affinity with the masses.

3 Performances of Ordinariness in Kenya's Populist Mobilization

In Kenya, populist performances of "ordinariness" to signify closeness to the people take many forms, some of which are often overdramatized as to border on the absurd and the comic. First, the structuring motif of these performances is based on the 'hustler' narrative that I mentioned above. In this populist discourse, the 'hustlers' are constructed as the downtrodden, the wretched of the society, condemned by the political system to work on odd and difficult jobs for their livelihoods. The elite is therefore held responsible for the glaring inequalities and exploitation of the people. But these deplorable living conditions are condemned and celebrated in one breath. They are condemned as undesirable conditions created by the ruling elite to deprive the people of their rights to a decent living and prosperity. To change these conditions, the populist narrative opines, political power must shift to those who can identify themselves with the aspirations of the ordinary people, a change that can only be achieved through the 'general' will of the people which the populist politician claims to represent. But to empathize with the people, their lowly lives, the hustles that define their everyday anguish are celebrated as moments of resilience and resistance. It is this celebration that takes the form of performance of ordinariness to which I now turn.

One of the images that attracted media attention and trended a lot in social media is of a bare-footed Kenyan member of parliament (MP) clad in torn and patched school uniform pants during an event in a school in his constituency where he was the chief guest. Didmus Baraza, a diehard

4 Literal translation of *jua kali* is 'fierce sun' but it refers to an entire industry comprising small scale traders and artisans who work on the roadside, and unsheltered from the fierce sun.

supporter of the populist party, the United Democratic Party (UDA), said he was merely demonstrating to the students and parents that, like most of them, he came from humble backgrounds and therefore understood their plight. The MP had undoubtedly taken his playing the ordinary and the regular to extreme levels, and it did not go down well with the intended audience, who found it insincere. Rather than bolstering his image, this act drew criticism from the public who read in the member's antics glorification of poverty and mockery of the poor in pursuit of cheap publicity. The MP followed this with two other performances which his handlers posted online: one where he is photographed hammering nails onto the roof of a classroom, work normally reserved for artisans, and another in the countryside where he is captured helping a 67-year-old woman to prepare tea on an earthen stove. On the latter he wrote on his Facebook wall: "Reminiscent of hustlers life; at Sango Village Matili where I visited a 67-year-old widow . . . .and assisted her to *prepare tea on an earthen stove*." (My italics) The reminisces to which the MP is referring is not born out of the nostalgia for the smoky earthen stoves that, like many ordinary Kenyans, may have defined his childhood, rather, what is being appropriated in this performance, through what Moffitt calls "mediated enactments" (2016: 58), is the symbolic value of this widow's humble, impoverished rural life to the 'hustler' political project. Another video clip that went viral in social media was that of Senate majority leader Onesmus Murkomen who is filmed expertly kneading *ugali*[5] in a three-stone earthen stove inside a smoky mud-walled house while narrating to his admirers about his humble backgrounds. He twitted the clip with the words; "Back to my roots. Showing the kids how to knit and knead black golden ugali."

While they do not go to the extremes such the ones elaborated above other players in this populist theatre perform their affinity to the people by joining them in their mundane chores, eating with them in dingy rural or slum kiosks, buying wares they do not need from hawkers or buying all the bananas sold by the roadside by women (traders) and eating them with the bystanders as a sign of camaraderie. For example, a senator, also affiliated with the UDA party, posted images of himself on his Facebook wall unloading murram from a lorry and buying vegetables from traders and captions it: ".as promised, we have this morning worked with traders, Tuktuk and Bodaboda operators in Gïthurai market to help fix up poor roads in the area." As I write, politicians of different persuasions and parties have heightened these populist activities, given that only ten months remain to the next general election that comes up in August 2022. Social media is awash with images of politicians abandoning their top-of-the-range vehicles to take rides on *bodaboda*[4] to attend political rallies or even for a ride home—for example, a politician affiliated with the populist UDA party twitted a picture of himself arriving home on a *bodaboda*.

While populist actors cut across political parties in Kenya, the politicians associated with the nascent United Democratic Party (UDA) are the most visible populist players, and this has more to do with the 'hustler' populist narrative scripted and articulated by William Ruto, the party's leader. Ruto founded the UDA party after being sidelined by the ruling Jubilee party when he fell out of favor with Uhuru Kenyatta. The hustler narrative is Ruto's imprint; he initially originated it to distinguish himself from the political class that has thrived through exclusionary patronage networks and alliances, or as he describes it, a "wealthy elite detached from the everyday suffering of ordinary people." Although he is a beneficiary of the Moi client politics, Ruto silences this aspect

5 Bicycles or motorcycles used as taxis for carrying passengers or goods are popular means of transport in East Africa.

of his rise to the top position of political power and wealth, choosing instead to foreground his nondescript background and the quotidian 'hustles' that characterized his youth. He often narrates about his humble beginnings, how he sold chicken by the roadside to make a living, how he went to school barefoot up to the age of fifteen, and even slept hungry as a pupil because his family had nothing to eat.

Pitting himself against "dynasty," he mobilizes the masses to his side by constantly demonstrating his closeness to them, including financially supporting them in their hustles. He paints his opponents as an elite alienated from the ordinary people, and he presents himself as the solution to their marginalization by the establishment. He goes ahead to appeal for the alliance of the marginalized poor, the hustlers. Ruto cuts the image of a politician who is quite at ease with the ordinary folk. In his meet the people tours, he reinforces this image by eschewing any form of protocol and other formal strictures. As a populist leader, Ruto approximates Kurt Weyland's typology who, writing about Latin American populisms, describes populist leaders as political players who apart from seeking frequent face to face contacts with the masses "act in ways that embody and live out the dreams of the common man, promise to include the long-neglected populace in the mainstream of development and protect it from sinister forces, and instil in their followers a sense of mission to transform the status quo and transcend the confines of the established institutional framework in order to find redemption under their savior's guidance." (2001: 22)

It is the existing institutional arrangements that Ruto sees as both the impediment to the redemption of the common people and an obstacle to his bid for the presidency. Referring to it as the 'system' or as the 'deep state', he condemns the establishment's opposition to his desire to succeed Uhuru Kenyatta has acts of discrimination that has nothing to do inadequacies in his character but has everything to do with the system's revulsion to the idea that an ordinary self-made man can dream to lead Kenya. This is how he framed this political message in one of the political rallies:

> Some people are telling us sons of hustlers cannot be president. That your father must be known. That he must be rich for you to become the president. We are telling them that even a child of a *boda boda* or a kiosk operator or *mtoto wa anayevuta mkokoteni* (child of a cart pusher) can lead this country. (Kahura and Akech 2020)

Although there are echoes of Barack Obama's evocation of his humble background in Ruto's self-fashioning—and this is probably subtly deliberate—his strategy, however, is closer to Donald Trump's populism not only regarding what Kahura and Akech call "the rhetoric of the 'outsider' who have come to save an underclass trampled on by the undeserving upper class" (2020) but also in his distaste for complex and technocratic language. He tries to be simple and direct in his communication with ordinary people. Scholars of populism have identified simplicity and directness as key styles of populist leaders' political messaging, given their claim to embody the ideas and interests of ordinary people. Their style then is "to speak in the 'language of the people' which may include using popular idiom, adopting a style of expression that is simple and direct, avoiding intellectualisation, jargon or bureaucratic language." (Vincent 2011: 3)

Raila Odinga, a long-time opposition leader who also deploys grammar of populism in his criticism of the status quo, is fond of speaking in proverbs, improvised riddles, and other rhetorical

strategies like analogy and allusion, and allegory, with which the ordinary people easily identify. His other popular form of messaging is football commentaries, where he imagines rival political teams in a football match that ends with him scoring a lone goal after receiving a pass from a key member of his political team. Meanwhile, the crowds respond to his commentary by playing the role of football spectators, cheering excitedly towards the denouement as the commentator kicks an imaginary ball and scores. Like Ruto, Raila Odinga invokes the people versus the elite populist grammar. Danielle Resnick, for instance, observes that "Odinga's campaign manifesto presented stark dichotomies, evoking Manichean discourse." She quotes Odinga as stating in his 2007 presidential campaigns:

> I give you a cast-iron guarantee that I will be a champion of social justice and social emancipation—a champion of the poor, the dispossessed and the disadvantaged in our nation. I will redress the imbalance between the powerful and the weak, between the rich and the poor, between the satisfied and the hungry. (Resnick 2017: 111).

On the other hand, Ruto, presents himself as a man of action rather than idle talk and prefers aggressive, demagogic, and dismissive rhetoric, which tends to incite rather excite. Unlike Odinga, he does not address the masses in proverbs and riddles except when he addresses his ethnic Kalenjin constituency in his native Kalenjin language, where he demonstrates mastery of the cultural, linguistic archive. Punctuated by simple and effective slogans that get remembered easily, his speeches focus on the assumed legitimacy of his representative claim as a 'hustler' and the conspiracy against the 'people' by the ruling elite.

However, the desire to be simple and direct and offer simple solutions to ordinary peoples' problems tend to license deliberate dissemination of outrageous falsehoods as truths to the masses who are at times assumed to be naive and even irrational. One example comes to mind. In the run up to Kenya's 2007 presidential election, a central campaign issue in the Rift Valley was the restoration of the Mau Forest complex, Kenya's largest water tower, and the fate of the people who had encroached the forest and who the government wanted to evict. The argument of the environmental scientists was that much of Kenya's water came from natural water towers like the Mau that are basically raised forests that absorb water during the rainy season and slowly release it during the rest of the year. The denudation of the Mau forests through human activities, therefore, worsened droughts and threatened livelihoods. But during rallies, politicians chose to rubbish the scientific facts that underpinned the government's restoration efforts. Rain, Paul Sang, a member of parliament and the former minister then in Ruto's camp, told his affected constituents, does not come from trees, "it is rains that create forests and not vice versa…. rains come from the sky not from trees". The speaker is a science graduate and a former teacher, and he is therefore aware of the falsehoods he is selling to his unsuspecting audience. Characteristic of populist detest of intellectualism, Sang stated, "even if you have been educated, even if you have ten degrees, or even 20, rain still comes from the skies" (Kaajja 2012: 78),

4 Conclusion

Populist mobilization in Kenya, like in other regions of the world, pits the 'people' against the ruling elite. Such mobilization is driven by populist leaders who exploit the people's disenchantment with a system that has become unresponsive to their plight. But as discussed above the 'hustler' narrative, embodied in the leadership of the United Democratic Party (UDA),

is a radical version of populism that goes beyond the 'people' versus the 'elite' divide; instead, it complicates the situation by creating a chasm between the Haves and the Have-Nots, a result of the people's misreading of 'Dynasty' to mean the 'Haves'. This is subjective labelling that leads to a chaotic confrontational situation. Hustler populism unwittingly pits the poor against the rich and creates the sense that being rich and affluent is wrong. In its political messaging, hustler populism performs its affinity to the ordinary people by appropriating their essential tools of the trade—*Mkokoteni*, wheelbarrow, *bodaboda*—as party symbols and as markers of the imagined 'Hustler Nation.' The populist leader's affiliation to the people is also expressed through these symbols.

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Imagining the Indian Nation

Historical antecedents and current political realities

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1 Introduction

The postcolonial and post WWII world is seeing the emergence of newly formed nations that are ongoing projects, where a political and territorial identity is often being thrust willingly or unwillingly on regions and populations, which did not have a historical and cultural link to the larger entities of which they were forced to identify. As Certeau (1984: xvii) puts it, 'marginality is today no longer limited to minority groups, but is rather massive and pervasive'; a situation in which the non-producers of culture become strategists, manipulating their positions in the larger arena of exclusions. India became a nation in 1947, after a painful and highly traumatic incision of its territories on religious grounds. Pakistan, created as an Islamic state has acquired the status of the 'Enemy Other' for ever. In 1971, India helped East Pakistan break away from West Pakistan to create the state of Bangladesh on the basis of language. Bangladesh remains both a friendly country as well as a liability as its porous border exports many poor persons into India as illegal immigrants. After the incision, the territories that remained were also not comfortable in their adhesion to a body that was unfamiliar and even unknown. The North-Eastern part of India, eight states of largely tribal populations, with different language families and historical antecedents, remain in a tenuous relationship with mainland India (Channa 2014, 2015, 2017). These highland regions, separated geographically and culturally from the Indian mainstream form what Scott (2009) has termed as 'zomia'. These are regions imperfectly integrated and having a contested relationship with the hierarchical and literate civilization of peninsular India. Even what is recognized as the Indian heartland, remains an internally fragmented and loosely structured entity that has seen many fluctuations in its political identity.

Prior to British and other European colonisations, there was no map of India as it is seen today. The only unification occurred when territories were conquered and subjugated under individual rulers, dynasties and invading marauders. Rich in many kinds of natural resources, the earliest civilization known on this part of the world, namely the Harappan civilization, comprising of the cities on the river valleys of the Indus and its tributaries, had close links with Mesopotamia and the ancient Roman civilizations. There was trading on the sea routes from the Western as well as the Eastern coast. From ancient times, this part of the world was known to the western world as a region of great wealth and resources, so that several European countries had arrived on its coasts, the Portuguese on the West, the French and the British on the East, for trading in lucrative goods. But prior to them, there had been Arabs, Turks, Mongols and people from the Central Asian plateau who had moved into India, and many had made it home; prominent being the Muslims from Turkey, Afghanistan and the Middle East. Alexander's invasion (327-325 C.E) had opened up South Asia to the European imagination through the writings of the Greek historians who came with the army.

But whosoever came to this continent, became incorporated into its indigenously evolved system of social classification and identity; the Varna and Jati categories through which, from antiquity, the people born and living on this soil, classify and understand the world around them (Smith 1994). Aside from being a system of hierarchy and exclusions, the Varna and Jati system also has the remarkable capacity for absorption and assimilation, in a way that outside entities, are neither coerced to change their identity, nor are they fully absorbed, but they are assigned social positions and a space within the larger society, with specific prescriptions for behaviour and social interactions. It is impossible to understand the social and political history of India, without at least a basic understanding of this worldview and its powerful hold on the people of this sub-continent.

2 Varna and Jati: Is there a Hindu Identity?

Much has been written about the origin and nature of the caste system, its structure and its religious and ritual dimensions (Dumont 1970, Hocart 1950, Srinivas 1962). But it is above all a cosmology of identities one that confers almost a species like character upon various groups and communities. While Varna is a universal categorisation of the entire universe, inclusive of the human and the non-human world; Jati identifies ties of blood, territory, culture and worship materials (sacred words, mantras, deities and rituals) that draw boundaries between one human group and another enjoining that they should normatively marry one of their own 'jati' (Inden 1976). When Indians say they wish to marry someone of their own jati, or when parents insist that their progeny must marry within their own jati, what is really emphasised is the aspect of 'compatibility'; more than that of hierarchy. Through endogamy, jatis are also the basis of formation of horizontal identities, where the important dimension is *difference* rather than inequality (Gupta 1993, Channa 1979). For example, even during the peak of the colonial rule, while the Indians looked upon the British as their rulers, they still regarded them as *mleccha* (unclean) to be absolutely avoided for social interaction and marriage (Trautmann 1997). Within this worldview, since every jati could legitimately have its own way of worship, food habits and other cultural traits, they could live as separate but adjacent units with close economic and political ties. This is the reason that wave after wave of people with different culture and religious beliefs were accepted as part of Indian society; without ever requiring to give up their faith or

culture. Persecuted religious groups like the Zoroastrians (Parsis), the Jews and Bohra Muslims have lived peacefully in India for centuries.

This has also been made possible by a worldview with no strict and strong exclusionary principles. What is known as Hinduism today is a syncretic set of beliefs and practices, with no known source and no human prophet. The earliest source is the Rig Veda, ancient texts dating to 1500-1200 BCE, followed by three others. These Vedas described elaborate rituals for propitiation of various cosmic forces by making fire offerings (yagna), performed in the open. This period did not recognize any anthropomorphic deities who were installed in temples. The priests performed the rituals as specialists but the actual hereditary system of brahmin priests, along with other stratified groups of the larger Varna and Jati system did not evolve till much later.

There is no word in any Indian language that means religion in exactly the same way as religion is known in the western world. The word dharma which Indians use as analogous to religion, only means appropriate action. And in the system of Varna and Jati, it means that different Jati have different dharma. Jati is used to refer to any kind of differentiation, not only differentiations based on rank and hierarchy within the Jati/Varna (referred to as caste) system. Men and women are different jatis, the various species of non-humans are different jatis, the forest dwellers are referred to as 'vanya' (forest) jatis, the Muslims and Christians are different jatis. One reason for majority of Indians no converting to another religion, is that, within the Indian cosmology, one is born into a jati, one cannot overcome one's jati identity by conversion.

Even in recent times, when aggressive Hindu organizations are converting Indian Muslims and Christians, they refer to it as '*shuddhi*' or purification, the rationale being that they were made impure by following the ways of other faiths and now they are being purified to come back to their original jati identity. It was never conceived possible that someone coming from another land and culture could be 'converted'. Walsh (2011: 69) mentions. 'Like the Christian communities that had settled in Kerala, Muslim traders were given land, allowed to maintain their own religion, and incorporated as "jatis", into the west coast'.

Adapting to the local norms, Christians and Muslims, settling in India, as well as other religions like Buddhism. Sikhism and Jainism, while overly professing a non-hierarchical ideology, nevertheless, subscribe to caste values. Bhatty, a Muslim sociologist writes, 'The Indian Muslim society is divided sharply between two major groups, known in North India as Ashraf or Shairef and non-Ashraf or Kameen' (Bhatty 2016:32). The Ashrafs are again divided into four sub-castes, the Sayyads, holding highest position and claiming to come from the Middle East, direct descendants of Prophet Muhammed, the Sheikhs, descended from the four Caliphs, followers of the Prophet, Mughals of Turkish descent and the Pathans of Afghan descent, or of mixed descent of the Mughals and the Indians. Following the Jati notions of endogamous marriages, the Sayyads and the Sheikhs intermarried, and the Mughals and Pathans did marry among themselves, but the higher two categories did not marry among the lower two categories. The Kameen were converts from the lower Hindu castes, the ones who performed various services like the barbers, the dhobis, the butchers and tanners; these followed their respective professions and married among themselves. Elsewhere, Channa (1985) I have described in detail the communities of the launderers or dhobis, who are comprised of both Hindu and Muslim sections. "These non-Ashraf castes adopted a few Islamic practices such as nikah, but retained their caste panchayats, which regulated their day to day social behaviour' (Bhatty 2016: 33).

Most Christian converts follow the caste hierarchy of their original castes and the Anglo-Indians or indigenized Europeans form a separate jati. The only communities or people who have nothing to do with the caste system are the tribal or indigenous people of India, although some of them have acquired caste like values, staying close to Hindu communities, especially in Central and Eastern parts of India. The tribal pastoral groups of the upper Himalayas, recognized as tribes, however consider themselves to be upper caste Hindus of the Ksatrya Varna (Channa 2013).

It is therefore difficult to identify any particular social or cultural trait, or any specific rules or norms that identify a Hindu. There is nothing prescribed or essentialized about Hinduism. Although there are many deeds and practices that a devout Hindu may perform, they all remain voluntary and arbitrary. Even if one never visited a temple, never engaged with a priest and did not read any scriptures, one would still remain a Hindu, if one just said so. There are however some near universal beliefs that belong not to the Hindus, but to all belonging to the sub-continent, primary being the belief in soul and reincarnation and a cyclical notion of time. But these are so inherent to the soil that every religion, Buddhism Jainism and Sikhism, also believes in them. While Brahmanical ideologies of caste hierarchy, purity and pollution and ritualistic performances are accepted as core aspects of Hinduism, there are prescribed paths to liberation (*moksha*) that can be taken without losing one's legitimate status as a follower of the dharma. In fact, Brahmanical Hinduism is often rejected by saints and sages who may exhort people to follow the path of Bhakti (devotion as in the Hare Rama Hare Krishna movement of Sri Chaityana) or the path of Karma (good deeds as expounded by Swami Vivekananda) or the path of pure knowledge (Gyan) like the Sankaracharyas. These three known paths to liberation of the soul, Bhakti, Karma and Gyan do not need the Brahmin or the priest, nor necessarily, any ritual performances.

It is this very flexible and non-restrictive, non-essentialized nature of Hinduism and the ease with which one can continue to be a Hindu, that has kept people adhering to the identity of being Hindus, since at the ground level one may and does, interpret it in any way one likes. Therefore, in spite of the concerted efforts of peoples and political parties to create a Hindu political identity, the task has been extremely slippery and difficult to attain. Efforts to create a Hindu nationalist identity has been in place since the late nineteenth century, and most of them had arisen as a reaction to European, especially British colonisation of the region. There had been numerous and sometimes powerful resistance to Islamic and European invaders who have been attacking India from the time of Alexander of Greece. Alexander invaded North India in the Pre-Christian era and was met with stiff resistance. But he and subsequent invaders were resisted by the local chieftains and kings for defence of territory and not of religion. The Maratha chieftain, Shivaji is said to have used Hindu symbolism and Hindu slogans, such as *Har Har Mahadev* (praise, praise Shiva) to attack and combat the Moghul emperor Aurangzeb, but that was way into a long period of Islamic rule at the throne of Delhi. As is clear historically, the Hindu identity had begun to shape itself largely in opposition to outside invaders and overtly non-Hindu rulers. It lacks the character of doctrinal and essentialized religious identity.

3 How India became Hindu

It was by the c.a 400 C.E that the Gupta dynasty, with its three famous emperors, Chandra Gupta, Samudra Gupta and Vikramaditya (Chandra Gupta II), that a Hindu religious identity in terms of Sanskritic Brahmanism, temples and texts had consolidated. It was during this period that

Sanskrit became the language of rulers, priests, elites and the literati. The codification of what may be recognized as Hindu customary laws were written down by Manu only by the c.a. 200 B.C.E and 200 C.E. According to Manu the role of the king was to protect *dharma*, but that meant everyone's dharma. As noted by historians even as late as eighth century C.E. Indian kings continued to patronize and endow Buddhist and Jain monasteries and religious sects along with Hindu temples and priests. The definition of a *Chakravartin* (exalted)King, as emperor Vikramaditya had endowed himself, was to be fair and just to everyone irrespective of jati and dharma differences (Walsh 2011).

Islam came India via the Arab traders in eighth century C.E. The greatest influence of Islam was through its Sufi saints, who spread all across Northern India and merged with the Bhakti (devotional) movements of the 8-13th century C.E. This was the period of emergence of a great syncretic tradition that still has strong influence on the Indian people. Even today large numbers of people of every faith, including many Hindus, visit the Sufi shrines at Ajmer, Agra and Delhi, to pay homage to the saints who professed the path of devotion of love to attain divinity. Kabir is a household name in India, a sage who professed the oneness of all souls and a unified divine truth. He was born to a Hindu Brahmin widow and raised by a lower caste Muslim couple. Sai Baba of Shridi (in western India), with millions of devotees was also a Muslim fakir but at present revered by Hindus as a god. Buddha was incorporated into Hinduism as one of the incarnations of the great god Vishnu, and Jains and Sikhs are hardly regarded as non-Hindus. Most Hindus visit and revere the Sikh Gurdwaras as they do the Jain temples and shrines.

It was Brahmanical Hinduism (consolidated and scripted in the Laws of Manu) that spread a strong and divisive ideology largely based on the notions of purity and pollution that precipitated and hardened hierarchies and gender- based discriminations (Rege 2013). During the colonial period, practices of torture of upper caste widows, underage marriages of girls, prohibition of women from getting an education and the practice of untouchability, were some of the prevailing customs of Hinduism that shamed the men from elite families, who had begun to acquire western education and were developing more cosmopolitan outlooks. Some of them spearheaded the reforms of orthodox Hindu practices as well as founded some heterodox sects of reformist Hinduism.

As historians like Cohen (1996) Stein (1998) and others have pointed out, caste labels, especially of the middle level castes such as the Ksatriya and the Vysya were always contested as well as fluid. The ruler, irrespective of caste or religion has a special significance for the people of India, who always look upon governance as encapsulated in a person, rather than an organization. Different periods of history are remembered by the names of the charismatic leaders who ruled more than by their ethnic characters. After the mass uprising of 1857 against East India Company rule, although humiliated in defeat, the people of India by and large were happy to be subjects of a Queen rather than of a company. The Queen they felt had greater legitimacy to rule, than the traders of the East India Company. One may refer to Nietzsche (1974:107) who writes, 'at the bottom the masses are willing to submit to slavery of any kind, if only the higher ups constantly legitimize themselves as higher, as *born to command*-by having noble manners.' Here Nietzsche is referring to the beginnings of industrialization and the rise of the economic elite as against the traditional noble elites of Europe. But the concept of 'born to rule' and its legitimacy as applicable as to South Asia, not only because of the existence of a feudal order but because of the existence

and deep- rooted pervasiveness of the personality centred monarchies that prevailed mythologically and historically. The ideal government was that of mythical king Rama, the 'Ram Rajya'. The indigenous word '*sarkar*' for the government is always used by Indians in an anthropomorphic way. Even in today's democracy the 'sarkar' is usually personified in the form of a charismatic leader, the party and its ideology are usually secondary (Brass 1994). One reason for the defeat of Congress and victory of BJP in 2014 and 2019, was that the latter was able to project a charismatic leader, unlike Congress, that at present does not have a strong leader to project.

In spite of its perceived ideological rigidity, the jati/Varna system always had a degree of fluidity. One can observe it in modern India as well, where many jati groups are forever contesting their status, one way or the other. But the British pursued a goal of administrative clarity, one that could not tolerate such shifting and ambiguous identities. Recognizing that caste was one of the foundational principles of Indian society that even cut across religious divides, they imagined a full categorisation and tabulation of the entire caste demography of the region. Caste, therefore became a major criteria of identification in the official gazetteers that were being compiled from 1865 onwards. The ten- year census that began in 1871, and which continues even at present, used caste as an important social indicator. The 1901 census, attempted to fit all castes into fixed Varna categories. To the Indians, who looked up to the British rulers as 'knowing' and superior, were persuaded to believe that caste was a very important aspect of their identity (Dirks 1992: 56-78, Dirks 2001). As Inden (1976) has described, families and elders, began to devote much time and energy into constructing family genealogies and history in order to arrive at a correct caste placement for their lineages. 'By 1911 many Indians believed that the purpose of the census was not to count population but to determine caste ranks. By 1931 caste groups were distributing flyers to members instructing them on how to respond to caste question' Walsh 2011:127).

In those early days, the British administration was probably not aware of those aspects of the jati/Varna system that made it both complex and also nearly impossible to codify. An important fact in this respect is that jatis were regional in nature and although Varna was ideally a pan-Indian phenomenon, not every region of India has all the Varna represented. For example, Kashmiri Hindus are all Brahmins. There are no other Hindu Varna in Kashmir, although the Kashmiri Muslims have a caste like system with a category of untouchables. In most of Southern India, there are only Brahmins and lower castes, the middle level Varna are missing. Bengal on the other hand had no Brahmins till they were imported from Varanasi.

Again, although Brahmins belong ideally to the highest Varna in terms of purity of rank; their social and economic rank is not always high. The Indian social scientist Srinivas (1962) introduced the concept of 'Dominant caste' to familiarise people with the actual realities of caste hierarchy in India, that is not solely derived from religious sources but is very much controlled and informed by political and economic power fields. A dominant caste is usually the one that has the greatest amount of land under its control in any region, is demographically well represented and politically powerful. An apt example is the Jat community of Northern India. They play a significant role in contemporary politics as well and are a force to contend with in Northern and North-Western India, including the territories around the capital city of Delhi.

The Hindu identity therefore remains highly fragmented as people have a greater tendency to identify with their jati and regional groups than to identify with a Pan-Indian Hindu identity.

Although there have been many movements to solidify and essentialize a core Hindu identity, since the late nineteenth century, 'Nevertheless, there remains in India today considerable ambiguity concerning the use of the word "Hindu" to define any clearly demarcated group of people in the sub-continent and considerable doubt about the existence of a Hindu Political Community" (Brass 1994:16).

In the last two decades and from the beginnings of the twenty-first century, the situation is beginning to look somewhat different. The present regime at the centre is the Right -Wing BJP under the leadership of Mr. Narendra Modi, known to be a hard- core RSS origin political personality. However even with an official figure of eighty percent Hindus in the total population of India, as pointed out by Brass, this regime is finding it hard to rule on a communal and essentialist agenda. The next section will describe the rise of Hindutva (political identity of Hinduism) and the slippery and uncertain path of its attainment and retention of power. Brass has made a significant comment that 'It is a recurring feature of Indian political history that only a charismatic leader with a simple appeal can unite the sub-continent or any of its larger people for a political purpose' (Brass 1994: 32).

4 Forging an 'Indian Nation'

According to Benedict Anderson (1983), the Nation is an Imagined entity. His work extensively discusses the historical as well as technological mechanisms that ensured the rise of 'nations' as understood today, emphasizing the print media. This is not to say that the nation as constructed is imaginary in its effects. Rather it moves people and communities into far more drastic action than it was a pragmatic and substantive entity. The very ephemeral quality of the concept enables the nation to be made into something sacred, that initiates feelings and what Clifford Geertz (1973) has referred to as strong moods and motivations for action, while describing the nature of the sacred.

The sacredness of the 'nation' is to be ideally translated into patriotism and into selfless and sacrificial action (Channa 2020). But since it is a construction and constructions are informed by history, life ways and ground level realities, and since these are not the same for individuals and collectivities, there is always more than one construction both from inside as well as from outside of the entity.

It is paradoxical, that the person to whom coining of the concept of Hindutva is attributed, claimed himself to be an atheist. Vishnu Digambar Savarkar defined Hindutva as a combination of territorial, cultural and racial ties. Historians have traced the name Hindu to an ancient meaning that designated those who lived beyond the Hindu-Kush mountains as referred to by Europeans and Central Asians. Some associate it with the river Sindhu. But in either case it is a territorial rather than a religious association. Hindus themselves called their faith as Sanatan Dharma (the forever or ancient dharma) and not Hindu, a term that is of much recent usage. Racially the term Aryan too was introduced into India by the Europeans (Trautmann 1997). The ancient usage of the term Arya as used in Sanskrit texts was a reference to someone of good social and refined status, akin to a gentleman. It is also been widely used in later times to designate the Vedic and Sanskritic civilization, designating as Anarya (non-Aryan) people who did not follow the Sanatan Dharma. They included the indigenous people of India and the outsiders like the Muslims and

Christians. With the consolidation of the jati/Varna system it gradually came to mean those who were not part of the HinduVarna categories although everyone has a jati.

The Hindu political identity began to consolidate itself, around the late nineteenth century, primarily against the Islamic rule, especially as rulers like Aurangzeb used tyrannical methods against the non-Muslims under their reign. Not however having anything more overt than 'cow protection' as their slogan, these groups targeted beef eating as a non-Hindu practice. This particular agenda has been popularised under the current regime, and in very recent times in India, several cases of outrage against Muslims and Dalit communities in the name of suspected cow -slaughter has been recorded. Some of them have been widely condemned by the general public and media, but most tacitly supported by the local police and political power holders.

Another imagery, part nationalist, part Hindu, that has been revived and used deliberately to target minorities is the slogan, Vande Mataram (Hail to the Mother). This was coined by the Bengali novelist, known for his nationalist writings, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, a Brahmin and avid promoter of Hindu norms and values. His novel Ananda Math is set in the backdrop of the Great Bengal famine of 1769-70, when Mir Zafar was the puppet ruler of Bengal. He was put on the throne by the East India Company that overthrew the legitimate ruler Siraj- Ud- Daulah at the Battle of Plassey, in 1757, with the connivance of his minister Mir Zafar, and a wealthy Hindu merchant Jagat Seth. However, Chatterjee focuses on Mir Zafar as the main villain behind the calamity caused by the famine, as his later critics have pointed out, rather than the East India Company that controlled the resources and did nothing to help the famine stricken local population. As a result, one-quarter of the population of Bengal perished. But Anandamath, a story about dedicated Hindu monks who used their monastery as a haven for anti-state resistance directed towards both the incumbent Muslim ruler and the British represented by the East India Company, fuelled the later, more organized anti-colonial movements, especially in Bengal. More importantly the novel created a visible image of the nation, in the form of the mother nation, a goddess figure, who was painted by the renowned painter Abanindra Nath Tagore. This figure of the Desh Mata (or the mother country), helped focus the energies of those fighting alien rule, for it created a concrete image that people could recognize and revere. The sacred image and the worship of the nation as a mother goddess, evoked strong emotional responses from a people who hold the mother figure in the highest esteem and the mother goddess is the primary deity of Eastern India as well as in other parts of India. We can say without much uncertainty that India as a nation, was first conceptualized in this image. Mother nation was an entity for which people were prepared to shed their blood. The novel, eulogising a militant organization of dedicated monks, also set the path for seeking freedom as a military one.

At a later date in the twentieth century, Subhas Chandra Bose, broke away from Congress led by Mahatma Gandhi, to take the militant path. In his youth he had been greatly influenced by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's slogan as well as song VandeMataram. To the present day, right wing Hindutva regime has begun to emphasize this slogan which had always been popular but the official chant had been Jai Hind. When the Prime Minister unfurls the national flag on the ramparts of the Red Fort, the salute is Jai Hind and it still continues. Somehow Vande Mataram has now been resurrected as a Hindutva slogan, which it was never meant to be. Subhash Chandra Bose treated persons of all religions equally and was a dedicated socialist and secular in his approach. The slogan Jai Hind was also coined by him to lead his Indian National Army (INA) that had

soldiers from all parts of India, and a sizeable representation of women fighters under the leadership of Captain Lakshmi, a woman medical doctor from Kerala. At present her daughter Subhashini Ali (Sehgal) is a hardcore member of the Communist Party of India. The INA, although dismantled after its defeat at the hands of the Allied Forces, and the reported death of Bose in an air crash in 1945, remains an icon for all Indians and Bose is among the most revered of all nationalist leaders. The Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP)has begun to resurrect the official political image of Subash Chandra Bose to counter that of Jawaharlal Nehru, who is symbolized in their archrival, the Congress party.

Three leaders can be marked as having left indelible impression on the people of India, but each with his own version of Nationalism. While to Bose, nationalism was a goal to be wrested by any means including armed conflict, to Gandhi, it was an ideal and moral goal, not merely one that was political. Gandhi is considered the Father of the Nation and is known throughout the world was countering the British regime with non-violence. His modus operandi was *Satyagraha* (a non-violent form of protest for the truth). His charisma and philosophy mobilised an entire nation to come out on the streets and face the violent British police, unarmed and with no effort at retaliation. It was based on the principle of moral courage and the power of truth. Gandhi visualized a nation that would be truly indigenous, built up from below. Although he never denounced the caste system, rather endorsed it, he picked upon untouchability as a dehumanizing act and asserted like many other Hindu Reformists that it was not a part of core Hindu beliefs and should be done away with.

Bhim Rao Ambedkar was a contrast to most other nationalist leaders of his time. Unlike them he belonged to a poor untouchable family of the Mahar caste group of Maharashtra who have the lowly status of landless village servants. He was however a brilliant scholar and was sponsored by the Maharaja of Mysore to continue his studies abroad. He did his Ph. D from Columbia university in New York and obtained a degree in Economics from London School of Economics. He became a social activist and labour leader, leading his community members and others of the marginal castes, who were largely industrial workers in the city of Bombay. He joined the freedom struggle under Gandhi's leadership but they fell out over the issues related to caste. Gandhi had an ideal vision of all castes attaining equality and did not believe in reservation, which he thought would divide the caste groups further. Gandhi had an Utopian vision of equality and justice that Ambedkar realized was not possible in a society deeply fractured on caste lines.

Ambedkar had experienced caste discrimination at first hand and was extremely sceptical about any kind of equality being possible. He advocated from separate constituencies for the lower castes, whom he also named as Dalits. He realized that there could never be equal competition and co-operation between the castes at different levels of the social ladder. Ambedkar flourished as a labour leader and founded his own Independent Labour Party. He had issues with the emerging Indian nationalism that he felt was solidly upper caste and class based. Ambedkar's vision of a new Indian nation was based on the notion of social justice. He had no connection with the Hindu imagery or any kind of indigenous symbolisms of the Indian nation. His education abroad had taught him that the only way out of the pressing social inequalities of India was to reject the indigenous ways of life and move towards a modern and secular India.

Unlike other Indian nationalists he totally rejected the Indian dress and way of life, preferring to be seen wearing a western style suit and tie and towards the end of his life he converted to

Buddhism, taking a large number of his followers with him. Ambedkar headed the team that framed the Constitution of India. The Indian Constitution is therefore based on the principles of equality, liberty and social justice and professes a just and equal society.

Yet Ambedkar was well aware of the social constraints that would make a society envisaged in the Constitution nearly impossible in India unless Indians shed their values and mindset that is entrenched in the inequalities of the caste system (Jaffrelot 2005, Geeta 2016).

He was very right. If anything, the political and social processes in India are moving towards a direction antithetical to what he had envisioned as a nation. The Dalits continue to have an uneasy relationship with the apex of Indian politics, that is always seen as upper caste and class, even during the secular, socialist agenda of the Congress party. Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, representing the congress, was a Brahmin. His daughter married a Parsi but projected herself as a Hindu.

Post-Colonial India never produced again men of the calibre of those who had fought for the Indian nation. There has been a gradual move away from the idealized concept of a secular and socialist republic as envisioned by Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose, a society based on human rights and dignity as wished for by Ambedkar and the moral and just society of Gandhi's Ram Rajya.

The present political gain of the BJP that has become the main ruling party of India since its electoral victory in 2014, and re-election in 2017; is spearheaded by the personal charisma of its leader Mr. Narendra Modi. Although a hard- core member of the Rashtriya Swam Sevak Sangh (RSS), Modi as the head of a diverse state like India, has a tight rope walk to remain credible in the eyes of the electorate. The land slide win of the Congress party in 2004, after the massacre of Muslims in Gujerat, under the personal stewardship of Narendra Modi, who was chief minister of Gujerat at that time; had made it clear that a one- point agenda of 'Hate- Muslims' was not going to work for even the Hindu majority in India.

5 Is there a Future for a Hindu India?

Although India has a purportedly eighty percent population of Hindus, this label does not apply to a homogenous category of people. As already discussed, there are many internal fissions in the overall identity of being Hindu. The most notable and near insurmountable are the fractures along the lines of regionalism and jati, especially the deep chasm that separates the high castes from the low. Then there is the opposition of North India to South India, the so-called Indo-Aryan and Dravidian divide, that is both linguistic and cultural and finally the class divisions of rich and poor that are analogous to but not quite coterminous with that of caste. In addition, there are all the regional divisions, that are becoming more and more manifest as the Indian democracy moves away from the period of resistance against the colonial foes, that had unified it into a common identity.

A case in point is the divided reaction to the demolition of the disputed Babri Masjid by Hindu activists on 6th December 1991, while there was a coalition government at the centre, with the BJP as one of its components. But the Prime Minister was V.P. Singh, who belonged to a socialist party, had won elections on playing the lower caste card against the upper castes. B.J.P is on the

other hand, a largely upper caste supported party. The Babri Masjid is supposedly built on the space earlier occupied by a temple marking the birthplace of the Hindu god Rama. The activity was illegal, as according to the Indian Constitution, demolition of any place of worship is not acceptable. Faced with little option, the Prime Minister put the leader of B.J.P; L. K. Advani in jail, the BJP withdrew support to the central government, causing it to fall. What is of importance to be noted is that the results of a country wide opinion poll on the demolition of the Babri Masjid, in January 1993, showed that more than fifty-two percent of North Indians approved of the demolition but only seventeen percent of South Indians approved of the demolition, and seventy percent approved the imprisonment of the leaders of the BJP, and the banning of the party (Walsh 2011; 262). This clearly shows that even in matters of religion, there is a clear North-South divide. It is to be noted that while Rama is a highly revered god of the North India, he is not such an important deity in South India, who have their own major deities. Within the South Indians there is a strong division between the followers of Vishnu (Vaishnavites) and the followers of Shiva (Shaivites).

A huge split and confrontation between the upper and lower castes had occurred in 1990 when the then Prime Minister V.P Singh decided to actually implement the 27% reservation recommended by the Mandal Commission for the Other Backward Classes (OBC) that included castes that were low in hierarchy but not quite as low as untouchables but suffering social discrimination as well as economic deprivation. Although the term class has been used, it remains a jati based reservation but one that covers practically 55% of the electorate of India. The implementation of the recommendations of the report, saw massive protests from the upper caste students as well a backlash from the lower castes and the formation of two major national level parties of the lower castes, Samajwadi Socialist Party (SP) and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP). The latter is now led by Mayawati, a woman leader belonging to a Dalit caste group (Jatav). Although the 2002 riots had ardent supporters among the right- wing Hindus, both the riots and the demolition of the mosque did not go down well with a majority of voters, both Hindus and non-Hindus, bringing the Congress party to power in 2004. It would be another decade, till 2014, that the right- wing BJP would gain control of the centre, but with an agenda consciously trimmed of its extreme Hindutva agenda. When Narendra Modi rode to power it was on the wave of modernization, promise of economic growth and development. What the people looked forward to was good governance, less corruption and red tape.

The overt right-wing ideology was kept covert and active through the first term of BJP rule, when cadres insidiously supported but publicly condemned carried out attacks on Muslims and Dalits, in the name of cow -protection, while school text books were being stealthily transformed to suit a Hindu supremacist ideology and attacks were being made on liberal educational institutions and individuals (Shani 2007). Overtly some populist measures were being implemented to appease the lower sections of society; most widely publicised being the provision of private toilets in the houses of the poor. Although in many cases like the water deficient regions of Rajasthan (Channa 2019), these did not serve any purpose, yet wide publicity was given to the program.

But what was achieved successfully at the end of the first term in power, was creating deeper rifts between various communities, and fanning Hindu resentment against the non-Hindus, Muslims and Christians (Jaffrelot 2011). Although Hindu Muslim strife had been an ongoing process historically, attacks on churches and missionary institutions was also becoming rampant.

After getting the mandate for the second term, the BJP and Mr. Narendra Modi, finally began to give shape to their core agenda. A Constitution Amendment Act (CAA) was introduced to discriminate refugees on the basis of their religion. It was overtly stated, that all refugees coming to India from neighbouring countries who were Hindu, Sikh, Jain or Buddhist would be given preference leaving out the Muslims. The National Citizenship Count (NCC) was also operationalized with the explicit aim of weeding out Muslims from the Indian population. There were wide spread panic and many people were rendered homeless because they did not have the necessary papers. The government was preparing to make large detention camps for those it wished to strip of citizenship. The threat for the minority communities was very real. In a country of largely illiterate people, producing evidence of birth and education was a tough task. Such measures were not taken lying down and provoked huge demonstrations and sit in protests, mostly from young people, scholars, intellectuals, artists and public figures. There was often brutal police action, in one case the police entered the campus of Jamia Milia Islamia, a prestigious university campus in Delhi, and mercilessly beat up students in the hostels and libraries. Many young scholars and highly recognized intellectuals were slapped with charges of sedition against the state, a law that was dug out from the colonial period, one that was used by the British against Indian citizens. Now this law was being used with impunity by the Indian state against its own citizens.

Another much delayed yet lovingly nurtured agenda of the BJP was to take away the special Constitutional status of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. A rather threatening move has been to isolate the Kashmir with its majority Muslim population from Jammu, Leh and Ladakh; converting each of them for the time being into Union Territories, that means that they do not have their own legislative assemblies but are directly under the central state. In the name of maintaining law and order, all local politicians of Kashmir were put under arrest and all modes of communication with the outside world were snapped. Rifle bearing army men were put in every nook and corner. Schools and educational institutions shut down and all normal life disrupted for almost a year. Only recently were some of these stringent measures being removed when another lock down occurred due to the pandemic. Some prominent political leaders still continue to be under house arrest.

It was only the COVID pandemic that put an end to the large numbers of public street protests against all these measures. Yet even at the height of the pandemic, the BJP announced that the inauguration of the Ram temple in Ajodhya would take place and the same was done in the month of August 2020 with the prime minister taking an active part in the ritual. In other words, the BJP accomplished all its designated tasks for its ultimate aim of attaining a Hindu state, as dreamed of by Savarkar, the father of the Hindutva movement.

Yet their actions and their projects are not leading towards any unified and essentialized identity of an overtly Hindu nation. By 2019, the party had begun to lose its popularity with the majority of voters. It lost several important by-elections, losing out in the states of Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, two regions that had been a stronghold of the Hindu supremacy. One reason has been its complete disregard of the marginal and poor populations, disregard for environment and excessive divisive politics. There are large numbers of young people who had began to rebel against the anti-people measures and the appeasement of mega corporates at the expense of the marginal. An even more potent reasons is that large sections of people do not identify with the

upper caste, Hindu and North Indian identity projected by those in power. The home state of Mr. Modi, namely Gujarat, although one of the most industrialized states with some of the richest of the country, lags behind in key human development indices. Its level of poverty, infant mortality and malnutrition is among the highest in the country.

6 Fragmented national Identities and the Future of Populism

Although the Narendra Modi government rode on the wave of populism, projecting a single charismatic personality that overrode all normative and ethical divisions, it still does not prove itself to be a popular government. The very values and norms of Hinduism that it professes, undermine its legitimacy. The ideal of a Hindu nation was spelled out by the father of the Indian nation, Mahatma Gandhi as Ram Rajya (the rule of Rama). The ideals of Ram Rajya is the impartial and fair treatment by the ruler of all his subjects. Another value for which Indians have high respect is asceticism. The most ideal ruler, according to Indian scriptures is the ascetic ruler, who rules for the sake of dharma and not for personal glorification. While Gandhi was revered as a saint for his ascetic lifestyle, the only other political figure who approximated him in recent times was Abdul Kalam, the scientist President of India, again given almost unanimous reverence by most Indian people. Narendra Modi could never achieve this status although he would have liked to very much. He lived his life like a bachelor, and is pure vegetarian and teetotaller and is known to keep stringent fasts for Hindu ritual days. Yet his extravagant tastes in personal clothing, and accessories and his very frequent foreign travels and custom- made personal jet plane and general love of the rich and the corporate has prevented him from getting any reverence from the general public.

The ancient Vedic scriptures had preached, 'Ekam Sat VipraVahudaVadanti'; a dictum adapted by Swami Vivekananda, whom the BJP often use as their mascot for aggressive Hinduism. What this phrase means is that 'There is only one Truth, different sages preach different paths.' The teacher and mentor of Swami Vivekananda was Ramakrishna Paramhamsa; a saint of nineteenth century Bengal, who not only preached these lines but actually lived like a Muslim and a Christian to prove that all religions are identical in their core pursuit of the One Truth (Romain Rolland). As already mentioned, the medieval saint Sai Baba, who was a Muslim Fakir, had millions of devotees among the Hindus. To a large number of Hindus, the BJP's version of Hinduism appears to be an upper caste Brahmanical version not really spiritual or pertaining to religion but highly political.

What is emerging in India is a deepening of the regionalism that Jaffrelot and Verniers 2009:14) had described after the 2009 elections, 'The Indian general elections continue to be the aggregate of twenty-eight regional elections, each displaying its social, political and economic specifications'.

A nation is never a finished product, especially an emerging one like India. The only few occasions when Indians come together under a common identity umbrella is when they are motivated about a common enemy or when they are united by a highly charismatic leader. The 1857 uprising brought Indians together fight what they considered an unjust regime, the East India Company. The reasons were rooted in Jati norms that the soldiers, both Hindus and Muslims, felt were being violated. Another time was during the Salt March headed by Gandhi, who many saw as a saint and spiritual leader, more than just a political one. Subhash Bose was another charismatic leader, who united Indians of all description into an army and almost built a nation in exile.

After Independence, Pakistan remains the quintessential enemy that unites Indians, more on the Cricket field than in the war zone. Yet hating fellow Indians, even if they are of another faith, is not convincing enough for most. Thus, as Zoya (2000:294) points out, that 'Hindu nationalists, unlike their counterparts in many Muslim countries, identify their principal enemies as internal rather than external', a situation that may not go well on the ground. Again, as Thapar (2000: 33) says quite rightly that the attempt to construct an India based primarily on a Hindu identity, goes against the grain of Indian civilisation, which has been a civilisation of multiple identities.' What will be the future of India is difficult to tell, but what is coming out more convincingly is that India could have been a functioning democracy, but this too has been compromised during the last couple of years of the BJP rule. On the 30th of September 2020, the Supreme Court acquitted all the accused in the Babri Masjid demotion case, it was a fait accompli, a judgment known even before it was given. In a free and liberal democracy, the courts, the judges and police, are all controlled by a centre, or rather by one person. Where does democracy end and Fascism begin? That is a question that is waiting for an answer.

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In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Bank Account

Marco d'Eramo (independent researcher)

1 Introduction[1]

On the wall of the New York subway car stands the inscription: "If you want to feed your soul, we have a great menu". With a stroke of genius, this advertisement of a religious sect associates the two deepest passions of American society: on the one hand, an inexhaustible collective bulimia that is in withdrawal if it does not have something to chew, swallow, ingest on the sidewalk, in the elevator, in the car, in bed, in the movie theater, and on the other hand, an intense religious vocation that dates back to the very foundations of this nation, to those Pilgrim Fathers of the Mayflower who landed here in 1620 in order to be able to live their puritanical fundamentalism in peace.

At the same time, this advertisement refers to a mystery, for it reconciles the materiality, the carnality of American culture and the asceticism of its foundation, in that oxymoric expression that is to use the verb "to feed" for an object such as "the soul".

It is the same mystery that must be clarified for the reactionary counter-revolution, a mystery that concerns not its planetary framework, but specifically the American version, both of North and South America. In Latin America and in German America, but not in Europe, the counter-revolution of the neoliberal ideology has teamed up and merged with the more conservative Christianity. This can be seen in the United States of Donald Trump and in Brazil of Jair Bolsonaro. Yet the neo-liberal ideology is totally amoral, it deifies personal selfishness, it even subjects the concept of justice to the measure of how much it costs to enforce it, it does not retreat to the prospect of slavery or the sale of children. Nevertheless, the same billionaires and foundations

1 A larger version of this text appears as the last chapter of the volume Masters. The Invisible War of the Powerfull against their Subjects due out from Polity publishers (Cambridge, UK) in fall 2023. The volume has already been published in Italian by Feltrinelli (2020) and in Spanish by Anagrama (2022) under the title *Dominio. La Guerra invisibile dei potenti contro i sudditi*, Feltrinelli, Milano.

that sponsor the crude capitalism, that push for the globalization of the world, at the same time finance and support an identity religion, aimed at the maintenance of traditions. The reciprocal is also a mystery: how do Christians who should practice poverty and privilege altruism to support the ideology of personal interest, of selfishness?

The American, feminist philosopher Wendy Brown asked the question after the massive vote of conservative Christians had ensured the re-election of George Bush jr. for his second term: "How does a rationality that is expressly amoral at the level of both ends and means (neoliberalism) intersect with one that is expressly moral and regulatory (neoconservatism)? How does a project that empties the world of meaning, that cheapens and deracinates life and openly exploits desire, intersect one centered on fixing and enforcing meanings, conserving certain ways of life, and repressing and regulating desire? How does support for governance modeled on the firm and a normative social fabric of self-interest marry or jostle against support for governance modeled on church authority and a normative social fabric of self-sacrifice and long-term filial loyalty, the very fabric shredded by unbridled capitalism?"(Brown 2006: 692).

A first answer is that neo-liberals simply use religion. Taking up Polybius,[2] for the first time in Christian Europe, Niccolò Machiavelli argued that religion was introduced into human societies as an instrument of government: “And whoever considers well Roman history will see how much Religion served in commanding the armies, in reuniting the plebs, both in keeping men good, and in making the wicked ashamed”. But going beyond Polybius, Machiavelli says that to introduce religion to Rome, Numa "*pretended* he had met with a Nymph who advised him of that which he should counsel the people”, that is, *feigned* to receive the divine word:

> the Religion introduced by Numa was among the chief reasons for the felicity of that City, for it caused good ordinances, good ordinances make good fortune, and from good fortune there arises the happy successes of the enterprises. And as the observance of divine institutions is the cause of the greatness of Republics, so the contempt of it is the cause of their ruin (Machiacelli 1882: book I ch. XI).

Machiavelli thus inaugurated the libertine tradition according to which religion is a fiction, an imposture necessary to discipline the plebs. Tradition that coagulated around the theme of the "Three impostors": Moses, Jesus and Mohammed were three impostors who (like Numa Pompilius) simulated receiving the word of God to discipline the vulgar.[3]

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2 “What in other nations is looked upon as a reproach, I mean a scrupulous fear of the gods, is the very thing which keeps the Roman commonwealth together. (…) Many people might think this unaccountable; but in my opinion their object is to use it as a check upon the common people. If it were possible to form a state wholly of philosophers, such a custom would perhaps be unnecessary. But seeing that every multitude is fickle, and full of lawless desires, unreasoning anger, and violent passion, the only resource is to keep them in check by mysterious terrors and scenic effects of this sort. Wherefore, to my mind, the ancients were not acting without purpose or at random, when they brought in among the vulgar those opinions about the gods, and the belief in Hades; much rather do I think that men nowadays are acting rashly and foolishly in rejecting them”. (Polybius, book VI, 56, 2002: 385).

3 *Traité des Trois Imposteurs* ou *La Vie et l’Esprit de Monsieur Benoit Spinosa* (1719), Eng. Trans. *Treatise of the Three Impostors* (1904). Its conclusion is that: “there is no God such as is conceived, nor Devil, nor Soul, nor Paradise, such as has been depicted, and that the Theologians, that is to say, those who relate fables for truth, are persons of bad faith who maliciously abuse the credulity of the ignorant by telling them what they please.” Downloaded from https://infidels.org/library/historical/unknown/three_impostors.html.

A text by the most influent among the US conservative think-tanks, Heritage Foundation, seems to agree with the libertines from its very title: "Why Religion Matters. The Impact of Religious Practice on Social Stability" (Fagan 1996). Its key points, stated in the summary, are: "1. Religious practice appears to have enormous potential for addressing today's social problems. 2. Strong and repeated evidence indicates that the regular practice of religion has beneficial effects in nearly every aspect of social concern and policy". The author lists the following beneficial effects: "The strength of the family unit is intertwined with the practice of religion. The regular practice of religion helps poor people move out of poverty; generally (it) inoculates individuals against a host of social problems, including suicide, drug abuse, out-of-wedlock births, crime and divorce; (it) encourages such beneficial effect on mental health as less depression, more self-esteem, and greater family and marital happiness". In short, to put it in Polybius' words, religion "serves to maintain the state".

In this sense, the "libertine" use of religion knows no political boundaries. Since Eisenhower, all American presidents have participated at least once during their tenure in the National Prayer Breakfast organized every year by a very discreet association, known as “The Family”, through its Fellowship Foundation created in 1953. That year, the official theme of the inaugural breakfast was "Government under God”. Hillary Clinton (2010) and Donald Trump (who has attended three times in the last three years) were both there. This "religious" breakfast, attended in Washington by 3,800 guests (for a fee) from more than 130 countries (Vogel and Dias 2018), is sponsored by the Us Congress. Around the "Family" circulate the most varied conspiracy theories, because the strict secrecy of its membership. Certainly, during the Cold War, the Fellowship established relations in the 1960s between the US government and the Brazilian dictator General Artur da Costa and Silva, the Indonesian dictator Suharto. The "Family" hosted a secret meeting between Sadat and Beghin at a National Prayer Breakfast in 1978, organized meetings in Washington between the U.S. government and the former Salvadoran general Carlo Eugenio Vides Casanova, invited to the 1984 Prayer Breakfast and sentenced in 2003 by a Florida court for the torture of thousands of citizens in the '80s. On that occasion was also invited the Honduran general Gustavo Alvarez Martinez, linked to the CIA and death squads, who later became an evangelical missionary before being assassinated in 1989 (Sharlet 2003).

Experience tells us, however, that the hypothesis of cynicism, namely that the powerful cynically exploit the superstitions of the mob, may be true, but is too laudatory because in the end the powerful themselves (politicians or billionaires) end up believing in those superstitions they think they are exploiting. Not only that: Machiavelli's and the libertines' thesis applies to all rulers, on all sides, just as bipartisan Prayer Breakfasts in Washington are. But as can be seen very well from the Pentecostal phenomenon in Latin America, there is a specificity, anything but bipartisan, in the relationship between conservative Christianity on the one hand and neoliberal extremism on the other.

Obviously, it is not the first time that capitalism and Christianity have allied. Already in 1905 Max Weber clearly explained to us how protestant ethics shaped the spirit of capitalism. And yet he too could not help but be surprised: "But it is just that which seems to the pre-capitalistic man so incomprehensible and mysterious, so unworthy and contemptible. That anyone should be able to make it the sole purpose of his life-work, to sink into the grave weighed down with a great material

load of money and goods, seems to him explicable only as the product of a perverse instinct, the *auri sacra fames*" (Weber [1905] 2001: 339).

But even here, it is more a matter of a mental attitude than of a political position. A more significant indication comes from the sermon, *Acres of Diamonds*, which the Baptist pastor, founder and first rector of Temple University in Philadelphia, Russell Herman Conwell (1843-1925), gave for the first time in 1869 and would have replied another 6,152 times worldwide. Conwell is categorical: "I say that you ought to get rich, and it is your duty to get rich". "Money is power, and you ought to be reasonably ambitious to have it. You ought because you can do more good with it than you could without it. Money printed your Bible, money builds your churches, money sends your missionaries, and money pays your preachers, and you would not have many of them, either, if you did not pay them. I am always willing that my church should raise my salary, because the church that pays the largest salary always raises it the easiest.... The man who gets the largest salary can do the most good with the power that is furnished to him" (Conwell 1915: 18, 20).[4]

And the reverend repeats again: "I say, then, you ought to have money". As shameless as this peremptory order to get rich may seem, one begins to glimpse its logic when Conwell starts praising the Rockefeller, the Carnegie and the Astor, i.e. potential donors of the university he founded in 1884: "Why is it Mr. Carnegie is criticized so sharply by an envious world! Because he has gotten more than we have".[5]

But everything becomes clear when Conwell attacks the unions, first because unions make all jobs a bundle and put well paid jobs and starvation jobs, skilled jobs and humble jobs on an equal footing, and then, especially because the unions dare to take it on with the "oppressive rich": "He is an enemy to his country who sets capital against labor or labor against capital". What the reverend can't get over is "the war between capital and labor", the class struggle.

Since the 19th century the great capitalists and the conservative wing of Christianity have been united by a common adversary, namely the workers' movement, atheistic and anti-capitalist socialism. Once again, "the enemy of my enemy is my friend". That is why the relationship between great capital and conservative Christianity becomes closer, more intimate, when in the '30s of the last century both capitalists and Christians are faced with the Roosevelt's New Deal, that is when the workers' movement obtained significant victories in response to the Great Depression. Let's not forget that after 1929 great capital enjoyed heavy press coverage, the sufferings of millions of homeless and unemployed were blamed on the exorbitant greed of the magnates of industry and finance. Capitalism was discredited by failures. And Franklin Delano Roosevelt abounded in religious quotations and paraphrased judgments enunciated by the clerical current of the Social Gospel at the beginning of the century. It was then that the business associations turned to the preachers to defend capitalism "from government interference": "corporate titans enlisted conservative clergymen in an effort to promote new political arguments embodied in the phrase 'freedom under God'". At the 1940 Convention of the National Association of Manufacturers,

4 Conwell's lecture is available on several sites, for instance the site of the Temple University: https://web.archive.org/web/20130101215120/http:/www.temple.edu/about/history/acres-diamonds.

5 The versions of the lecture differ slightly from each other. The last sentences are taken from the online version of Temple University. Instead, in the version printed by Harper, Rockefeller it is not mentioned, nor are the unions, while Carnegie is mentioned in another context.

where the executives of General Motors, Standard Oil, General Electric, Mutual Life, Sears, Roebuck (as well as the director of the FBI, J. Edgar Hoover) spoke, the most applauded prolusion was held by the Reverend James W. Fifield JR. (1899-1977), called "the Apostle of the Millionaires", who attacked "the New Deal's encroachment upon our American freedom" and "the menace of autocracy approaching through bureaucracy": "these titans of industry had been told, time and time again, that they were to blame for the nation's downfall. Fifield, in contrast, insisted that they were the source of his salvation" (Kruse 2015: 7).

The bridge between the Gospel and capitalism was individualism: for these preachers, the salvation of the soul is strictly personal: everyone saves only himself, therefore every ethics of salvation must be based on the ethics of individualism, that is capitalism.

When, after the Second World War, the Cold War broke out, with the obvious common enemy (the Soviet Satan), the Christian-business machine was already tried and tested and able to take full advantage of the new technology of television.

The father of modern conservative fundamentalism is Billy Graham (1918-2018) who at the end of the '40s launched his "crusades" in various cities of the United States, becoming famous thanks to the enormous build-up by the newspapers of the magnate Randolph Hearst. His Evangelical Foreign Missions Association was an effective instrument of the Cold War. Graham founded the largest evangelical periodical, *Christianity Today*, the Urban Missionary Conferences, and was later one of President Richard Nixon's closest confidants.

Also under Eisenhower's presidency, the John Birch Society was born (from the name of a pastor killed in China in 1945) which was financed by Fred Koch (of the family of oilmen of Kansas) and Harry Bradley (of the family of Bradley), two families whose foundations have been decisive in the story of the neoliberal counter-revolution. Bradley and Koch appear to be bigoted families from the beginning (as is the Coors dynasty of beer, another great financier of right-wing culture) and the history of their funding of religious extremism is intertwined with that of their gifts to reactionary study centers.

But it was from its ranks that many leaders of the conservative Christian revolution came out in the 1970s and took power with Ronald Reagan. It was Reagan who was the first presidential candidate to inaugurate the tradition that the candidate's acceptance speech at the party's convention end with "God bless America!", a phrase that no candidate has ever dared to omit since (Kruse 2015: 274).

It is from John Birch society that Tim LaHaye (1926-2016) comes out, whose series of novels *Left Behind* has sold 80 million copies (it is no coincidence that in these novels the Antichrist is a gentleman who resembles Robert Redford, has the terrible stigmata of being "polyglot", and is Secretary General of the United Nations).

Bear in mind that in the long hours of driving that mark the American day, it is almost impossible not to listen to radio sermons. And you can't zap between the various channels without stumbling upon one televangelist after another. TV was the privileged channel for spreading the message of the Christian conservatives, so much so that the figure of the "televangelist" became proverbial. In 1960 Pat Robertson (1930-) founded the Christian Broadcasting Network (Cbn) which was immediately at the forefront of the cultural war, broadcasts in more than 200 countries and 70

languages. Its broadcast, the 700 Club, is seen by a million people. Robertson also founded International Family Entertainment Inc., a satellite channel with 63 million subscribers, which was sold to Fox Kid Worldwide in 1997 for $1.9 million. Robertson has also launched Regent University, Operation Blessing International Relief and Development Corporation and the American Center for Law and Justice.

Another televangelist, the Baptist pastor Jerry Falwell (1933-2007), founded in 1979 and led until 1987 the Moral Majority, antiabortionist, anti-gay, anti-feminist, creationist movement, against the Salt negotiations with the USSR, in favor of media censorship, decisive in bringing Reagan to the White House in 1980. In 1989, the Moral Majority dissolved and merged into the Christian Coalition of Robertson.

The end of the Cold War and 11 September changed the course of the Christian conservatives. They are always anti-Semites, but if before their anti-Semitism was directed against the Jews, it has since manifested itself against the Arabs. For Robertson Islam was a religion that wants to destroy the others; for the former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, Jerry Vines, Mohammed was a "pedophile possessed by the devil" and for Franklin Graham (son and heir of Billy), "Islam is an evil and perverse religion". In January 2001, Franklin Graham gave the introductory speech to Bush's settlement in the White House, and Donald Trump supported the fake news that Barack Obama was actually a Muslim who had attended the madrassas (according to a survey, 80% of Americans believe that Obama was born in America, but only 39% know that he is a Christian and 29% believe that he is a Muslim) (Gore 2017).

It remains, however, always mysterious why billionaires have such a deep-seated passion for the fundamentalism (the USA feels more at home with Begin than with Rabin, more with the fundamentalist Aunt Ulaq than with the secular Gandhi). The deepest reason lies precisely in what struck Wendy Brown: no society can be based on a "rationality that is expressly amoral at the level of both ends and means", on "a project that empties the world of meaning, that cheapens and deracinates life and openly exploits desire". In short, a society cannot stand up to pure competition. This was also known by the German Ordoliberals of the Freiburg school, as Wilhelm Röpke wrote: "we must stress most emphatically that we have no intention to demand more from competition that it can give. It is a mean of establishing order and exercising control in the narrow sphere of a market economy based on the division of labor, but not a principle on which a whole society can be built. From the sociological and moral point of view it is even dangerous because it tends more to dissolve than to unite. If competition is not to ha e the effect of a social explosive and is at the same time not to degenerate, its premise will be a correspondingly sound political and moral framework. There should be a strong state" (Röpke 1950: 181).

The more amoral the market and competition are, the more necessary is a social, non-economic glue. A suspicion had already come from a blatant inconsistency of the neoliberals when they say (as Friedman and Thatcher did) that the basic unit of the economy is indifferently the individual and the family. But the family can only be considered a unit if the bonds that unite it are not market bonds (whatever Gary Becker says), otherwise the family must be split into the individuals that make it up and it is not an economic unit. The basic unit cannot be the individual *and* the family, but must be the individual *or* the family.

Therefore, the more capital becomes global, detached from territories, traditions and history, purely behavioral, the more it needs something to reconstitute territory, traditions and history. The more or less veiled racist sympathies of all the neoliberals hook up to the flesh, to the blood, to the bodies a theory and a practice more and more bloodless and immaterial, well symbolized by the ultra-fast trading of actions, by now freed from any human actor and managed by computer. One of the most important reasons why Occupy Wall Street faded so fast is that Wall Street is no longer on Wall Street, and technically no longer exists: the New York Stock Exchange is – from a physical point of view – an immense series of servers and computers piled up in refrigerated hangars in New Jersey.

If this hypothesis is true, that is, if globalist cosmopolitanism needs territorial localism, then sovereignty and identity movements are just the other side of globalization, one cannot go without the other. Just as religious fundamentalism is a consequence, a creature of modern secularism.

As for fundamentalism, another, and perhaps decisive reason for the mutual fascination that conservative Christianity and neoliberalism exercise on each other is that the free market is a true and real faith, with its missionaries, its apostles, its temples (the banks) and its Mega-Churches (the mega-banks "too big to fail"). In the free market and in the invisible hand one believes, as one believes in the trinity or in the double human and divine nature of Jesus.

I am certainly not the first to notice the religious dimension of capitalism. Karl Marx had inaugurated this perspective of thought in his famous passage on the mystery of the form-merchandise, on its "fetishism":

> In order, therefore, to find an analogy, we must have recourse to the mist-enveloped regions of the religious world. In that world the productions of the human brain appear as independent beings endowed with life, and entering into relation both with one another and the human race. So it is in the world of commodities with the products of men's hands. This I call the Fetishism which attaches itself to the products of labour, so soon as they are produced as commodities, and which is therefore inseparable from the production of commodities (Marx 1887: v. 1, book 1, ch. 1 sec. 4).

In an equally famous fragment entitled "Capitalism as religion", Walter Benjamin says that the religious structure of capitalism is not only "as Weber thinks, a religiously conditioned entity, but an essentially religious phenomenon": "Capitalism is a pure cult religion, perhaps the most extreme ever"; "Capitalism is the first case of a cult that does not expiate but gets into debt" (Benjamin 1921: 100-102).

But the situation changed when, applying to the sphere of faith the theory of rational choices elaborated in the 1960s, economists began to use the metaphor of the market in the religious sphere, producing an "economy of religion". At that point, scholars of religion reciprocated the gift to economists and a reverse field of study was opened up, in the sense that they began to look for what can be understood about the market by looking at it with the categories of religion (McKinnon 2013).

Harvey Cox has written a book called *Market as God* (Cox always uses the market with a capital M "to signify both the mystery that enshrouds it and the reverence it inspires in its adepts"):

> The phrase 'religion of the market' is not just a figure of speech. Faith in the working markets actually takes the form of a functioning religion, complete with its own priest and rituals, its own doctrines and theologies, its own saints and prophets, and its own zeal to bring its gospel to the whole world and win converts everywhere. The fact that acolytes of the market faith do not formally acknowledge it as a religion does not change this reality (Cox 2016: 6).

Like the gods of the Ancients and the Jehovah of the Jews, the Market is also an irascible, punitive god with a changing character: "In days of old, seers entered a trance state and the informed anxious seekers what kind of mood the gods were in, and whether it was an auspicious time to begin a journey, get married, or start a war... Today The Market's fickle will be clarified by daily reports from Wall Street and other sensory organs of finance. Thus we learn on a day-to-day basis that The Market is 'apprehensive', 'relieved', 'nervous' or even at times 'jubilant'. On the basis of this revelation, awed devotees make critical decisions about whether to buy or to sell. Like one of the devouring gods of old, The Market - aptly embodied in a bull or a bear - must be fed and kept happy under all circumstances".

> "The diviners and seers of The Market's mood are the financial consultants and CEOs of major investment business. They are the high priests of the mysteries. To act against their admonitions is to risk excommunication and possibly damnation. If, for example, any government's policy vexes The Market, those responsible for the irreverence will be made to suffer" (Cox 2016: 16).

As in all religions, there are heresies to be punished in the market, not with the stake, but with debt: "The troubles with countries from Japan to Greece, I recognized the Market's votaries to be arguing, derive from their heretical straying from the free-market orthodoxy – they are practitioners of 'crony capitalism' or 'ethno-capitalism', or 'statist capitalism'. Like those of ancient Arians or medieval Albigensian, their theories are all deviations from the one true faith - in other words, heresies. In the Great Recession of 2007-2009, I saw the kin of crisis that shakes the foundations of belief. But faith is strengthened by adversity, and the market religion emerged buttressed and renewed from its trial by financial heterodoxies. (Cox 2016: 6)

The theologian Cox also questions the relationship between old religions and the new faith, and thinks that the most likely solution is for the ancient gods to submit to the new divinity and live in its shadow, as picturesque identities can flourish in the globalizing shadow of capital: "It seems highly unlikely that traditional religions would ... challenge the doctrines of the new dispensation. Most of them seemed content to become its acolytes or to be absorbed into its pantheon, much as the old Nordic deities, after putting up a game fight, eventually settled for a diminished but secure status as Christian saints" (Cox 2016: 20).

But perhaps his most pregnant observation is when Cox says that the Market is a demanding god: "the Market God needs to transform people from what they once were people prepared to receive and act on its message. They have to be born again. They have to be reconfigured" (Cox 2016: 193).

"Born again" is an almost incomprehensible expression in Europe, but very clear in the United States (for instance, President George W. Bush was proud to be "born again"): it means being

reborn to new life after having had the experience of God. And indeed, the rational decision-maker maximizing his options to Gary Becker is the person "born again" to capitalist life.

It is on this ground of faith that the great "secular" study centers, the conservative think-tanks of Washington, connect with the Pentecostal obsessed mystics. As a member of the conservative Ludwig von Mises Institute said in 1980: "Our people deal in absolutes" (Lapham 2004: 41).

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The Benevolent Dictatorship of Good Intentions

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1 Introduction

A notice on the first pages of the conference book of the 2011 Montreal meeting of the American Anthropological Association read as follows: *"No scents policy: Attendees are asked to please refrain from wearing perfumes, colognes or other scent producing products which may cause discomfort to other guests"*. It is tempting to see in such a notice an assault on the freedom every individual has in a liberal democratic society to express himself or herself whichever way they see fit. However, it is equally fair to balance this with the thought that one's freedom might be limited by an obligation one owes others to respect their freedom as well.

John Locke, the eighteenth century English philosopher, formulated this caveat with his "do no harm principle". In reflecting on the Sustainable Development Goals, it might be useful to draw from this principle to counter an idea that seems deeply ingrained in upbeat development initiatives, namely the idea that there is such a thing as a right to development. This right seems to be based on the belief according to which people have an obligation to help others. It is too broad an idea to be of much practical use in development policy. Development policy might do well to emphasize the priority the "do no harm principle" has over any obligation to help those in need.

In this contribution, I take issue with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) to argue that they reflect what is problematic in the idea of development. Underlying this idea is the belief that good intentions are not only sufficient to justify intervention, but that they will necessarily lead to good outcomes. The US economist, William Easterly, described the problem at the centre of this reflection as the "tyranny of experts" (Easterly 2015). More than a decade before him, the US political scientist and anthropologist, James Scott, had suggested similar terminology, "seeing like a state", to take issue with "schemes to improve human well-being" (Scott 1998). The broader context for the argument in this chapter is a critique of Modernity and its commitment to progress achieved through Reason.

The so-called “transformation agenda” underlying the Sustainable Development Goals takes its cue from a deeply felt concern for the fate of those whose lives have been made miserable by hostile historical, economic and political forces. This concern informs development policy in important ways. However, opinions are often divided on the sense and nonsense of development aid. For some, development aid is a moral obligation. Those who support and practice it fulfil this obligation and thereby express their humanity. For others, development aid is nothing but a waste of time and money. It brings neither prosperity to the people who are supposed to benefit from it, nor does it express moral values, since it is often granted for reasons related to securing personal advantages. This is a simplified account of a highly complex discussion that has been going on for decades among development practitioners, scientists, politicians and laypeople.

Development is a very interesting concept. It implies the idea of unfolding and releasing, an idea consistent with practice. Development refers to the process experienced by countries in unlocking their potential. It can be human capacities that are unfolded through better education; but potentials can also refer to the exploitation of natural resources that helps a society to create a life of prosperity for its members. The unfolding meant by the term development can be the sharpening of the aesthetic sense of a culture, which can then enable a society to experience the beauty of life and the world more intensely. Development refers to a purposeful process aimed at making people happy through prosperity. Development means movement. Herein lies perhaps the first place where the meaning of values can be established. Movement is based on the idea of progress. Progress means, first of all, that the world and the people who live in it become better. It also means that humanity is able to rule the world.

To what extent do values play a role here? In two respects. Firstly, the idea of progress is based on the normative idea that reason is not only better than faith and feeling, but is also the mark of a better way of being in the world. From this it is concluded that societies that do not make use of reason are jerky and are figuratively "worse". "rational societies", so to speak, would then have the right to develop "non-rational societies". Seen in this way, and secondly, development aid is not just about helping people to have a better life. It is also about imposing on them a way of life that is supposed to be better. Values are crucial to this. They play the role of objections that people can have to reject development. The main question here is what price people and their societies have to pay to be able to develop. Do they have to give up their culture?

This is not a trivial question. The history of the encounter between Europe and the rest of the world is marked by such crises of meaning. The "discovery" of the world by European seafarers was undoubtedly an important moment in the emancipation of Mankind through science, curiosity and courage. Nevertheless, it triggered a chain of events that placed values at the heart of dialogue – or debate – between peoples. The Atlantic slave trade, the subjugation of indigenous peoples in America and colonialism were disputes about values. On the one hand, there was the question of whether the Europeans could justify their actions against other peoples in the light of their own Christian and Enlightenment values. The general tenor of the question was that a positive answer was needed. One assumed that one had a moral obligation to lead others into civilization, whatever the cost. On the other hand, the question was also whether there were any higher values accepted by all rational people that could justify the urge to progress. Here the answer was not so unequivocal, because all attempts at justification amounted to a world view that was essentially European.

Before elaborating further, it might be useful to make a few remarks concerning the sense in which the above mentioned "the no scents policy" can be thought of as a moral problem. Wearing a perfume is in very significant ways an expression of a sense of one's self worth. One's sense of personal worth defines one's dignity as an individual and as a human being. One's human dignity constitutes a kind of trump card which individuals can hold against anyone who may feel inclined to invade their privacy. One's sense of self-worth defines, at least theoretically, the space which one enjoys to do as one pleases without fearing external constraint. However, there is a caveat. Every individual shares the world with others. This fact alone constrains the scope of one's freedom. As Isaiah Berlin once argued, we can think of freedom (or liberty) as either negative or positive. It is negative when we can act without constraint and positive when our action is subject to control. The need to pay heed to others introduces an important, and legitimate, constraint into the exercise of one's freedom. The exercise of one's freedom should not affect the right which others have to exercise their freedom.

It is in this sense that it would be fair to argue that the obligation to do no harm is a moral obligation. In fact, if we value our own dignity surely we should value the dignity of others and, therefore, we should refrain from doing things which though they may please us, they may harm others. In other words, no amount of good will and intentions is enough to justify interference in other peoples' lives, an interference which may harm them, therefore, infringing upon their right to dignity.

Let us suppose, for the sake of argument, that someone wearing expensive perfume, clothes and shoes encounters a lone child drowning in some lake. Would it be morally right not to help the drowning child?

Such moral dilemmas have been formulated to sharpen our understanding of the moral challenge presented by poverty and human suffering to us. Peter Singer, an Australian philosopher, has famously argued that it is our moral duty to spend our wealth to help others (Singer 2009). Every time a development organisation issues an appeal for help, every morally responsible individual should respond to this appeal by giving what he or she has, even if that means ending up poor oneself. Not surprisingly, there is disagreement over this demand. A biologist by the name of Garret Hardin (1974) used the full boat metaphor to argue that the first obligation that we owe is to ourselves. He overstated his case by implying that those who need help might have placed themselves in that position through sheer lack of responsibility. If by taking another person on board we would jeopardize our own chances of survival, Hardin argues, then it is morally right to refuse to take further passengers on board. Now, stated at this level of abstraction it is difficult to appreciate the full chilling force of Hardin's plea. Indeed, he was using the lifeboat metaphor to argue against aid to Africa. Let them die, he implied, for the world has limited resources and cannot afford to care for those who are too stupid to look after themselves.

Now, this is too callous a position to take. Our moral obligations fall under two categories, at least as far as the issues which interest us are concerned. We have an obligation to help, but we also have an obligation to do no harm. I insist on this distinction because I believe that it is central to rethinking development aid. I think it is important to state right away that I see the task of rethinking development as one that is not concerned with the question why we should help, but rather *when* and *how* we should help. Peter Singer and Garrett Hardin address the "why" question in their metaphors, and ignore or downplay the significance of the "when" question. There are all

sorts of reasons why we should help, including bad ones, as we all know. Therefore, we cannot make our thinking about development policy dependent on that sort of question. Moral obligations invite us however to ask, and try and find an answer, to the question, *when* it is morally right to help.

In our actions we are guided by the idea of Human Rights. We have gone a long way towards expanding this idea with talk nowadays about a third generation of the same. What I would like to do now is to articulate the distinction which I made between the moral obligation to help and the moral obligation to do no harm with the idea of Human Rights. Central to this idea is the legitimate belief that protecting human rights is the best expression of our concern for human life. Concern for human life matters because human dignity matters. We show concern for human life when we uphold the right of every individual to be responsible for his or her life. In terms of international relations this concern finds expression in the Westphalian conception of sovereignty preventing any state from interfering in the affairs of another, however noble the intention.

Of course, just as we might have the right to wear a perfume there are limits to national sovereignty. Those limits are set by a positive conception of human rights which not only fixes their fundamental moral basis – i.e. upholding human dignity – but also seeks to spell out the conditions for observing them. This is why the international community has expanded the notion of human rights to include a whole range of social and political rights. Now, these social and political rights do not, in my view, constitute the essence of Human Rights. They are policy recommendations by which a government can guide its actions. They do not give any government or foreign nation the moral authority to coerce anyone, even if there is nothing morally wrong with ensuring that people have access to education, health and food. While I am all for observing Human Rights across the globe, and across the board, I agree with those philosophers who argue that we should classify as Human Rights only those rights important enough to suspend the sovereignty of a nation or the freedom which an individual has to be responsible for his or her life. Anyone who has been appalled by military intervention in Iraq, Afghanistan or, more recently, in Libya, will readily understand what worries me here. Like the American philosopher Michael Walzer, I would find it legitimate – even if I still did not agree – that America invades Afghanistan as an act of self defence, rather than as an attempt at bringing democracy and freedom to Afghans. The notion of "just war" knocks at its limits there. There is a sense in which the increasingly broader definition of Human Rights denies the notion the precision which it needs to be effective and useful.

What this discussion means to me is that the moral obligation to do no harm is central to the Declaration of Human Rights. Since nations and individuals have the right to be responsible for their lives, these rights trump any external attempt at improving people's livelihood. I am stating my point of view in the most extreme possible way to encourage us all to have a frank and productive discussion afterwards. I think such a frank discussion is necessary because I have the feeling that in thinking about development policy too much emphasis has been placed on good intentions, rather than on the effects of those intentions. I have suffered from good intentions, even if my present condition may suggest otherwise. My suffering is on account of being an African. You see, it has become a truism to talk about Africa as a crisis continent. The problem with this talk, of course, is that it cuts Africa off from the historical processes and structural conditions that constituted it. I am sure that there are some here among you who think that colonialism was

a long time ago, Africans should stop talking about that. Some of those who might feel inclined to think this way may even be Christians who see no problem in leading their lives to atone for the sins of Adam and Eve or in response to God's sacrifice of his Son, both of which happened considerably longer before colonial rule. And lest we forget, colonial rule was also motivated by good intentions, namely the intention to bring Africans to civilization.

What I want to say here is that a moral obligation to help can be usefully formulated with regards to our immediate local communities. I have a moral obligation to help my kin; a Swiss citizen has a moral obligation to help another Swiss citizen. This moral obligation is easy to formulate because anyone formulating it will draw from a common history and fund of experience which will render the notion of "help" understandable. Communities are built on thick webs of meaning that are not necessarily intelligible to external observers. I am "religiously unmusical", as Max Weber used to say, but my parents were Christian. If they were still alive today and I told them about European immigration policy, they would have a hard time reconciling Christian notions of charity (or more precisely love of neighbour) and the policies that seek to keep unwanted foreigners out. This is what the American philosopher Michael Walzer meant when he made a distinction between *thick* and *thin* moral arguments. *Thick* ones can only be understood within a community; *thin* moral arguments, by contrast, are those that command plausibility on a very general and abstract level. Thin moral arguments are those which should have jolted the international community into action to stop the genocide in Rwanda while at the same time preventing it, i.e. the international community from dictating to Rwandans under what kind of political arrangements they should live with one another. It is a fine line, but it needs to be drawn. The Declaration of Human Rights makes this distinction. It invites us to acknowledge the fact that while a moral obligation to help can be formulated within a country it cannot be formulated trans-nationally, where the moral obligation to do no harm should be the guiding principle.

Take the Millennium Development Goals, for instance. Ever since their declaration a decade ago I have been highly sceptical about them. My scepticism is founded on the belief that they follow the moral obligation to help while violating the moral obligation to do no harm. In spite of the noble objectives which they represent, I believe that the MDGs have done more harm than good and I did my best to convince public opinion in my own country to simply ignore them. It will come as a relief to most of view to know that I failed in a spectacular manner. I am not the first one to criticise them. Samir Amin, the Egyptian scholar, is one among many who have done this before me, although in his case the criticism was formulated in predictable ways (Amin 2006). He deplored the fact that they were not the outcome of a consensus – having been decided by President Bush who commissioned someone, Ted Gordon, apparently a consultant for the CIA, to draft them[1] – and were foisted upon a lenient world community. He also deplored the much more fundamental fact that the achievement of these goals was not premised on a fundamental questioning of the economic system expected to deliver the results, an issue some of you – given your age – are likely to remember if you think back to the seventies when the discussion was underway concerning a "new international economic order". Whatever happened to that discussion? The financial crises that the world is facing today and the remedies that are being

1 Stephen Browne (2006) is credited by some for coining the term MDG.

suggested remind us of the importance of this question which was simply ignored at the time when the Goals were imposed on the rest of the world.

My problems with the MDGs are of a different nature. I will only mention two. First of all, I think they are too fuzzy to guide policy. If the world eliminates absolute poverty in India, for example, can it then claim to have met the objectives? What statistical sense does it make to expect every country to meet the goal of halving the number of its absolutely poor when the objective is to halve the number of the absolutely poor in the world? If a country like Mozambique concentrates its attention on one region, preferably the region where the President comes from, and succeeds in considerably reducing absolute poverty there – so that its figures show national average rates consistent with international expectations – can it be celebrated as a success story? Some of you will think that I am nitpicking, but those of you who know how daunting it is to translate principles into policy and these into actions will understand my worry.

My second problem is related to this, in fact. While the scope of the MDGs covers everything that any government might reasonably subsume under social policy, their elevation to the standard against which good governance can be measured effectively imposed an external agenda on developing countries. The United States are still bickering over whether national health schemes should be instituted; they still conduct acrimonious debate about federal responsibility and individual responsibility. In Europe, social policy came, historically, nearly as an after-thought. Thanks to trade union struggles, which forced Bismarck to oblige, it came to Germany in the nineteenth century; in Britain it had to await the Second World War, with the Beveridge Report, to find a national consensus which the same conditions were unable to secure for Roosevelt in the US, in spite of all his well meaning intentions in "The New Deal". What is significant about these experiences, though, is that they were the result of local processes of discussion which enabled these political communities to define priorities. Lest I am misunderstood, these debates did not produce the *right* policies; they simply produced the kinds of consensus which any policy needs to be sustainable. Why would a procedure that worked so fine for the rest of the world be denied to Africans? Why would international bureaucrats who are not subject to any democratic control know better than political communities? Why should countries like Mozambique not be allowed to define poverty in ways that are sensitive to what the community deems to be a condition of deserved and undeserved poverty? I am not calling for Mozambican "Workhouses" or "poor laws"; all I am saying is that there are forms of intervention that can render local politics trivial and, in so doing, undermine the more important goal of ensuring that countries really own their development process, whatever that means. MDG talk has done a lot, in my view, to undermine this goal. Even the concern that the goals might not be reached is not our problem. The way the goals were formulated required that the international community places developing countries under some form of trusteeship to channel the huge amounts of money, and implement the policies, necessary to achieving the goals.

What I have been saying so far is that we cannot derive a right to development from the moral obligation to help. All that a moral obligation to help requires us to do is to intervene, as a moral community, in the event of a humanitarian tragedy. We cannot remain indifferent to the suffering of Haitians or Japanese when an Earthquake or a Tsunami strikes their countries. It is morally responsible to lend a helping hand. Once we have given our help in a humanitarian tragedy it is also morally responsible to withdraw and refrain from dictating to them what they should do to

prevent similar catastrophes in the future. It is none of our business, really. In fact, and to be blunt, it is none of anyone's business.

Of course, what I am saying here is that we are under the obligation to do no harm. Rescuing lives facing an immediate danger is honourable, like me diving into Lake Geneva to rescue a drowning person even at the cost of drowning the nice scent along. Pulling that person out and subjecting him or her to swimming lessons against his or her will is not honourable at all. It is arrogant and preposterous. It is a violation of the right that attends every individual – and every nation – to be responsible for their lives. So, the question concerning what kind of development can only be answered with reference to the moral obligation to do no harm. Development only makes sense if it is premised on the idea that people have the right to decide how they want to lead their lives, no matter how sure we are about what a good life should look like. Development, in my view, boils down to ensuring that people have the ability to make their lives predictable. This is not achieved by sending missionaries to show them how to do it – unless, of course, they ask for it – but by making sure that in your own countries your right to lead humanely dignified life does not violate the human dignity of others, elsewhere.

In a nutshell, then, I suppose that all I am saying is that if we need any kind of international declaration to guide our actions in the 15 years after 2015, then it should be one that reins in our temptation to think that our ability to worry about others gives us the right to tell them what to do about their lives. We don't have that right, I am afraid. We need something pretty much like the "no scents policy" of the conference I attended in North America, a "no meddling policy" that will read more or less like this: *Well meaning people are asked to please refrain from formulating development goals, initiatives or other things that might look like meddling and which may cause discomfort to distant nations*.

2 The Web of Solutions

I don't know if the phenomenon is new. I am very interested in describing it here because it is one of the most problematic manifestations of popular science. This, as I have been saying, consists of the habit of only accepting as valid what comforts our convictions. It is an anti-intellectual attitude, which does not necessarily mean that it is the prerogative of non-intellectuals. In fact, it is a habit cultivated by many intellectuals, especially those who reduce their training only to the technical aspects of what they learn and care little about the ethical support of science itself. So, the phenomenon in question is this thing that in the absence of a better term I call the "web of solutions".

Their morphology is simple. It consists of the obsession with the idea that the best technical solution to any problem is the best technical solution to that problem. I'll explain. If the problem is, for example, the mosquito, the solution is to kill the mosquito and the best technical solution is to spray DDT. No matter what the health and environmental consequences are. If the problem is crime the solution is to imprison or even kill the criminals. It does not matter what happens in the prisons, in the communities, in the trust within society, to the police, etc. If the problem is the inefficiency of public enterprises the solution is to privatise. It does not matter if this will create worse monopolies than state-owned ones, if it will relax environmental criteria, etc. If the problem is the poor's dependence on social assistance, then the solution is to put an end to public assistance, no matter what the most vulnerable then do.

There are three problems with this idea. The first is that it oversimplifies the world where paying attention to complexity could be useful. It atomises the problems and doesn't see how they fit together. Second, it is not necessarily aware that its definition of problems is also as linear as the search for solutions. This is because problems do not necessarily reflect empirical reality, but rather what convictions have filtered out. For example, what can lead a sensible individual to think that the problem of the poor's dependence on public assistance exists is the ideological conviction in the meritocracy. It can lead someone to think that only the lazy are poor. The only empirical data that comes into one's head is that which reveals cases of really "lazy" individuals who "take advantage" of public funds. All those others who are really victims of an unequal society have no impact on that kind of head. Third, these solutions are an end in themselves, they do not promote any value, nor do they protect any principles. Atomizing, filtering, and shifting to the rest.

Why am I talking about "the web of solutions"? It's because this phenomenon is dynamically articulated to produce bigger problems than the ones I wanted to solve. When we lose sight of the connection that one problem has with another, we risk creating new things, therefore, even more impenetrable to our reasoning. Not articulating what we know for the sake of simplification brings with it that kind of risk. There is no such thing as the mosquito problem. There is the problem of the conditions in which people live, the kind of access to health that exists, the functioning of institutions, the natural environment in which they live, cultural and social habits and so on. To reduce this problem to a single dimension (in this case, many mosquitoes) is to risk letting others articulate in even more complex ways to the point of escaping our understanding. It is the same with crime. It would be good if it only consisted of the existence of criminals. But that is not so, unfortunately. The police action itself is part of the problem, not just the solution.

The "web of solutions" not only produces more complex problems but also creates the conditions for its own reproduction. It is, as anthropologists would say, a social body. The more complex the problems, the simpler the solutions appear and the easier it is to convince as many people as possible that the problems are easy to solve. It's incredible, but it seems that way. It is from this innocent simplification that populism lives. Wherever populists are at the top we see simple solutions to complex problems. Stop migration, they shout in Europe, without bothering to know how they will guarantee the functioning of their economies without foreigners; legalise the transformation of police officers into murderers, they say in Brazil, without bothering to know what will become of all the potential innocent victims.

Now, what allows this dimension of popular science to flourish is something that societies need more and more. I refer to the awareness that a society only deserves that name if it constitutes an ideal thought out by its members. An ideal is not what the development industry promotes in the minds of many young people, namely a society without hunger, nudity and so on. An ideal is always a value (or set of values) whose promotion and protection weakens what creates hunger or nudity while inoculating society against that cause. A vision of society is that. That is how Marxism (despite all my reticence) can underpin a vision of society with its emphasis on the principle of solidarity and social justice. That is also how liberalism can underpin a vision with its concern for equal opportunities. When I read things from Mozambican Facebook I hardly get the impression that the speaker is referring to some set of values that he or she consciously and consistently reflects. I don't see any vision of society in much that I read around here, especially from some militants in some CSOs.

The impression I get is that many derive satisfaction from being part of a majority that considers itself to be of good. They reduce decency to identification with that majority. They don't know what decency it is not to be able to be indignant as the majority is indignant, but to organize their own lives around the value whose promotion will limit the conditions that produce the reason for the indignation of the majority. It is no accident that many are unable to see the contradiction between loudly condemning what others have done wrong and allowing themselves exceptions to the rule ("because it is another situation"…). How many hidden debts have not been incurred by all those who walk around loudly today, but, of course, to a lesser extent, in other situations, well, for justified reasons, etc.? How many? It is characteristic of popular science to advocate an absolute morality (especially for others), for this creates a scapegoat whose infinite drag in the mud guarantees the plausibility of simple solutions. It is not for nothing that the growth of popular science coincides with the expansion of the evangelical churches. They also live by promoting the devil. The end of absolute morality is the absolute state, alias despotism.

At this point we can turn to the second level of the value discussion. Development is not just theory in the sense of the philosophical and ethical justification of its necessity. It is also practice. In other words, actions are carried out that serve to make development possible in the world. One fights against poverty, defines children and their needs, calls for democratization and initiates appropriate measures, and teaches people in all possible activities. The list is not even complete. Where are values expressed here? They are expressed where any action can be ethically justified. It may be obvious to many why poverty must be eradicated. But appearances are deceptive. Not everywhere poverty is defined in the same way. Even in Europe, poverty was at least a virtue in the Middle Ages, cultivated in particular by certain religious orders. Only in the course of time did poverty acquire the negative connotation it has today, and above all in connection with a normatively determined definition of the tasks of the state.

Seen in this light, it is actually obvious that poverty reduction programmes in so-called developing countries do not only have to solve an existential problem. They must also convince people why their ideas of life, merit, punishment and reward are not appropriate. Where people are forced to give up such ideas, it must be explained why they have to do so. Unfortunately, development policy sometimes tends not to differentiate poverty in its intervention. It looks at people who are poor and does not ask whether they are poor because they are structurally disadvantaged or whether they are poor because they are averse to work. It may not sound right to insist on such a distinction, but it was no different in European development.

In England, until after the Second World War, there were the so-called "Poor Laws", which provided support for the poor according to whether one was "deserving" or "undeserving" poor. Most of the time the poor were put into so-called "workhouses", where the living conditions were deliberately made hard so that people could prefer the working world outside. Here, too, values are at work – values that have to do with diligence, independence and responsibility. they raise the question of whether and to what extent developing countries have the possibility and the right to determine for themselves what should be considered poverty to be fought in their societies. This applies to all areas that are the subject of development policy intervention. A very controversial topic in development policy, for example, is child labour. Until when are you a child? What can be expected of a child? And above all: who has the right to give the final answers to these questions?

Development is a valuable issue. The ambiguity is deliberate. Development is a valuable matter because it contributes to improving the living conditions of people all over the world in the form of aid and cooperation. It gives confidence to many people and gives them the trust in humanity that some events in history have called into question. At the same time, development is a valuable matter because it is based on values. These values are neither uniform nor are they applied in a coherent way. Values are first and foremost based on historical experiences made by different individuals and communities. It is such experiences that can sometimes lead people to judge the same thing differently. For example, if institutionalised development policy emphasises the need to treat nature with care, this can be an expression of the experience of the threat to human existence that people in developed industrialised nations feel. But it can also be interpreted as an expression of the hypocrisy of people in developing countries who long for a life of prosperity and still remember how Europeans have exploited the resources of these countries.

In the final analysis, the debate on development aid is always and inevitably a debate about our values. Yet this discussion is not limited to the question of whether it is morally useful or pointless to help other people. It is also important to ask whether development aid should be justified in terms of a moral obligation to help others, or whether the main issue should be to ensure that, in helping others, no harm is done to them. The latter is becoming increasingly important, as development cooperation has triggered processes of socialization that were not necessarily intended. A dam can help people to control the violence of nature by reducing the risk of flooding. But stagnant water is an ideal breeding ground for all kinds of pathogens in tropical regions. Is it wrong to build dams? Is it irresponsible to expose people to such dangers without giving them the means to defend themselves?

We all want a better world, Europeans, Asians, Americans, Africans, we all want that. It is true that, from a scientific point of view, the problem begins right there, namely what it means not only to want a better world, but also the very idea of a better world'. In Italy and the USA, just to take current examples, a better world consists of insulating the Italians and the Americans from the wretched of the earth, to use the famous expression of Frantz Fanon. The miserable stay in their countries and do what they can to improve their lives, and the unmerciful continue to enjoy the comfort that history has given them, but also their commitment and hard work. Fighting for a better world in these circumstances would mean strengthening instruments such as migration policy to ensure that the wretched do not relinquish their responsibility to develop their countries even if circumstances do not allow it and that they do not bother the one who on his own merits has done the best of his life.

I'm cynical about these things because I'm African. There is a proverb in our continent that teaches us something very simple to digest: those who bring unhappiness to others, teach them wisdom because they become more cautious. Africans should learn to be more careful in their relationship with the good intentions of Europeans. Good manners force us today to relativise some things, for example to say that colonialism was not so bad, especially if we compare it with what we did with independence and so on. But the raw truth is that the problems we have in Africa today are problems that without analysis of the colonial moment can hardly be understood.

I know that many people react to this by saying that colonialism was a long time ago. Interestingly, some of the people who say this are Christians and still feel a duty to pay for Adam and Eve's mistakes. It seems that only Africans should have a limited time horizon. When I say that today's

problems are, in part, a legacy of the colonial moment, I do not mean in any way to suggest that without colonialism Africa would be better off, nor even to say that there is nothing that our leaders and our people have done wrong. I just want to say that the world in which things are a problem for Africans is a colonial world, so a world built by others for themselves and within which we Africans must find our place. It is not easy.

The second explanation for my cynicism has to do with the fact that I am a sociologist by training. We all know that Chinese saying by which the development industry dies of loves: if you give fish to a hungry man, he will starve that day; if you teach him to fish, he will starve every day. To be honest with you, I have never understood that saying, or rather I have never understood it because if you assume that it would be in the interests of hungry man to learn how to fish, especially in a world where there is then no money to buy the equipment, fishing may not be profitable because the European Union protects its fishermen by subsidising its own fishing industry, in short because climate change makes rivers and seas completely unpredictable with the help of carbon dioxide emissions. The world in which we live makes another kind of learning more rational: how to make a starving face, how to appeal to the conscience of those who have fish to give, how to fall into the good graces of those who have made charity a paid profession?

Anyway, my training in sociology articulates with my African distrust to rephrase the saying: if you sell fish to a person, that person will have what to eat today; but if you teach that person how to fish, you will ruin an excellent business opportunity! This is what we have been asking ourselves in Africa for years. Why would it be in the interests of Europeans and, in general, of the unmerciful of the land, to end our poverty? It is true that there is that idea that our poverty would be functional to the wealth of others, so those known arguments of world-system theory, etc. I'm not going to list all the attempts to answer that have been made because the list is long. But one thing has become clear and it has been constant: it is not Africa that is a problem, but the world. I think it is important to retain that and I say that at ease because speaking here in front of experts in public administration I hope to be understood. Knowing the problem is more than half the way to solve it. So I insist: the problem is not Africa. The problem is what makes Africa a problem. Just as Franz Kafka used to say that he was a cage looking for a bird, I would say that the world, for the manipulative reason of its structure of defining the problems of others for whom only it has the solution, is the cage that treats Africa as its bird.

I would like to explain this better and thereby get into the most substantive part of my conference. I want to raise three conceptual problems in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals to explain why I do not like them, nor their precursor, the Millennium Development Goals. The problem for which SDG presents itself as a solution is not what we think it is, but we should still be concerned. This last remark is so as not to completely ruin the relationship with you, because I want to say, in conclusion, that it is the public administration, especially as a science, that has the noble responsibility of guiding us in the search for the real problems that need our attention.

The first conceptual problem has to do with the way SDG formulate their ends. The famous Transformation Agenda defines, among other things, the elimination of poverty and hunger as one of its main objectives. I have to say, however, that defining this type of objective is extremely problematic, because it refers us, as the document does, to discussing ends rather than means. Ending hunger and poverty are noble objectives, but the question, which is not addressed in this agenda, is how to get there. Why, for example, do rich countries not open their borders to allow

poor people to find work to send money to their poor relatives there in the "latrines" – with due respect to the president of the most powerful country in the world – where they come from? There would be enough arguments for that.

First, if we take into account the liberal spirit at the base of the constitution of the world we live in, a spirit that values the free market, the free movement of people and go SDG, I see no reason not to think of the relaxation of migration laws as a powerful tool in pursuing SDG. Moreover, what else has the liberal world done but to create a global citizen who cannot be bound by territorial borders? Why can't a young Nigerian who graduates from Abuja aspire to sell his knowledge where he knows it will be valued, where he knows it will be professionally realized? Because this freedom must remain the prerogative of those in possession of a passport that allows them to travel the world without hindrance – in Switzerland, where I live and work, locals have a passport that allows them to enter 80 countries without a visa while I, with my Mozambican passport, can only do this in 8 countries? Often, the desire to emigrate, as one of my students demonstrated in a Master's thesis on students from Ghana, is not explained by the simple fact that people want to escape poverty. Sometimes what explains the desire to migrate is the constitution of those individuals as global citizens through the training they have received.

Secondly, and here I follow the provocations of the Korean economist at Cambridge University, Ha-Joon Chang (2010), why does a country like Sweden struggling with the wage burden of its public transport workforce not hire Indian drivers who are cheaper, more skilful at the wheel – try driving a bus where the cow has priority – and less interested in asserting their union rights? Of course, this is really a provocation, but the idea that is being sought is of structural relevance. To what extent are the problems faced by countries the inevitable consequence of the sort of measures we take to keep the undesirables away from us? We should not forget that there is a certain hypocrisy in this desire to keep the undesirables away, because whenever structural conditions have demanded it, the conditions have been created for them to come. It was those undesirables who kept the welfare state in Western Europe functional during the three glorious decades after the Second European War. It was the undesirables of the Iberian Peninsula, the Mediterranean, the Maghreb that ensured the affluence of the non-misciples of the world during all this time. Switzerland is too small a country for the size of its economy, yet there is a captive electorate there for a political discourse hostile to migration as if it were possible to maintain that economy without foreigners.

Rather than defining ends, we need a discussion about the means. There have been times when such a discussion has taken place. Does anyone remember the debate on a new international economic order? Does anyone remember the debate on the need to reform capitalism? Yeah. Not that I'm a Marxist or anything. I'm just saying it seems suspicious to me to want to solve a problem created by a certain structure without touching that structure. Poverty does not exist in spite of everything that is done to combat it; it exists because of what is done to combat it.

The second conceptual problem has to do with the concept of poverty itself. Here I speak as a sociologist. Some of us are not so interested in defining poverty until we reach those criteria criticised by Amartya Sen when he asked himself what it means to live below the line of survival. Some of us are interested in why poverty is a problem. It's a simple question, but crucial. It's not in all circumstances that poverty is a problem. I do not need to refer to the intrinsic moral value that life in poverty has for certain religious orientations – I exclude, of course, the Benedictine

orders famous for the amount of fat displayed by their monks. I am inspired by Georg Simmel, a German sociologist from the turn of the 19th century, who problematised this issue in a reflection on the poor in which he came to the conclusion that the poor would not be the description of an essential condition, but the affirmation of an artefact of institutional intervention. In other words, you are poor because you are the object of the intervention of an institution whose function is to deal with poverty (Simmel 1965 [1908]).

This may sound strange at first, but I give you an example that may perhaps make it clear. In the 1990s there was a great movement towards debt relief for developing countries. The institutional response given by the Bretton Woods institutions was to impose as a condition for the enjoyment of forgiveness that a country should not only be highly indebted but also very poor according to the criterion of the debt service burden in relation to Gross Social Product. My home country, Mozambique, had just emerged from a terrible civil war and resented the burden of debt servicing despite all the aid that the IMF and the World Bank, in the context of the structural readjustment programme, were giving it. Mozambique was in the situation described by Emperor Alexander on his deathbed: dying with the help of many doctors. Mozambique struggled and on September 1, 1999, managed to convince the IMF and the World Bank that it was a highly poor country. You cannot imagine the emotion with which the news was received in Mozambique. The front page title of the main daily was something like "hurrraa, somos pobres!

What produces institutions that fight poverty are values, for example the importance that human dignity, justice as equity (to speak like John Rawls), equal opportunities have for the way we choose to manage social coexistence. Fighting poverty in these circumstances, therefore, is much more than getting people out of poverty, than doing those micro-credit schemes that are always legitimized by the existence of drunken husbands who live off the work of their diligent wives. Fighting poverty in such circumstances is reinforcing these values, that is, promoting the kind of principles that will increase our rejection of the violation of human dignity and will protect us from those who are prepared to accept it as the price that must be paid to ensure the welfare of the few. Here I return to the structural issue: as long as we live in a world that accepts structural imbalances in the name of an ideology or a system of economic resource management, any intervention we make to eliminate the resulting problems will be nothing more than a palliative. It is as simple as that. Let me put it directly: the US today has a president who cultivates an ethically problematic discourse. All right, it's your right. But how can you believe the sincerity of those who want to help solve the world's problems when none of them have the courage to stand up and distance themselves from that speech? Has anyone seen the European Union twisting its nose at what it says and does? For me, these things are important, much more important than declarations of intent.

Finally, the third conceptual problem is more difficult, but shorter to deal with. Why do we think poverty is the problem? Why has it never crossed our minds that wealth might be our problem? These are rhetorical questions, of course, but justified. Poverty is the problem not because it is really a problem, but because the way we approach the world from an economic point of view makes it the problem that needs to be tackled. In other words, our model for managing our economic assets is geared towards producing wealth. It commits us to a vision of the world based on the idea that the pursuit of wealth is at the same time the sine qua non for the elimination of poverty. This is difficult to understand why a significant part of that poverty is produced by the

process of wealth production. I hasten to say that I am not an economist (...), so I do not have the right knowledge to discuss the merits of our economic asset management model, but it seems elementary to me to suppose that it is also important to address the machine that produces poverty and wealth as a problem itself.

The reason why wealth is not the problem is also simple. If we were to define wealth as a problem, perhaps we would get to the point where we would suggest that the one who has more should be more restrained in his enjoyment than he has, or even that he should share. Who would be willing to do that? Does the Transformation Agenda adventure itself? I don't think so, and it's clear why. It's not just a political issue. It's an intellectual issue, the inability to imagine other possible worlds. We approach the world with the same degree of perplexity that two little fish in an aquarium approach their condition. If God does not exist, says a little fish, who changes the water? The Agenda could be about privileges, about opportunities, and so forth, but it's not. It is to some extent the defence of the status quo. It is best defended by defining Africa as an unresolved problem, not the world that puts Africa in that situation.

But there is a saying in Africa that if cockroaches want to rule they should hire the fox as a bodyguard. It is true that it is illusory to think that Africa can rule the world, at least for the time being. The priority is to fight to better define the problem for which SDG can be a solution. The title of my conference is actually inspired by a controversial book from the 1990s by a Cameroonian intellectual, Axelle Kabou (1999), entitled "what if Africa refused development?" Contrary to what I do, Axelle Kabou raised the question of to what extent the development difficulties of the African continent would reflect an African problem. She blamed the elites of the "Friday" complex in reference to a character, "Friday" in Daniel Defoe's novel, primitive and incapable of living without the tutelage of the white man, she spoke of the hostility of these elites to technology, the comfort they derived from holding the West and, above all, colonialism, responsible for African problems. Kabou was successful in the development industry while among Africans her intervention was seen as a manifestation of what Jean-Claude Djéréké described as "la honte de soi" (the shame of oneself).

My approach is slightly different. When I ask "what if Africa rejected SDG?" I don't want to suggest that African problems are entirely African. I just want to suggest that the rejection of SDG is, in the first instance, a refusal to accept the definition that others make of our problems as a condition for our own intellectual, political and economic emancipation. This is precisely where I think public administration as a science can play a very important role. In fact, I think of it as the bodyguard for the cockroach who wants to rule the world. I reserve that role primarily to public administration as a science, not as a technique. Public administration as a technique takes problems for granted and implements solutions, no matter if they really address the problem for which someone sees them as the real solution. On the other hand, the science of public administration does what the world needs the most, namely, critically challenges, doesn't conform to what everyone knows, makes sure that the problem has been well defined.

I have agreed to come and share with you my concerns about SDG because I have assumed that as scientists you are committed to critical questioning. I read the call for contributions and saw the careful, critical way in which the issue has been formulated, very far from the triumphalisms that have characterised the discussion of the issue. I have seen the programme and the various subjects it contains and I have had the distinct feeling that simply talking about them in such a large and

diverse space as this is, in itself, crucial to doing the best possible. Back in the American Wild West in the old days, some saloons had the following appeal in big letters: "please don't kill the pianist; he's doing his best". That's what it's all about. The most important thing is to know that the world is doing its best.

3 One big Misunderstanding

There is something about development assistance making me think that this might all be a misunderstanding. It is the idea that development assistance is about developing countries. I do not think so, no matter what development experts and practitioners say. True, it is easy to think so. After all, this is what it is called: development assistance. Moreover, the historical context within which development assistance emerged was one within which all interested parties invested a lot in the idea that certain countries needed to catch up. Some call it “modernising”, others “industrialising”. Catching up has been an abiding metaphor for development itself conveying the idea that countries lagging behind can be brought up to scratch with the developed world.

When we are confronted with yet another civil war in Africa or with a refugee crisis, so-called experts step out of their holes to decry the shortcomings of development assistance. They ask loud questions about whether development assistance makes any sense at all, seek and find the culprit in the development institutions or Africans, or both. Worst of all, they set the stage for yet another big idea that will drag Africa out of its problems.

The problem with the dominant development thinking is manifold and not at all new. First of all, it has fostered unreasonable expectations based on the highly problematic idea that doing the right thing is all that one needs to achieve desired outcomes. Unfortunately, that is not the way the world works. The world is not fair. It does not necessarily reward good behaviour. There may not be many examples of countries which did the right thing and failed, but it is equally true that doing the right thing in itself is not enough to be successful. In fact, most success stories in Africa, cases like Botswana, Mauritius and Cape Verde and, more recently, Rwanda and Ethiopia, are success stories with the benefit of hindsight. Because they are successful – for the time being – it is assumed that they did the right thing.

Secondly, and more disquieting, the thinking underlying development assistance and policy draws from a contentious assumption. This assumption consists in the belief that one knows how developed countries actually developed. This often translates into a series of recipes seriously at odds with empirical evidence. Some people speak of strong institutions, good governance, absence of corruption, commitment to democracy and human rights, etc. basically assuming, therefore, that this is what it takes to develop a country. Well, empirical evidence tells a different story. In Europe, for example, strong institutions, effective anti-corruption strategies and, generally, good governance were the outcome of development, not its cause. Even respect for human rights and democracy would only count if one were to ignore the massive violation of the dignity of colonized peoples. This is not a mere academic point. European democracies, which in any case, are properly speaking a recent phenomenon – basically something that came in the wake of the end of the Second European World War – thrived in splendid violation of the right of subjected peoples to be politically represented.

Thirdly, development thinking persistently makes the serious mistake of ignoring the open ended nature of historical events. Teleology has been a hallmark of European historical thinking. It is grounded on the rather millennial assumption that there is an end to history variously conflated with the coming of the Messias, the onset of a new era, the satisfaction of all human needs, etc. Those who strongly believed in these things and had the opportunity and the power to implement them led the world into the horrors of the Holocaust or of the Gulags. The truth, however, is that historical action is open ended. Every new situation is not the end of the world, but rather the announcement of new opportunities for action. We have not yet discovered the algorithm that could enable us to direct human creativity and energy into those actions consistent with how we think is the right course of history. This is of direct relevance to development policy, for most ills blamed for preventing development in Africa, for instance, are in fact African responses to the opportunities opened up by development intervention. Both the success and failure of development interventions create new situations and, with them, new opportunities for human action for good or for worse.

These are just three problems with development thinking. To clear potential misunderstandings: none of this is to say that development assistance and policy has been a complete failure. This is too simplistic a conclusion to draw. In fact, development assistance has been a positive factor in Africa, keeping hope alive and helping countries to find their way in a world that was not built for them. The people who work in development institutions are genuinely committed to their work and give their best to achieve the goals of their institutions. The problem is the expectation that through their work their institutions will develop Africa. May be not, in spite of their good intentions. And if not, that will not be because Africans do not want to develop. It will be because we are helpless before the forces of history. Therefore, instead of insisting on an unwarranted expectation we should change our mind about what we can achieve with development assistance and conceptualise it in a different way. There is no shortage of ideas to guide our thinking.

One crucial idea, one which is close to the liberal foundations of politics today, is the idea of opportunity. We should think of development policy as a commitment towards levelling the playing field so that those disadvantaged by history get a chance at taming a world the structures of which conspire against them. This is a long term commitment based on patience, a virtue that has been in short supply in development circles. It would inoculate development practitioners from the urge to overburden African countries with new strategies and approaches every time one thinks that one is not getting value for the money invested. It might also tame politicians and journalists who for lack of understanding of what development is use the “failure” of development to mobilise discontent against development institutions and Africans.

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Hush it up!

Editorial epistemicide and the invisibility of the debate on race issues

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1 Hushing it up I – First Steps…

Popular expressions commonly assume the form of an imposition or prescription. They reveal a social rule, immersed in relational webs that involve power. Their interpretations are varied and the connotation or intonation with which they are spoken can modify the message's sense and understanding.

These expressions need to be shared among the individuals concerned. Their senses and meanings too. The emitter and recipient of this communicative action must share the same cultural capital. Certainly, improper use of a popular saying can cause problems for the person wishing to use it. Its use cannot be dissociated, therefore, from the reality experienced by the individual or group. It is this sharing that assures social cohesion, the interests and ideologies that figure in the collective imaginary and that are based on the subjectivities of the people involved.

Use of one of these sayings commonly enables the interlocutor to issue a message in an indirect but nonetheless prescriptive and finalistic way. Expressions like "tell me who your companions are and I'll tell you who you are" create parameters for segregation between individuals. In this case, a set of distinctive characteristics are chosen to impose selection mechanisms in social interaction. This expression is utilized in a context in which the emitter prejudges other individuals based on his or her own parameters. And, in this sense, race, gender and social or territorial origin are distinctive characteristics used in this prejudgement.

Abafe o Caso! "Hush it up!" This is an exclamation that imposes silence and excludes: it demands the silencing of certain themes and the exclusion of determined individuals from the debate. When announced and used, it assumes at least two interpretations in everyday life and experience.

The first interpretation involves the suspension of a theme, topic, knowledge or discussion. It occurs when individuals prejudged as 'outsiders' approach the field of dialogue or discourse. In other words, it involves refraining from saying something when the entry of undesirable individuals in the discussion becomes unavoidable. As an example, the suspension of a particular theme of conversation among a circle of friends when the latter are approached by the person or people who are the object of their criticisms or the motive for the conversation. In this case, the expression "hush it up!" (*abafe o caso!*) is used to silence the topic abruptly, preventing the other(s) from becoming aware of what was being said. Over the course of history, many individuals have been left out of the production of knowledge. The fact is that the colonizing enterprise, in its series of conquests, propagated a single form of reason, a single history and a single model of civilization.

The second interpretation of "Hush it up!" concerns the lack of knowledge of determined themes or topics and involves purging the debate and making the issue invisible. It is commonly associated with the relations existing between different ethnic, social or political groups where no interest exists in promoting dialogue or cultural approximation. This interpretation is more closely allied with colonizing practices, whether with the ships of the era of the great navigations of the fifteenth and sixteenth century, or with the gigabytes of the internet and the digital social networks.

Here, the interpretation is that each society has a political strategy that allows the selection and promotion of some themes in detriment to others. It also reveals that some select individuals are identified as capable of speaking, writing and debating about the society in question, in detriment to others who are marginalized, subalternized and excluded. In sum, this expression reveals an ideological arithmetic focused on the exclusion of individuals from society. As a mechanism for controlling insurgencies, the colonizer creates forms of genocide, conceived as strategies for eliminating bodies, and exercises widespread control and domination over the other members of the conquered societies. Death and punishment serve the dominant elites as operational instruments of such control and domination.

Smothering culture. Smothering knowledge and knowhow. Smothering individuals. They are groups who prevent others – people different from the dominant elites – from participating in the lived world. It may be possible to speak about the culture of the other. It may be possible to speak about their knowledge and knowhow. But is not possible for them to be protagonists. This is what this ideological model presents to all of us. Smothering the capacity of the individual to speak about him or herself means diluting, within the structure of societies, the social cohesion that identifies the person as a member of a group, race or ethnicity.

In this essay, my aim will be to present the debate on the invisibility of racial issues in indexed Brazilian journals in the social sciences and education. To this end, I present the results of empirical research conducted from 2018, as well as reflections on this model of politics that resoundingly fosters the emptying of the debate on issues related to race relations.

2 Our Steps, Interpretations and Understandings come from way back…

Speaking. Singing. Listening. Reading and writing; these are not individual choices. People say what is socially acceptable and even speech classified as subversive is oriented by rules existing in society. If not the rules shared by the majority, at least those that enable critique and protest.

Art, in its multiple manifestations, does not lack aesthetic rules or standards of curatorship, nor those established by the art dealers: it represents the reading of a period and of a social existence in which each artist manifests his or her gaze and interpretations concerning the everyday life of the lived world. However, their circulation and acceptance by the specialized public are related to an aesthetic and linguistic model that translates each period and each place. In this cauldron, literature, music, photography, cinema and scientific production blend together – with the latter also performing the subliminal function of authenticating, through writing, the aesthetic value of each movement or artistic and cultural expression. The scientific and artistic fields confer legitimacy and social recognition.

Subjectivities, guided by the senses, contribute to the perception of the surrounding world. Each sense manifests an individual's perception of the experienced world. This world requires individuals to select signs and symbols representative of the things that they experience. Thus the sound of a clock hand ticking refers the mind to time and also refers the body to work and rest. Thus, the normative orientation of time existing in the clock also guides the individual's compliance with the hours of work, leisure, rest and other activities. This synaesthetic action demonstrates how the senses and reason operate in conjunction, establishing meanings and attributing meanings to images and to the sounds we hear. Individuals hear the sound of the clock and perceive the existence of work, associating it with the pulse in their veins or the cardiac rhythms of the body. In the digital era, the acoustic perception of a tic-toc is replaced by mobile alarms and notifications. The passing of time is also associated with the expectation of the future.

Reading and writing also adhere to parameters similar to those of art. We read what has been normalized, shared and accepted as proper to the society or culture in question. Moreover, what we read represents a singular aesthetic, a specific historical moment associated with the development of human thought and society. Hence, reading expresses a socially accepted and systematically guided language. Reading newspapers, leaflets, books, pamphlets, messages and so on represents an intellectual manifestation of what is shared ideologically. Hence, whatever is published has been aesthetically accepted and represents the general interest.

It can be said that society sets synergetic limits to reading and writing, which in turn implies the acceptance or rejection of literatures, themes, authors, facts or phenomena. But what are these limits? They are the forms of recognition that each dominant social group has established to legitimize this or that knowledge, this or that art, this or that knowhow, this or that morality, aesthetic or aesthetics, this or that ethical conduct, this or that profession. They also determine and indeed impose forms of marginalization and segregation. If clock hands point to the time of work and the things of life, reading a text refers to the problematization of an existing theme or phenomenon.

In *The Established and the Outsiders*, Nobert Elias and John L Scotson demonstrate how individuals who occupy the same social space are or are not recognized. They show how rules defined within the established and dominant group seek to subjectively inculcate among those classified as outsiders the idea that their standards and values violate those already established and that a kind of acculturation is necessary for them to become supporting actors in everyday lived performance:

> An established group tends to attribute to its outsider group as a whole the 'bad' characteristics of that group's 'worst' section – of its anomic minority. In contrast, the self-image of the established group tends to be modelled on its exemplary, most 'nomic' or norm-setting section, on the minority of its 'best' members. (Elias and Scotson 2000: 22-23)

> Attaching the label of 'lower human value' to another group is one of the weapons used in a power struggle by superior groups as a means of maintaining their social superiority. In that situation the social slur cast by a more powerful upon a less powerful group usually enters the self-image of the latter and, thus, weakens and disarms them. (Elias and Scotson 2000: 24)

It should be emphasized that for Elias, ethnic and racial differences cover inequality in the distribution of power, political posts and positions of influence. He looks to show that the uneven distribution promoted by these limitations is responsible for generating obstacles to the empowerment of individuals from historically segregated groups. Elias and Scotson write:

> It seems that terms like 'racial' or 'ethnic,' widely used in this context both in sociology and in society at large, are symptomatic of an ideological avoidance action. By using them, one singles out for attention what is peripheral to these relationships (e.g. differences of skin colour) and turns the eye away from what is central (e.g. differences in power ratio and the exclusion of a power-inferior group from positions with a higher power potential). (Elias and Scotson 2000: 32)

Contemporary reflections on the situation described by Elias and Scotson reveal that both the existence of distinct groups of established and outsiders and the constitution of patterns of recognition and distinction that impose an inequal distribution of power and the positions of influence in society are instruments that foment the creation of a necropolitics.

In his exposition of necropolitics, Mbembe (2018) explores the debate on sovereignty and demonstrates how the power or biopower that derives from this concept controls life and death. The author describes how the process of conquering and alienating peoples, depriving them of the human condition, transforms colonizers into the torturers of their conquests and those they conquer, whose bodies marked by race, and society marked by the lack of political articulation of the State, enable the submission of minds and bodies to the conqueror, the destruction of their culture, and the dissolution of the diacritical forms of perceiving the world, eliminating cosmovisions and imposing the commoditization of relations and the objectification of bodies, as a mechanism of control and submission of sovereign will. Thus any and all conquerors, within their borders and in accordance with their politics, possess the power of life and death.

The true exercise of sovereignty resides in defining the conqueror's model of civil society as the only probable and possible such form, dictating life and death.

Achille Mbembe states:

> contemporary forms of subjugation of life to the power of death (necropolitics) profoundly reconfigure the relations among resistance, sacrifice, and terror. I have demonstrated that the notion of biopower is insufficient to account for contemporary forms of subjugation of life to the power of death. Moreover I have put forward the notion of necropolitics and necropower to account for the various ways in which, in our contemporary world, weapons are deployed in the interest of maximum destruction of persons and the creation of death-worlds, new and unique forms of social existence in which vast populations are subjected to conditions of life conferring upon them the status of living dead. (Mbembe 2019: 201871)

Similarly, the notion of outsiders (Elias and Scotson) is insufficient to explain the destitution of power and the restrictions imposed on the occupation of spaces of power by individuals whose skin colour is different and classified as anomic and inferior.

Following Mbembe's thesis, the forms of altercide or elimination of the other – in its multiple dimensions – are constituent parts of necropolitics. Thus, the comprehension that necropolitics extends beyond the physical (genocide) should also guide our inquiries. The destruction of traditional knowledge, the subordination of thought to western reason, the materialization of a single history, the perpetuation of the colonizing and civilizing role, egocentred on Europe and the United States – all these singular characteristics, reinforce the self-image of the colonizer in detriment to the colonized. In other words, they promote forms of epistemicide and ethnocide.

The exclusion of phenomena with racial approaches in the scientific literature and divulgation reveals the choice of themes and approaches that function as models to guide or even domesticate the mind to the 'common type,' the 'common idea,' the 'algorithm,' to what is so often shared that it is accepted as a truth.

The algorithm recalls that: "to be remembered, it is necessary to be seen" or "only those who are seen are remembered." These are sayings that speak of the invisibility existing in society and that demonstrate that is necessary to appear in public. The expressions presume the existence of a social code, which selects distinctive, individual or collective characteristics as a model to be followed and filled. There is a type to be followed, one that has been defined and collectively shared. What the sayings also say is that when individuals are outside the parameters, they can be rendered invisible. Hence the phrase of the poet: for Narcissus, only what isn't a mirror is ugly (*Narciso só acha feio, aquilo que não lhe é espelho*).

2.1 Our Journey

Certainly, our steps, knowledge and knowhow come from way back. The organizational models, cosmology, religiosities, art and drums that echo in every space of the African continent, symbolically and rhythmically, represent each nation and each ethnicity. Our graphic marks and signs enabled a specific reading of the world.

The encounter with the colonizers, on the other hand, generated political and structural incongruences, flooding the local populations with social rules and civilizing practices, contrary to the lived and experienced everyday world. In this field, languages were persecuted and insurgent knowledge-bearing bodies eliminated.

The encounter between the European and African continents placed on the agenda the rationality prevailing in each region. In this case, European military power was sufficient to eliminate bodies and knowledge. Indeed, this was a strategy that extended throughout the colonies, imposing new structures on society.

When it occurs in the physical field, altercide, or the elimination of the other, is genocide. In the field of knowledge, epistemicide. And when the aim is to eliminate the culture and civilizational models of a particular ethnic group, ethnocide. In this instance, there is nobody to tell the story because the bodies were eliminated. There is nothing to talk about because the knowledge and knowhow were made invisible. There is no way for cultural aspects, legends, myths and cosmologies to be propagated because they have been marginalized and inferiorized. The collective unity that assures social cohesion is lost and subordination and subalternization become rife. As Spivak (2018) asserts, a direct and proportional relation exists between western intellectual production and the economic and international interests that orient western political practices.

The civil society advocated by the colonizer through the European civilizational process establishes that the citizen must possess certain standards of civility, which are guided by ownership of property and the guaranteed right of protection by the State. The model of the colonized, whose worldviews and political structure are oriented by elements pertaining to nature and subsistence , is counterhegemonic to the colonizing model and in this sense the ideas of sovereignty and power of the two sides oppose each other. The creation of a technology of conquest based on the model of sovereignty proper to each group legitimizes the exercise of necropolitics against the colonized peoples. This technology first involves the elimination of the language and the implementation of a model of sovereignty, which will be legitimized in Christian theology, dismissing the human condition of those who share another, non-Christian religious framework; second, there is a suppression of the bodies of knowledge that ratify and operate as a mechanism of recognition of different people; and third, there is a substitution of the native language and the delimitation of the culture.

In view of the above, albeit somewhat extemporaneously, it is worth recalling the difference that Rousseau establishes between forms of inequalities:

> I conceive of two kinds of inequality in the human species: one which I call natural or physical, because it is established by nature and consists in the difference of age, health, bodily strength, and qualities of mind or soul. The other may be called moral or political inequality, because it depends on a kind of convention and is established, or at least authorized, by the consent of men. This latter type of inequality consists in the different privileges enjoyed by some at the expense of others, such as being richer, more honoured, more powerful than they, or even causing themselves to be obeyed by them. (Rousseau 2017: 33)

Rousseau's conception shows the role of the dominant elites in making everyone believe in their importance to the maintenance of civility and the values of a society. It also demonstrates how these same groups are capable of inculcating in other groups the idea that their form of speaking, writing and self-expression must be domesticated by the so-called civilized. The strategies available to convince them were numerous and in many cases imperceptible. But among these strategies, reading and writing are fundamental since teaching literacy to a conquered people in the language of the colonizer wipes out the memory of the symbols of ethnic and racial cohesion that had previously persisted. This same action eliminates the relationship between the future generation and the past. Literature will not recount the conquests of the ancestors of the conquered but will present and orient the past to depict the acts of the conquerors as heroic.

But writing is also motivated by reading. Moreover, this relationship of interdependence between the senses and reason restores, in another form, the Cartesian binarism that informed the consolidation of modern thought. To write it is necessary to observe and master a standard of written language – in other words, it is necessary to master rules that, by themselves, exclude. The excluded are the illiterate, foreigners and anyone who does not share the same literacy experience.

The binarism professed by Descartes and ratified in the phrase "I think therefore I am" separated body and mind. This separation inaugurated modern philosophical thought, which justified for some groups of individuals the imposition of a single history and the subjugation of bodies, operationalised through the enslavement of black Africans and indigenous peoples in the Americas.

Cartesian dualism, which establishes the idea of body and mind as two separate and incompatible things, enables the justification for the process of expansion and colonization of new lands, as well as the appropriation of knowledge and the extermination of bodies. The inauguration of this modern philosophy prescribed for humanity the existence of a transcendental space where reflection coexists with human reason.

The Cartesian maxim "I think therefore I am" justified the existence of a mind detached from the body and, in the process, the knowledge and worldviews of those who differed from the white European man could be absorbed while their bodies became disposable. This duality established by Cartesian thought sought to justify and transcend theological thought, approximating the existence of the mind to the viewpoint of God (Mbembe 2018; Appiah 2006). This metaphysical approximation is sufficient to ignore the body, but not the thoughts derived from it: in other words, although the cosmovisions and worldviews of non-European peoples expressed a genuine knowledge about a given phenomenon or a given science, this knowledge did not need to be associated with a physical condition of existence, that is, with the body, whose diacritical marks of colour and phenotypes signalled their ethnicity or place of existence. This knowledge supposedly belonged to humanity as a whole and had to be systemized by minds whose training and orientation aligned with the emerging science.

Descartes proposes the existence of axes that define actions and the consequences of these actions, which, to some extent, flatten human relations, attributing values to them, and the reflections of these values in society itself. The axis of domination is definitive of action and the axis of imagery is the reflection of this within society. Thus the mind is on the axis of actions and

bodies are the reflection of these actions in the social experience of each individual or group. It can be emphasized that for each action there exists a reflection, and that its attribution in society as a whole is fundamental to the preservation of the latter and to the valorisation of the social condition of human existence.

The global geopolitics based around neoliberalism and the ideology of knowledge derived from it comprises the paradigm that recuperates this Cartesian duality, imposing methodological models that suffocate the voices of subalternized subjects as authors and protagonists of scientific production about themselves and their social existence.

> Epistemic racism/sexism is one of the most important problems of the contemporary world. The epistemic privilege of western men over the knowledge produced by other political and geopolitical bodies of knowledge has not only generated cognitive injustice, it has also been one of the mechanisms used to privilege imperial/colonial/patriarchal projects worldwide. The inferiorization of the knowledge produced by men and women across the planet (including western women) has endowed western men with the epistemic privilege of defining what is true, what is reality and what is best for everyone else. This legitimacy and monopoly of the knowledge of western men has generated structures and institutions that produce epistemic racism/sexism, disqualifying other forms of knowledge and other critical voices opposed to the imperial/colonial/patriarchal projects that govern the world system. (Grosfoguel 2016: 25)

The distinctions established in the analysis of the noxious effects that the model of a single history had on the society of colonized peoples developed into the mechanisms used to preserve inequalities, created through the binary and excluding logic that the colonizers established to justify the ethnocide and genocide present in the politics of European colonization.

> What links the 'I conquer, therefore I am' (*ego conquiro*) with the idolatric, God-like 'I think, therefore I am' (*ego cogito*) is the epis¬temic racism/sexism produced from the 'I exterminate, therefore I am' (*ego extermino*). It is the logic of genocide/epistemicide together that mediates the 'I conquer' with the epistemic racism/sexism of the 'I think' as the new foundation of knowledge in the modern/colonial world. The *ego extermino* is the socio-historical structural condition that makes possible the link of the *ego conquiro* with the *ego cogito*. (Grosfoguel 2016: 31)

The idea of an epistemic racism/sexism implies that the western model of knowledge construction excluded other forms of knowledge originating from other regions of the world. Thus, the definition of the geopolitics of knowledge takes Europe as its epicentre – or male heterosexual Europeans.

It can be inferred, therefore, echoing Mbembe (2019) in *Critique of Black Reason*, that the world imposed on colonized peoples and those abducted in the diaspora is a ghost world – one in which the body acts performatively, enacting something that did not belong to the person's lived experience but was instead a product of their life as a captive. The erasure of memory by the substitution of language. The invisibility of bodies and their cultural, aesthetic and gastronomic expressions. These are structural characteristics that consolidate the ghost world. Western writing also performs this role since it is imposed on colonized individuals, transforming the

experts and custodians of African and Amerindian knowledge and cosmovisions into illiterate subjects.

3 Hushing It Up II – the Invisibility of the racial Theme

While developing the research[1] on the formative process of black youth and academic routine, the need was observed to obtain an overview of the state of the art concerning the black youth theme and its correlates. This initiative set out to identify the authors and thematics in the areas of Sociology and Anthropology correlated with black youth, searching readily available and easily accessible scientific publications. The decision was taken, therefore, to survey journals indexed and classified as Qualis A (in the four-year period 2013-2016 according to the Sucupira platform), available on-line, principally via the Scielo platform.

To achieve these objectives, research descriptors[2] were chosen, indexers that could be used to map the data from the Scielo platform. This list of descriptors would enable the themes being debated to be mapped and subsequently identify the strategies used to define objects of study and academic routines for students linked to areas of knowledge in the social sciences and education. Using this procedure, the aim was to construct a conceptual map that would show the geopolitical distribution of the themes and the affiliation of the students to specific research fields.

The hope was that the research with the descriptors would enable a geopolitical and conceptual description correlated with black youth, as well as allow the identification of the conceptual bases that guide young people in the conduct of their research and the definition of their objects of study. However, the absence of publications indexed as Qualis A level in the areas researched caused some puzzlement. Efforts were made, then, to identify what this production was.

This thematic absence reoriented the research and the popular saying "only those who are seen are remembered" began to figure in the studies. This widespread expression highlights the invisibility of the debate on these themes in Brazil's leading science journals. Moreover, it raises two hypotheses that will not be exhausted here but that are being explored in the continuing development of the research. The first related to the idea of editorial epistemicide, which implies affirming that the country possesses a model of scientific and editorial dissemination in indexed journals (Qualis A) that render invisible the debate on themes correlated with race relations. This invisibilization effectively discourages young people from beginning their research career by defining their objects of study in relation to such themes. It should be emphasized that this condition of invisibility has assumed greater relevance after the democratization of higher education and its expansion.

The second hypothesis, which is currently being researched, establishes the idea of a thematic and conceptual hierarchization. This involves localizing the publications correlated with racial themes

[1] The development of this research counted on several young black collaborators, including Agnailson Araújo with a PIBIC/UFRB undergraduate research award and Talita Silva, working voluntarily at PIBIC, both of them on the UFRB Pedagogy Course.

[2] The descriptors used were (in Portuguese): Youth, Race, Racism, Race Relations, Racial Inequalities, Negritude, Higher Teaching, Higher Education, Public Policies, Quota Policies. This list of descriptors was used to map the published academic scientific production in general and indexed journals specifically.

and descriptors, as well as identifying the authors and proponents of these studies in the scientific academic field.

This perception of the invisibility of the race debate, likewise the dissemination and publication of research conducted by black authors, was made more evident through the Black Lives Matter movement. The Black Authors Matter manifesto, in which black US authors addressed the country's major publishers, highlights the need to broaden and reveal the depth of the anti-racist struggle in the diverse institutions responsible for divulging and disseminating knowledge and knowhow.

In Brazil, the country's largest publishing group states:

> As racism structures all our relations, it also impacts the editorial environment where not only are most senior posts occupied by white people, but the catalogues too are mostly composed of white and European-origin authors. This is why practical and proactive measures must be taken, following the example of other sectors like the public universities, which finally implemented quotas, reparation initiatives and affirmative actions for their student and teaching bodies. The anti-racist struggle is a one-way process in this country, not only in public institutions but also in the business and private sectors. Other groups must be included in this struggle, such as LGBTQ+ populations, indigenous and disabled people, as well as their intersections. (Companhia das Letras blog 2020)

Based on the above, it can be observed that the anti-racist struggle extends beyond the issue of the genocidal violence that impacts black youths more frequently. Genocide, epistemicide and ethnocide are the instruments used to dissolve the other, a mechanism for eliminating the participation of these others in society – that is, the practice of altercide. Machiavelli is identified as author of the expression, if you want to destroy a people, destroy their culture. Epistemicide and genocide are structuring structures that continuously figure in social institutions as submerged actions for erasing this reference of African and black origin in society.

3.1 For Narcissus, only what isn't a Mirror is ugly – the Production of the racial Theme in scientific Journals

For the development of this study, the methodological aim was to construct the state of the art of the academic work published in indexed journals and discussing the themes correlated with the research objectives: namely, the democratization of access to education and knowledge, youth, black youth, and participation in research activities. A survey was initially conducted on the Sucupira platform of the periodicals classified as Qualis A1 level in the areas of Sociology and Education.

Based on this survey of the indexed journals, a database was created containing national periodicals. This action made it possible to identify the journals geographically and therefore map the geopolitical distribution of science publications in the investigated areas.

The decision was taken not identify the journals included in the research. At the same time, the criterion adopted was that the journal's mission should contain the proposal to promote scientific debate on the diverse themes composing the field being studied and should be identified with at least three of the analytic descriptors in their publications.

Setting out from this bias, 19 periodicals indexed and classified by the Sucupira platform were identified as Qualis A1 in the area of sociology: 14 in the Southeast region, 3 in the South, 1 in the Northeast and 1 in the Central-West. For the area of education, 24 periodicals were identified: 17 in the Southeast, 6 in the South and 1 in the Central West.

The study's first finding is that the geographic distribution of the periodicals indexed and classified as Qualis A1 reveals a concentration of scientific dissemination along Brazil's South-Southeast axis, territories where the presence of migrants of European origin was significant in the process of forming Brazilian national society. In Grosfoguel's view, this European thought, or thought of European origin, spread more quickly and the subalternization of other knowledge became consolidated as an alternative form of maintaining power by the descendants of these migrants. Along the same lines, in the earlier work *Raça e Assimilação* by Oliveira Viana (1934) we can perceive how this racist and assimilationist ideology sought a terrain in which to become rooted in the Brazilian social thought of the era.

Research on the science periodicals demonstrates an uneven distribution of the channels of scientific communication, which in turn reflects the national policy for the development of higher education in the country. For decades, the creation of federal higher education institutions in Brazil stagnated. Centralization along the South-Southeast axis was associated with the 'coffee with milk' policy that guided the political actions of the Brazilian State, especially under its military governments. Reflecting broader policy, scientific dissemination was guided by this ideological model and segregated the states of the North-Northeast, attributing them a secondary value. Working in the other direction, we can observe, as a product of the expansion of Brazilian higher education, including into interior regions of the country, a modification of the scholars involved in scientific production.

Women and black people who were previously an object of study have shifted from the status of object to author. This epistemological insurgency, demanded by these subjects, in the construction of a research project where object and author perceive themselves to reflect a common social existence, slips into the invisibility of the debate on the racial issue that marks the country's indexed publications.

Scientific production begins in the IESs and the research centres. Hence, we conducted surveys on the production of theses, using the CAPES thesis and dissertation database, in the areas of sociology and education, based on some of the descriptors used in the research. The descriptors searched were race relations, black people and affirmative actions. These descriptors were selected due to the amplitude that their exploration allows the authors. The same four-year period of the studies developed with the indexed periodicals was used: 2013-2016.

In the searches on race relations, 9788 theses were verified for the period. Among these, 1257 were in education and 1066 in the social sciences. These works were distributed as follows during the 2013-2016 four-year period:

Table 6: Distribution of annual frequencies of theses in the areas of Education and Social Sciences exploring the RACE RELATIONS theme 2013-2016[3].

	Education	**Social Sciences**
2013	265	235
2014	321	223
2015	317	282
2016	354	326

In comparison, the investigation on scientific dissemination and production on the same themes in the Brazilian indexed journals classified as Qualis A1 show frequencies that do not reflect the theses produced and successfully completed in the country. Over the four years in focus, 2064 scientific articles were produced: 7 of these publications had race relations as a descriptor, 5 had black or negritude as an indexer, and 66 explored affirmative actions, subdivided into quotas, affirmative actions and access to higher education – the latter accounting for 57 articles. If we consider all the indexers searched and used as researched descriptors, 263 articles were produced for the observed four-year period.

In the area of education, 1604 articles were produced, 4 of which explored race relations, while 1 article examined the black or negritude theme, and 37 explored affirmative actions, 30 of which were on themes related to access, 2 on quotas and 5 on affirmative actions. Considering all the descriptors used in the research, 293 articles were found published in the area of education in Qualis A1 journals.

In the areas of social sciences and education, a total of 2323 theses were found using the descriptor 'race relations,' performing the function of indexer, which represented 23.7% of the theses exploring the theme. In the indexed journals, where the descriptor 'race relations' was used in the research, 0.34% of articles were encountered in sociology and 0.25% of articles in education. In relation to the total theses completed during the period, the ratio between articles published in Qualis A1 and theses was 0.65% in the social sciences and 0.32% in education. The ratio between the scientific dissemination of completed theses identified in the thesis database and the race relations descriptor is insignificant and represents less than 1% of the scientific articles published.

The consultations and searches undertaken on the Scielo platform using the same descriptors employed in the research on the thesis catalogue revealed that, irrespective of the classification by area of knowledge – social sciences or education – the academic and scientific production or dissemination on these themes is incipient. Between 1999 and 2019, 92 articles were produced on race relations and 209 articles with the descriptor Negro/Negritude (Black/Negritude). The affirmative actions theme produced 49 articles between 2002 and 2020.

In terms of distribution, in the four-year period of 2013-2016, 556 published articles/reviews from a total of 4,988 explored the themes under study, representing 11.15% of the articles published in the researched journals. However, a more detailed search reveals a tendency to erase the race debate. Although the Brazilian indices of inequality reveal an intersectionality of race and

[3] Source: CAPES thesis catalogue, 2020 – Elaborated by the author.

gender, the collected data shows a low level of scientific knowledge on these themes published in the Qualis A1 journals. This low production contributes to the diminishing interest of new researchers in the area. Low production of knowledge on racial thematics may also have political implications, weakening the debate on maintaining affirmative public policies.

4 Closing the Topic and speaking out!

Making use of the popular saying "hush it up" to speak of invisibility and concealment in in Qualis A1 indexed science journals has sought to highlight an otherwise neglected issue in the debate on the kinds of necropolitics that have become established in colonized countries, namely the importance of the intellectual and epistemological erasure perpetuated in universities and research centres.

Discussing the editorial epistemicide that encompasses the periodicals linked to research lines in postgraduate departments also means criticizing the axes of publication determined by the editorial boards of these periodicals and the definition of the research themes and objects in the consolidation of research groups. It means questioning the absence of scientific publications with a Qualis A1 indexation that address racial issues and their multiple transversalities.

The temporal logic of what and how to teach is indissociable from the student's receptive logic of what and how to learn. Just as the logic for the problematization of a phenomenon is indissociable how one observes it – that is, it is not separate from the accumulated knowledge and knowhow shaping the ways in which we observe the object under study. In this sense, the non-existence of theoretical support capable of grounding the studies of race relations in the logic of those who experience this condition in their everyday lived world implies forcing these black researchers to perceive the phenomenon, which speaks for itself , through the gaze of the socially accepted and included other.

In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon asserts: "my enemy is not the white man, it's the racist." (Fanon 2008). This maxim speaks of the need to define who are enemies are, who the racists are. However, while agreeing with Fanon, I reiterate that the theoretical and scientific invisibility of the racial debate, as seen through the gazes and experiences of those who carry the colour of night on their skin, reduces the criticality of everyone. Metaphorically, as in Saramago's *Blindness*, (1995) the spot that blinds the eyes of humankind is white, in its cultural, political, social and economic aspects and – especially as a form of justifying everything – its political aspect. In this way, it prevents the phenomenon from being perceived from any other viewpoint.

Access to higher education, access to the global computer network, affirmative action policies for the inclusion of subalternized subjects, the multiplicity of identities and the cultural diversity existing in the contemporary world are not enough to provide recognition of the debate surrounding the issue of race and its variants.

Over the course of the development of science and humanity, the definition of subalterns as a research object, the product of the interpretative gaze of science, seen from the standpoint of the civilized and scholarly, became a possibility. But the epistemic insurgency led by individuals, whose probable conditions of existence limited them to a subalternized and marginal place in

society, rewrites this possibility for study and research. It marginalises the theme and makes their findings invisible.

Indeed, colonizing politics presents its most perverse side when it eliminates the social existence of individuals, when it eliminates their culture, knowhow and knowledge. Eliminating the cosmovision of an ethnic group and imposing an imported version, whose forms of logic do not belong to their experience of the world, is devastating for future generations.

Neither the increased participation of black people in higher education, including on postgraduate programs, nor the political-identificatory demand for a voice or the adoption of proactive attitudes when it comes to thinking about and reflecting on racial themes are reflected in the scientific production and publication on these themes, principally in Qualis A indexed journals.

Hence, the global geopolitics based around neoliberalism, along with the ideology of knowledge derived from it, constitute the paradigm that has recuperated Cartesian duality, imposing methodological models that suffocate the voices of subalternized subjects as authors and protagonists of scientific production about themselves and their social existence.

It can be concluded that for altercide to be materialized, it becomes necessary to dissociate the subaltern from their language and consequently from their culture. In this sense, the linguistic epistemicide that suffocates the memories and concepts of each people or ethnic group is materialized in editorial epistemicide, which, smothered by the colonizing mindset , is unable to express or materialize the concept/idea of the subaltern and their ancestrality. This reinforces the popular saying “only those who are seen are remembered.”

“Hush it up!” is an epistemological rupture imposed by non-blacks, a strategy deployed by editorial politics to impose the silencing, invisibility and control of the debate on race, racism and negritudes, concealing black subjects and their political, cultural, artistic and scientific insurgency.

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Environmental Change

Populism, Lobbyism, and Injustice

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1 Introduction

Since the Fábrica de Ideias meeting/event held from 26 August to 6 September 2019, the people of the world have borne witness to a series of severe environmental and societal processes and events which are global challenges, and which are interlinked. Nevertheless, these interlinkages are rarely discussed in public. End 2019 and beginning 2020 SARS-CoV-2, a new zoonotic virus emerged and spread globally within a few weeks. Governments world-wide reacted to the pandemic with varying degrees of urgency. When writing the paper, it has affected over 32 million people and claimed the lives of almost 1 million more (Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center 2021)[1]. Most governments reacted quickly but differently, which directly impacted the way countries have been unequally affected. The first African countries to react to the pandemic with restrictions were Botswana and Rwanda by implementing re-strictions on 24 January 2020 (Our World in Data 2020). By that time, only 14 other countries had reacted similarly: Argentina, Barbados, Bhutan, China, El Salvador, Fiji, France, Malaysia, Mongolia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, and Uzbekistan. At the end of January, Uganda und Guinea were the next African counties to react – long before countries like Brazil and the USA began their restrictions at the beginning of March. The rapidly developing COVID-19 crisis has been playing out in front of the backdrop of the ongoing environmental and climate crisis, at a time alarming signs of climate change have been increasing, including disastrous wild-fires in Australia during Antarctic summer 2019-20; wildfires in Brazil, Siberia and California in boreal summer 2020; and the third

[1] These statistics were current on 1 November 2021. As the pandemic is still ongoing, the numbers will have almost certainly increased.

consecutively dry year in Central Europe, which have all strongly affected forest ecosystems, just to name a few.[2]

To a certain extent, the current reactions to both the COVID-19 crisis and to the climate crisis by populist – often conservative – governments and right-wing movements are similar, in as much as they neglect or relativize academic research. *Fake news*, *alternative facts* and conspiracy movements have become more prominent over the past few years, which is reflected in the number of academic papers being written on this phenomenon. Figure 1 shows the number of scholarly articles available on Google Scholar between 1990 and 2019 on the subject of *climate change* with the terms *populism*, *right-wing* and *sceptic*. The number of publications for all three terms first increased considerably between the years 2004 and 2005, while the number for *climate change* and *sceptic* grew more gradually. The number of publications for the other terms rose sharply after 2014 and 2015. The number of publications on the topic of environmental change followed a similar trend. Interestingly, the trend for "climate change" develop more continuously until they peak in 2013 with 570,000 publications and then drop continuously to 134,000 in 2019, while the numbers for "populism" and "right-wing" develop quite constantly from 1990 until 2019 (Google Scholar). Without an in-depth analysis the development of the publication figures shows a growing academic interest in the topic.

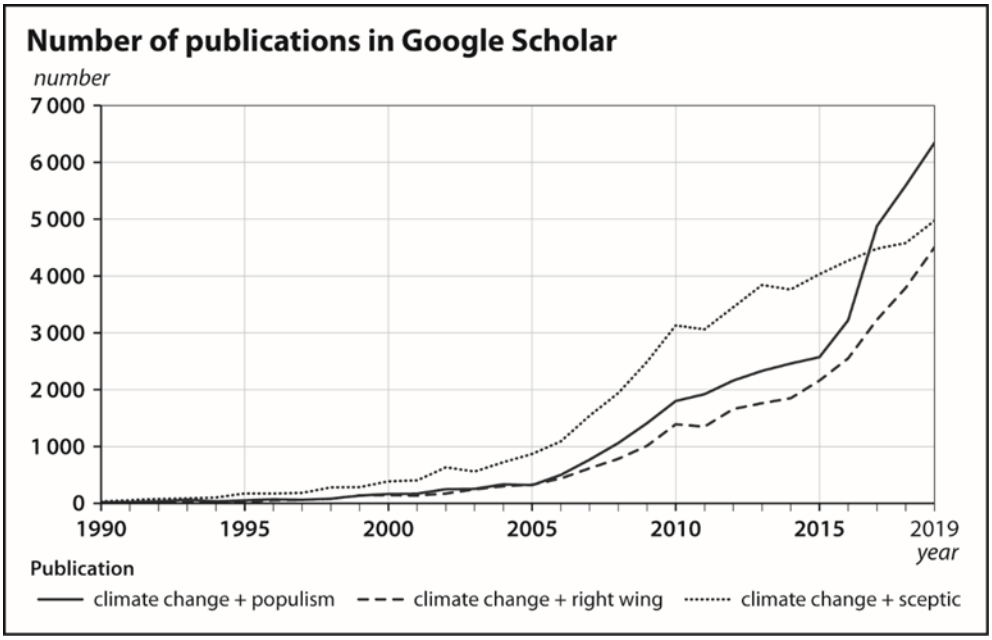

Figure 1: Number of publications on Google Scholar for the search term "climate change" in combination with the terms populism, right-wing, and sceptic from 1990 to 2019.

The goal of this paper is not to quantitatively analyse the links between populism and environmental change, which seems to be reflected in both the increase in number of publications

[2] The full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia on 24 February 2022 changed many things and its impact on environmental and climate change is not clear. On one hand, it shows the dependency on fossil fuels and the political implications which might boost renewable energy on one hand. On the other hand, the global impacts on livelihoods and food security could marginalize environmental efforts.

on these subjects and the rise of populist governments (Funke et al. 2020). According to their study the percentage of populist governments was relatively low until 1990 and then started to increase continuously until reaching the maximum in 2018 with more than 27 % populist governments out of 60 analysed countries. Right wing governments were the minority until recently but now the share is even. It will present a selective review of facts on climate and environmental changes, particularly in relation to SARS-CoV-2. It will also review climate change scientism with an analysis of climate change denial lobbying efforts.

2 Facts of environmental and climate Change

Already 1824, Fourier first described the principles of the greenhouse effect (Fourier 1824) and 1896 Arrhenius calculated a temperature increase of 4-6°C by assuming a doubling of the carbon dioxide (CO_2) concentration (Arrhenius 1896). Over 120 years ago, he was already able to make estimates on the influences of solar effects, albedo, and both ocean and vegetation feedbacks to calculate the radiative forcing controlling the temperature of the earth. Prior to this work, Callendar (1938) discussed the link between CO_2 emissions and temperature change. In the debate on Callendar's findings, Dr C.E.P. Brooks commented the decrease of Arctic Sea ice is a sign of rising temperatures and the Arctic acceleration, which is directly related to changes in atmospheric circulation. In the 1950th and 1960th the quantification of processes in the carbon cycle and the effect of the combustion of fossil fuels (Brannon et al. 1957) and the systematic measurement of CO_2 in the atmosphere started, also at the still existing station on Mauna Loa (Keeling 1960). In 1965, a report titled *The Environmental Pollution Panel President's Science Advisory Committee* clearly presented the effects of fossil fuel combustion. In preamble of the document, then USA President Lyndon B. Johnson stated:

> Pollution now is one of the most pervasive problems of our society. With our numbers increasing, and with our increasing urbanization and industrialization, the flow of pollutants to our air, soils and waters is increasing. This increase is so rapid that our present efforts in managing pollution are barely enough to stay even, surely not enough to make the improvements that are needed. … We must give highest priority of all to increasing the numbers and quality of the scientists and engineers working on problems related to the control and management of pollution. (The White House 1965: 193)

One chapter of the report is titled "Carbon Dioxide from Fossil Fuels – The Invisible Pollutant", in which the effects of CO_2 on the climate are clearly illustrated. The findings predicted positively correlating rises in atmospheric concentrations of CO_2 and global temperature. These projections are almost identical to currently observed values. In addition to the climatic effects of CO_2, other effects of human activities on the environment were investigated. For example, the decline of species populations is discussed:

> There is no doubt that pollution impoverishes our flora and fauna, de ranges natural communities, blemishes the beauty of the landscape, even sterilizes a few habitats. (…) Insect species have been reduced by 50% following pesticide applications to some habitats. (The White House 1965.: 193, 199 respectively).

The effects on ecological systems are discussed further, and their relation to human activities – mainly agriculture – are mad clear. Additional adverse effects CO_2 on soil, water resources, and other environmental issues were also discussed touched upon. Based on these results, recommendations were given on how to best to handle environmental changes and to conduct further research, stating, "We recommend that efforts be increased to establish the scientific bases upon which standards of environmental quality can be set" (The White House 1965: 22). In a report for the American Petroleum Institute, Robinson and Robbins (1968) came to similar conclusion on effects of rising CO_2 levels. In the late 1960s, Manabe and Wetherald (1967) published their ground-breaking paper "Thermal Equilibrium of the Atmosphere with a Given Distribution of Relative Humidity", which presented the first computer generated climate model; this allowed them to predict the effects on global temperature increase by doubling the atmospheric CO_2 concentration in simulations. Their predictions reflect current models and temperature increases. From simple calculations in the 19th century to the complex, coupled earth system models in current use, which include changes in solar radiation as well as negative and positive feedback loops, and the agreement of observed temperature changes with modelled temperature changes leave no doubt that the answer is clear. The current global warming phenomenon was caused by humans and is perpetuated by our continuing actions. Present research has moved beyond proving global warming exists to, instead, finding ways to track its effects and develop solutions for our predicament. Assessment reports of the IPCC (2013, 2014a) transparently present and discuss uncertainties and research gaps in various models to politicians and the public. These reports also examine the impacts on peoples' livelihoods caused by various temperature-induced incidents, such as rapidly melting glaciers; rising sea levels; extreme, climatic events; and uncontrollable wildfires (IPCC 2014b, 2014c). With new technologies, it is now also possible to trace single weather events back to climate change (Sippel et al. 2020; Otto 2017).

Despite the knowledge about the effects of greenhouse gases on the radiative forcing and its link to temperature, the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere constantly increases since the measurement on Mauna Loa started in 1958. In August 2020, the atmospheric CO_2 concentration reached 412.55 ppm (Global Monitoring Laboratory 2020). The concentration measured in ice cores shows that levels have historically fluctuated between 180-300 ppm (IPCC 2007). The concentrations for two other greenhouse gases – methane and nitrous oxide – have also been consistently rising (Global Monitoring Laboratory 2020).

Temperature changes are a direct effect caused by the increase of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Since preindustrial times, the global mean temperature has increased by almost 1°C (NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information 2020b). 2019 had the second highest, mean global temperature since the first temperature records were made 140 years ago. Only one year in the 20th century – 1998 – ranks among the 10 warmest years of recorded history. The nine others have all occurred since 2005. After 1976, all years were above the average mean temperature of the 20th century. The temperature increases recorded up to September 2020 already indicated values much higher than the normal, global average (NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information 2020a).

Increasing global temperatures have climatic effects and climate impacts. The following is a list of some prominent effects. Higher mean global temperatures cause more frequent and longer

heatwaves worldwide, and projections show a drastic increase in the likelihood of such extreme events (Suarez-Gutierrez et al. 2020; e.g., Kornhuber et al. 2019). From January to June 2020, Siberia experienced exceptionally high temperatures with a record-breaking high of 38°C north of the Arctic Circle (Ciavarella et al. 2020). This observation supports the fact that the Arctic is the site of highest temperature increases on the planet (Ciavarella et al. 2020). An attribution study demonstrated with high confidence that the January to June 2020 prolonged heat was made at least 600 times more likely as a result of human-induced climate change (Ciavarella et al. 2020). The same study concluded that the temperature would have been approximately 2°C lower without global warming. Europe experienced a series of record-breaking warm summers, as well (Xu et al. 2020). A similar heatwave swept across North America (Adams et al. 2020). At the same time, extreme cold weather events are also occurring despite increasing global mean temperatures, and there are many indications that they will also become more frequent (Wang et al. 2019; Cattiaux et al. 2010; Adams et al. 2020; Overland et al. 2020). One area of great concern is the uncertainty about what the extreme cold weather will have on agriculture (e.g., Vitasse and Rebetez 2018).

Precipitation is another important climate element undergoing possible changes. In contrast to temperature, fluctuations in spatiotemporal patterns are less clear and their trends are more erratic (IPCC 2013). Nevertheless, changes in rainfall have been observed in many regions of the world. Large parts of Europe were affected by an extended drought period from 2018 to 2019, which was more severe than any dry period between 2003 and 2015 (Hari et al. 2020). This episode of extreme moisture deficiency continued into 2020 (Helmholtz-Centre for Environmental Research 2020). Expectedly, this had tremendous impacts on agriculture and forests ecosystems (Buras et al. 2020). Exceptional droughts also occurred at higher rates in other regions, e.g., the California in the USA and Southeast Australia (Williams et al. 2020; King et al. 2020b). As for temperature both ends of the extremes occur and therefore dry wetter conditions and flooding happen. For example, regions in East Africa experienced above average rainfall from 2018 until 2020 (Wainwright et al. 2020; Kilavi et al. 2018). This caused not only floods, but a nightmarish locust outbreak (Salih et al. 2020).

Although a complex combination of factors is responsible for fire regimes, precipitation plays a significant role (e.g., Mayr et al. 2018). Accordingly, Bowman et al. (2017) predict a 20-50 % increase in the number of days per year with high fire danger levels because of projected changes in precipitation and temperature. California, and other areas in the Western USA, Southwest Canada, Portugal, Spain, Greece, and Southeast Australia are particularly susceptible to wildfires. Similarly, Lung et al. (2013) predicts an increase in fire risks in the years 2041-2070 in Central and Western Europe, South all over Europe and in Southern Scandinavia, and East and Southeast Europe. In some of the regions the ecosystems are fire ecosystems and adapted to fire, respectively fire is even an important factor but changes in fire regimes could still lead to negative effects (e.g., Fidelis 2020). This was made evident in 2019 and 2020 when unprecedented fire events swept across Australia, Brazil, Russia, and the USA, including unusual fires in Central and Northern Europe. The extensive fires in Brazil were the first to get wider attention in 2019 because after a decline in deforestation in the Amazon after 2004, the practice has since begun again (see Figure 2). While fires in the Amazon are also related to droughts (Brando et al. 2020a), 2019 was a droughtless year, so these fires were caused mainly by deforestation (Brando et al. 2020a; Barlow et al. 2020). The combination of deforestation for the purpose of agriculture and drought events are expected to have severe impacts on prime rainforest because the ensuing fires will likely move from treeline clearings to prime rainforest without appropriate fire management (Barlow et al. 2020; Brando et al. 2020a). This phenomenon is also observed in other tropical rainforests, e.g., the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Verhegghen et al. 2016) and all other African regions with tropical rainforests (Aleman et al. 2018). By using various climate change scenarios, Brando et al. (2020b) predict that about 16% of southern Amazonia might be lost to uncontrollable fires by 2050. It is therefore important to differentiate between the types of fire in order to establish and maintain sustainable fire management strategies. The 2019 situation continued into 2020, when deforestation rates seemed to decrease while the fires in the Amazon

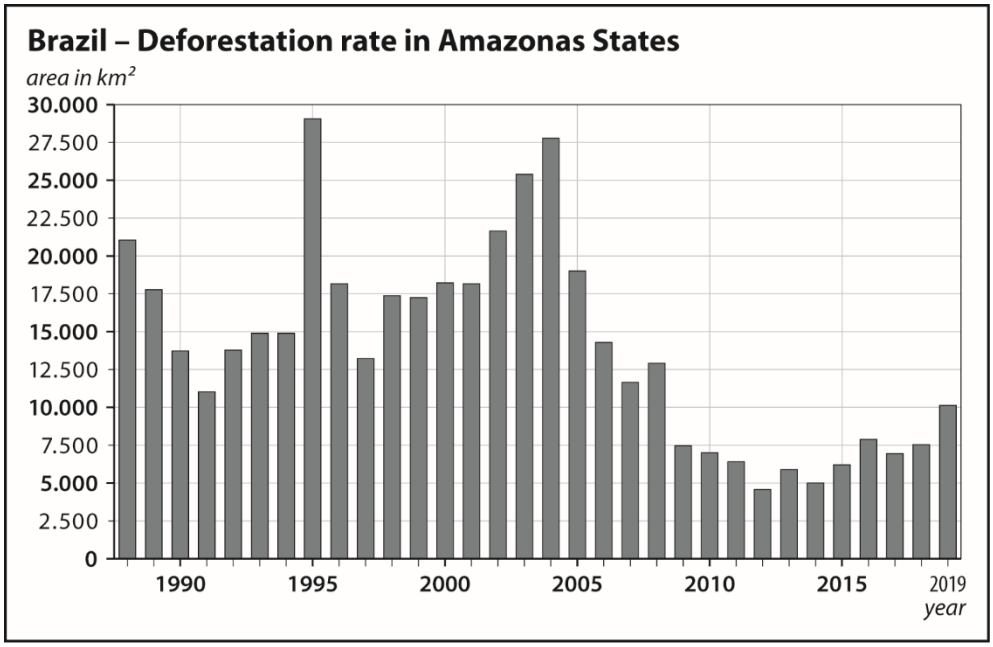

Figure 2: Deforestation rates in the Amazonas States (Amazônia Legal) in Brazil (INPE 2020).

increased (Butler 2020a, 2020b). At the same time, fires devastated the Pantanal in Brazil – the world´s largest tropical wetland (Mega 2020; Erickson-Davis 2020; Voiland 2020; Salazar 2020). The wildfires in Australia started exceptionally early in late June 2019 and grew rapidly through September and October, peaking in December and January (Boer et al. 2020). They were unprecedented in Australia – much larger than the 2019 fires in the Amazon, as well as about fifty times more intense than the strongest recorded fires in California. Besides other factors (Lindenmayer et al. 2020) the strongest influences are climate related with a severe drought and record-breaking temperatures in Australia (Nolan et al. 2020). Van Oldenborgh et al. (2020) could attribute climatic factors to climate change. While they did not see a trend in drought severity, an overlooked trend in higher extreme temperatures and in the *Fire Weather Index* show an increase exacerbated by continuous global warming. The impact on Australia's ecosystems has been disastrous (Ward et al. 2020). Just like the fire season in Australia in 2019, the wildfire season in the western USA started very early in 2020. Already in September 2020, long before the end of the wildfire season, fires in California, Oregon and Washington exceed all recorded seasons since 1987 with a clear trend in increasing burned area (see Figure 3). Like in Australia, climate change leads to more and extremer wildfires, with other factors like forest management contributing as well (e.g., Goss et al. 2020; Williams et al. 2019). The fires in recent history confirm predictions, but the enormous Siberian wildfires 2019 and 2020 (Patel 2020) beside and smaller ones in other parts of the Arctic were outliers (Witze 2020b). The wildfires in Siberia have burned the largest amount of biomass than any other fire event in the last 5000 years (Feurdean et al. 2020). This has turned the boreal forest soils there from carbon sinks to carbon sources (Walker et al. 2019). Extremely high temperatures, which are clearly linked to global warming, are the main reasons for the wildfires (Ciavarella et al. 2020; Overland and Wang 2020). Ciavarella et al. (2020) calculated the probability of such high temperatures to be 600 times more likely than compared to the beginning of the 20th century.

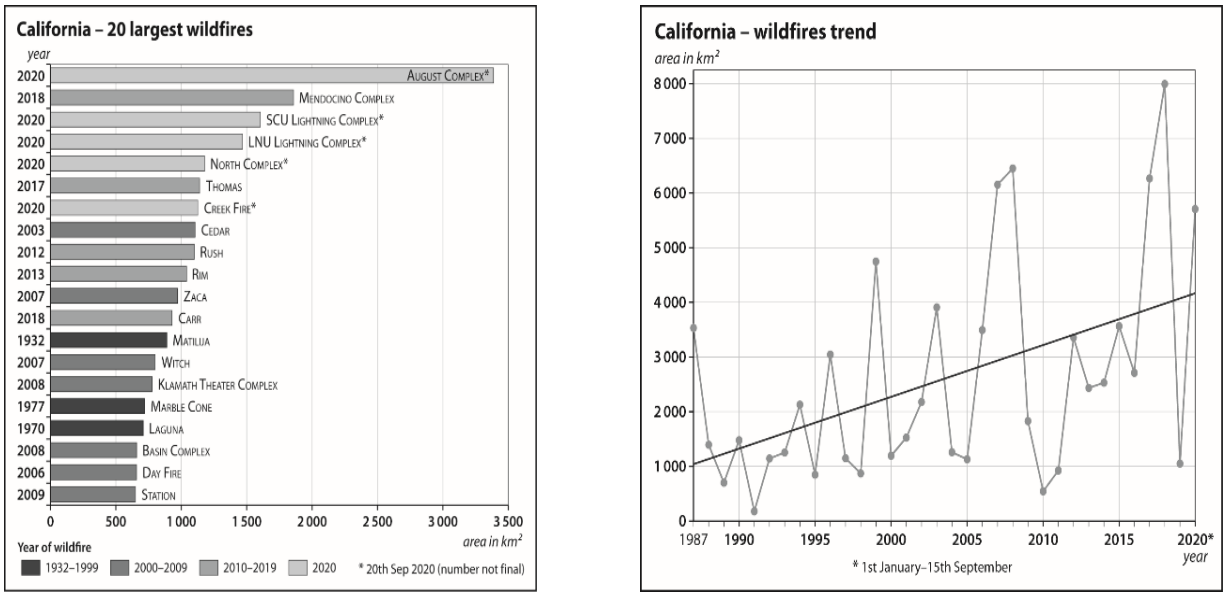

Figure 3: left: California´s 20 largest wildfires since 1932 (Cal Fire 2020b); right: Trend in burned area since 1987 (Cal Fire 2020a).

The last examples for the effects of global warming presented in this paper are the developments of the Antarctic ice, Arctic ice, and Arctic permafrost. 2020 saw the second smallest extension of the Arctic Sea ice since 2012 (Witze 2020a; Michon 2020). New analyses show that the summer melting is more severe than predicted by climate models and that an ice-free summer in the Artic could happen much earlier than projected (Peng et al. 2020). In 2019, the Greenland ice sheet experienced the second most severe melting since 2012 as well (Tedesco and Fettweis 2020). The acceleration of the melting started around 2000 and is comparable only to the drastic melting events in the Holocene epoch but in a much shorter time span (King et al. 2020a; Briner et al. 2020). Another important factor is the Artic permafrost, where more carbon is stored than in vegetation (Zimov et al. 2006). Increasing emission of CO_2 and CH_4 has observed, which has turned the permafrost from a carbon sink into a carbon pool (Natali et al. 2019). Previously, it was hypothesized that the Antarctic Ice Sheet was stable and could potentially even increase in mass, but recent studies show a decrease in mass which is related to the destabilizing ice shelves (Michon 2019). The trend in the melting ice sheets in Antarctica and Greenland is directly connected to the trend in rising sea levels, which fell under upper range of predictions (Slater et al. 2020).

These cases were not only prominently featured in international media but are also examples of important tipping elements in the global climate system; passing thresholds, or tipping points, might lead to irreversible climate system states (Lenton 2011; e.g., Kriegler et al. 2009; Lenton et al. 2008). The current warming trends in relation to direct and indirect land cover changes are bringing us closer to some of the thresholds for the identified tipping elements. Landrum and Holland (2020) state in their study that the transition from a cryosphere-dominated system into a status with much higher temperatures, less ice, and more rain instead of snow has already started. This assessment is supported by Overland, who advises us to "manage the unavoidable to avoid the unimaginable" (Overland 2020: 5). The transition in the Arctic has already influenced heatwaves in Europe (Zhang et al. 2020). According to Golledge et al. (2019) the West Antarctic Ice Sheet might have already passed its tipping point while Garbe et al. (2020) do not yet see thresholds passed. Nevertheless, they all emphasise that if thresholds are indeed passed, as in the 2°C warming scenario, the consequence will be irreversible due to the hysteresis effects. Simply put, much larger temperature decreases – compared to increases – are needed in order to rebuild the ice sheet. It is unclear whether or not the threshold has already been passed for the Amazon, or if one can even be defined (Amigo 2020). The rapid changes in the global climate system in most scenarios almost always falls under the upper ranges of the predictions, frequently exceeding them. There are knowledge gaps and unknown variables in the unfolding situation. Even so Lenton et al. (2019: 595) have stated in no uncertain terms, "The evidence from tipping points alone suggests that we are in a state of planetary emergency: both the risk and urgency of the situation are acute".

Besides climate change, the loss of both habitat and biodiversity are considered to be two of the most severe consequences of human activities. Biodiversity loss is observed for flora and fauna, though the latter receives more attention in public sphere. Human-caused extinction has been happening for about the last 1,000 years, but it has accelerated tremendously in the past fifty years (Turvey and Crees 2019). It is estimated that about 80% of the Earth's mammalian biomass has disappeared as a result of human influence (Goulson 2019). Today, wild animals constitute only 4% of the mammalian biomass; 96% of mammals are humans and livestock, and 70% of the avian

biomass is poultry. The extinction crisis led to the establishment of the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services [IPBES] in 2012. They have published regional reports and one global assessment in which they estimate that around one million species face extinction (IPBES 2019). The loss of vertebrates has been discussed for some time (Ripple et al. 2015; Ripple et al. 2014; e.g., Hoffmann et al. 2010). Insects have gotten more attention in recent years because of their rapid decline in many regions of the world (Goulson 2019; Hallmann et al. 2017; Sánchez-Bayo and Wyckhuys 2019). The loss of biodiversity is greatly influencing the functioning and services of ecosystems. For megafauna Norris et al. (2020: 919) have warned that a further decline might have "potentially serious impacts on ecosystem structure and function, ecosystem services, and biogeochemical cycles". Insects as well play a crucial role for the functioning of ecosystems and providers of ecosystem services because they are an important part in the food web, are pest controllers, biomass recyclers and pollinators of about 75 % of crops, just to name some functions (Goulson 2019). Causes of the decline are habitat loss and fragmentation, (Chase et al. 2020), exploitation (Norris et al. 2020), agricultural activities, industrialized agriculture, pollution, invasive species, and urbanization (Sánchez-Bayo and Wyckhuys 2019), but also climate change (Chapin III and Díaz 2020; Thomas et al. 2004). Like for climate change, the trajectories of species decline are known, but many uncertainties remain about how the processes interact and how they affect ecosystems and societies (Chapin III and Díaz 2020; Thomas et al. 2019). Nevertheless, urgent measures to stop species loss are needed (Norris et al. 2020; Harvey et al. 2020).

Even though the outbreak of COVID-19 caused by SARS-CoV-2 is not the only instance of interspecies transmission in recent times, the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic restarted the discussion about a possible increase of zoonotic diseases and their link to environmental factors. The most prominent, contemporary zoonotic diseases include – but are not limited to – SARS, MERS, Ebola, HIV, West Nile, Hanta and Zika, as well as most influenza strains (Reperant and Osterhaus 2017). After SARS, Weiss and McLean (2004) titled their paper "What have we learned from SARS?", to highlight that the response in the case of SARS was successful but that the next disease might be very different.

In the mid-1990s, Epstein (1995) put forth evidence on the possible connections between the emergence of new diseases and environmental change including climate change. Spill overs are most likely linked to human activities such as farming practices with more contact of livestock with wildlife, which leads to an indirect spill over to humans. It is estimated that about 240 new zoonotic diseases have emerged since 1940 (Morse et al. 2012). One interdisciplinary review study revealed that a large proportion of pathogens were zoonotic and that there is an increasing risk for even more to bridge the gap between species (Jones et al. 2013). Reperant and Osterhaus (2017) explored this hypothesis in their paper "AIDS, Avian flu, SARS, MERS, Ebola, Zika… what next?". Direct spill overs occur from more frequent contact between humans and wildlife, which can also occur in urban settings like animal markets. HIV and SARS are two of the most commonly referenced examples of direct contact transference (Jones et al. 2013). In their study, Jones et al. explored the origins of the transference:

> [We] found several examples of zoonotic disease emergence at the wildlife–livestock–human interface that were associated with varying combinations of agricultural intensification and environmental change, such as fragmentation habitat and

> ecotones, reduced biodiversity, agricultural changes, and increasing human density in ecosystems. (Jones et al. 2013: 8402)

The consumption of bushmeat is regularly discussed as one of the causes for zoonosis. That being said, the practice cannot simply be banned. For example, although there is a local awareness in Cameroon about the risks associated with consuming bushmeat, it is still important for the livelihoods of the rural population (Brashares 2006). With this in mind, regulation efforts should be implemented by using a multipronged campaign of conservation, sustainable use, and disease prevention. Potential global hotspots for emerging diseases could be predicted by combining known influencing factors with multivariate statistical modelling (Allen et al. 2017). According to Olival et al. (2017), East Asia is not predicted to be a future regional focus. Potential zoonosis hotspots are humid, tropical regions with high population densities, but also densely populated areas outside the tropics. Projected hotspot regions in the tropics are in South Asia, Southeast Asia, coastal West African countries, Ethiopia, Central African Great Lakes region, South-eastern Africa, Central America, and South-eastern Brazil. Risk areas outside the tropics, include the Nile Delta, Central Europe, and the East Coast of the USA. Findings from newer studies confirm shifts of mammals' ranges globally and their adaptation to anthropogenic landscapes, which increases the likelihood and risk of human-wildlife contact (Johnson et al. 2020; Morand 2020). According to Gibb et al. (2020b), the most likely host animals in "human-dominated ecosystems" are rodents, bats and passerines [perching birds].

The interconnection between the three major threats to a sustainable future – the climate crisis, the biodiversity crisis, and zoonotic pandemics – have been debated for many years. In a review paper, Estrada-Peña et al. (2014) discussed the direct and indirect effects of future pandemics, which include changes in the immunocompetence, a change in the species composition of hosts and vectors; and variances in contact rate throughout the cycle of pathogen developments and transmissions. In a preprint of a study completed two weeks before the COVID-19 outbreak, later published in nature, Carlson et al. (2022) modelled how climate change will increase the risk of novel zoonoses. There is evidence to suggest that climate change and land use is causing more overlap of previously isolated habitats of species which, in turn, enhances the probabilities cross-species transmission; especially in regions of high population density especially in Asia, Africa, Europe, and Central America (Cheng et al. 2018). Schmeller et al. (2020) include poverty as an additional factor.

As a consequence of the strong link between climate change, biodiversity loss and the possible increasing emergence of zoonosis, Gibb et al. (2020a) advocate for ecosystem perspectives and Dinerstein et al. (2020) propose the establishment of "Global Safety Net" to address all problems jointly. Zumla et al. (2016) emphasise multidisciplinarity in their "One Health" approach with a focus on local capacities and cultural aspects which would call for transdisciplinary concepts.

3 Not responding or not responding sufficiently

The fact that evidence supporting the existence of climate and environmental change and its relationship to pandemics raises many questions about the underwhelming and insufficient responses of the world's governments and societies are not acting or not acting sufficiently even when the threats are happening to a large extent and currently, like during COVID-19 and most likely in the future as for climate change. There are three possible explanations:

1. Knowing but deliberately neglecting the facts to control political decisions.

2. Knowing but not acting enough.

3. Neglecting the existence of climate (environmental) change and the pandemic.

Regardless of the reason, the result is the same. The ineffective responses to the changing world are exacerbating the climate and environmental crisis, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

3.1 Knowing but deliberately neglecting the Facts in order to influence political Decisions

Without a doubt, the causes and consequences of human activities have been known by major players in energy politics since the mid-1960s (The White House 1965; Robinson and Robbins 1968). Minutes of a meeting held by an investigatory task force assembled by American Petroleum Institute [API] held on 29 February 1980 clearly show that the participants were made fully aware of both the effects of CO2 emissions on the climate and the corresponding effects on societies (AQ-9 Task Force 1980). The AQ-9 Task Force advocated for the need to better circulate information to reduce the uncertainties of climate projections and the impacts of global warming. They stated that there is "scientific consensus on the potential for large future climatic response to increased CO2 levels" (AQ-9 Task Force 1980). They projected a global warming of 2.5°C by 2038 which would have major economic consequences. A 5°C increase by 2067 would have "globally catastrophic effects". The task force warned, "A 3% growth rate of CO2, a 2.5°C rise brings world economic growth to a halt in about 2025. Even this estimate is grossly wrong it is still probable that, whether there are grounds for immediate response to the threat depends on the validity of the market penetration time concept. Even if the latter is applicable, present-day significance of the impact depends strongly on choice of a future discounting factor. Need for immediate policy action hinges on these last two features" (AQ-9 Task Force 1980). Although the AQ-9 Task Force's meeting minutes was proof of the API attendees' aware-ness of the problem, they joined fossil fuel companies in the Global Climate Coalition, which is a lobbying group consciously working against all efforts to reduce fossil fuel emissions (Banerjee 2015). A study by Glaser (1982) (Exxon Research and Engineering Company) predicted a CO2 concentration of 409 ppm and a related temperature increase of 0.84 K by 2015 compared to 1979. This is close to the measured values of 401 ppm (Global Monitoring Laboratory 2020) and 0.73 K (GISTEMP Team 2021). Further projections in the study by Glaser are also similar to those of other studies on climate change. The Glaser study came to the conclusion that there is, in fact, a potential for climate change disasters, but that they will not happen before the end of the 21st century; their recommendation was to conduct more research until that time. In a letter to Exxon management introducing the study, Glaser stated:

> The material has been given wide circulation to Exxon management and is intended to familiarize Exxon personnel with the subject. It may be used as a basis for discussing the issue with outsiders as may be appropriate. However, it should be restricted to Exxon personnel and not distributed externally. (Glaser 1982: n.p.)

Despite the extensive and rigorous scientific research done by the petroleum industry, it was misappropriated and used to develop vehement climate change denial policies. This agenda was documented in internal memos (e.g., Levine 1989; Wiley 1980). Furthermore, the role of the

petroleum industry in influencing politics despite the in-depth knowledge about the dangers of climate change, has been documented in numerous journalistic articles and scientific publications (Banerjee et al. 2015a, 2015b; Song et al. 2015; Banerjee 2015; Hasemyer and Cushman Jr. 2015; for scientific publications see e.g., Frumhoff et al. 2015). Based on these facts, there is a growing interest in holding fossil fuel companies legally accountable for this coverup (Muffett and Feit 2017).

3.2 Knowing but not acting enough

Governments that publicly acknowledge the facts of climate change and sign treaties like the Rio Declaration of 1992; the Kyoto Protocol of 1997; or the Paris Agreement of 2015 are criticized for not taking enough action to effectively reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This is evident in emission rates, which have continuously risen since 2015. Simultaneously, the greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere have been increasing. A prime example of this nonaction in practice is Germany's former head of state, the so-called "climate chancellor" Dr Angela Merkel (Deutsche Welle 2021). By all accounts, Germany will not meet the targets of the Paris Agreement with the current climate policy in place (see Figure 4; Umweltbundesamt 2016; Climate Action Tracker 2021).

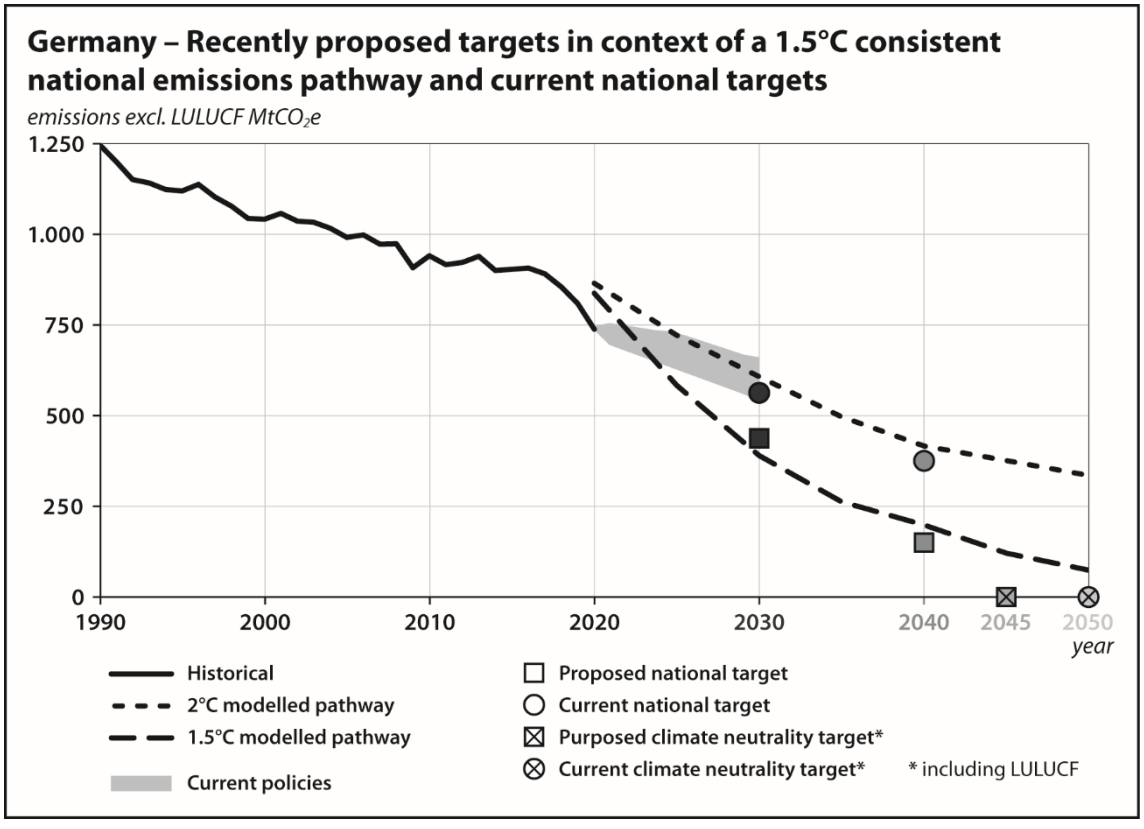

Figure 4: Germany´s emission pathways (modified after Climate Action Tracker 2021).

Often-used arguments are that Germany alone cannot reduce global emissions by itself because it is only responsible for approximately 2% of the total emissions and that Germany will loses its economic power by unilaterally reducing emissions. These arguments neglect the fact that Germany constitutes only about 1% of the global population, it ranks 4th after the USA, China, and

the Former Soviet Union in cumulative CO_2 emissions since 1750 (see Figure 5).

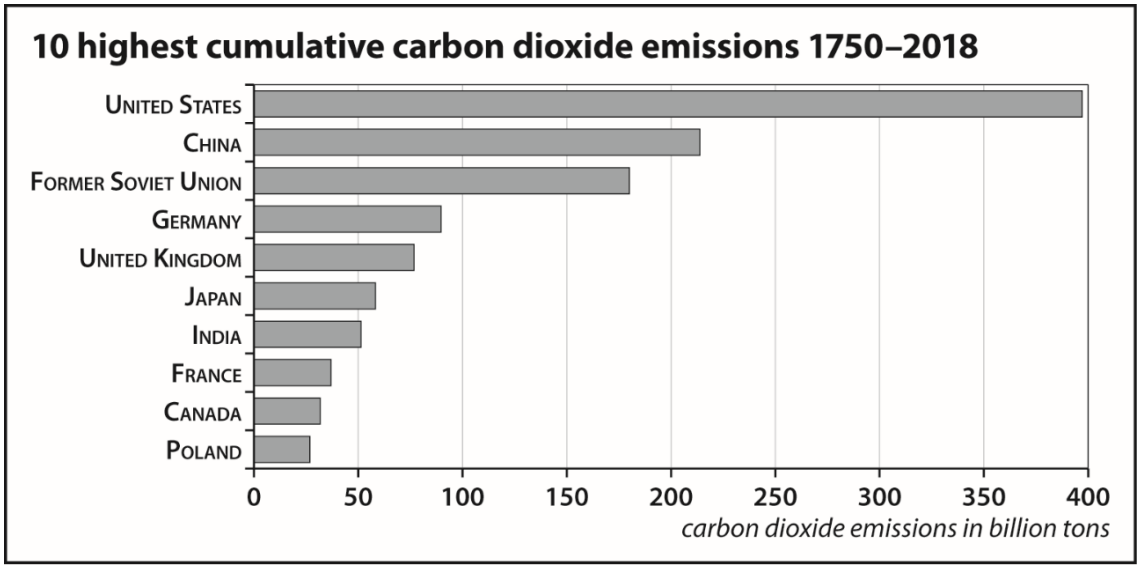

Figure 5: Cumulative carbon dioxide emissions (data from Ritchie 2021).

In 2020, the per capita emissions Germany were 7.69 t; 7.41 t in China; 1.77 t in India; 0.99 t in Africa; and 2.31 t in South America (Ritchie and Roser 2020) (see Figure 6). Hence, the first steps toward climate justice will only be realized when countries of the Global North – which are disproportionately responsible for higher levels of CO_2 emissions – reduce their emissions significantly in compliance with the Paris Agreement. At the same time, climate justice and injustice is more nuanced than the North-South-dichotomy. It is a matter of a general inequality. One OXFAM study showed that the richest 10% of the global population generate 52% of the cumulative carbon emissions, while the richest 1% generate 15% (Gore 2020).

3.3 Actively rejecting and denying the Existence of climate (environmental) Change and the Pandemic

After all the consistently accurate predictions of temperature increases and their connection to levels of greenhouse gas emissions, – as well as the recent extreme weather events and other environmental processes linked to the temperature increase – many people, including politicians and even some scientists (mostly non-climatologists) are still in denial (Cook et al. 2016). The same policies of denial are seen in the COVID-19 pandemic, even in the face of continuously rising infection rates and death tolls. Scepticism of sciences and research methods have created this *post-truth* culture. Despite the common features between the climate denial and pandemic denial camps and their links to populistic developments, there are key difference between them. The main variances are between right-wing and left-wing populism as well as the epistemological differences between the Global North and South (e.g., Arias-Maldonado 2020; Reyes-Galindo 2021). An introduction of a special issue by Buzogány and Mohamad-Klotzbach (2021) presented a differentiated picture of populist movements and their relations to climate change and nature with a literature review and specific papers in the special issue. Some insight to the ongoing

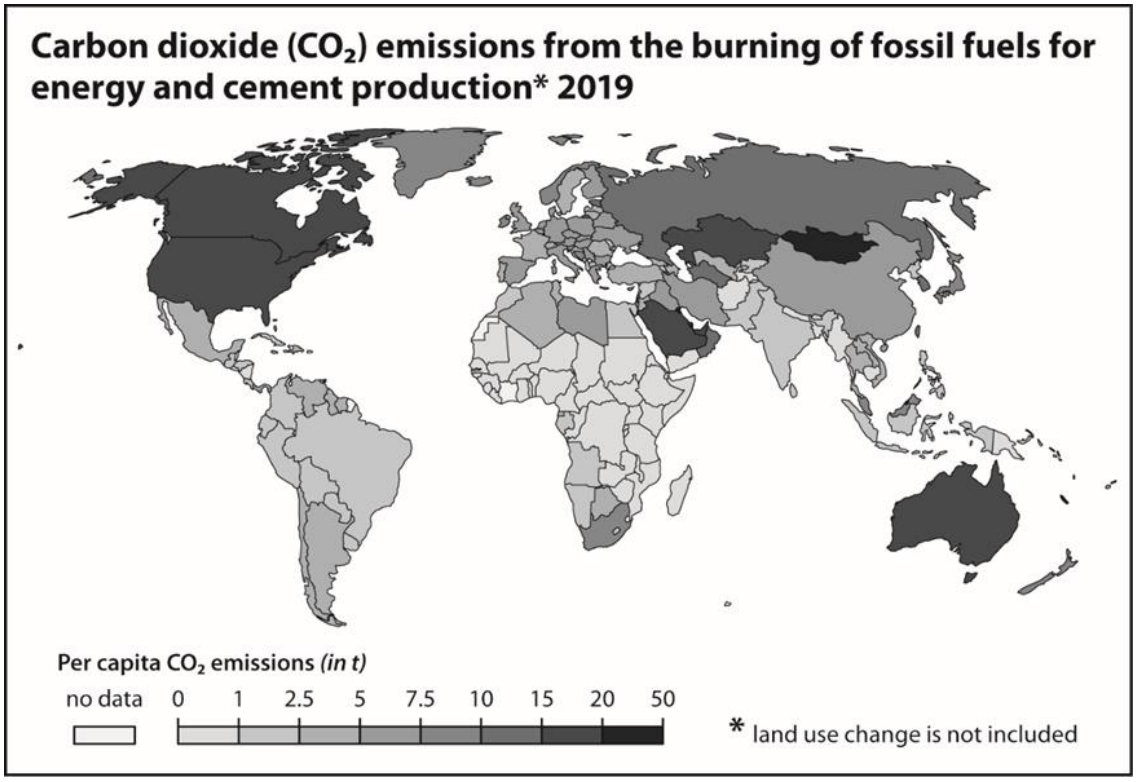

Figure 6: Per capita CO2 emissions 2019 (modified after Ritchie and Roser 2020).

debate is presented with selected examples on COVID-19, climate change and more general perspectives on scepticism of science.

In the preliminary phase of the pandemic, populist and non-populist governments reacted similarly, but soon their strategies diverged (Bayerlein and Gyöngyösi 2020). Rudolph et al. (2021) compiled an overview of the bold – at times, downright bizarre – dismissals of the COVID-19 pandemic from various populist and autocratic leaders such as Berdimuhamedow of Turkmenistan; Lukashenko of Belarus; Magufuli of Tanzania; Widodo of Indonesia; and Bolsonaro of Brazil. They also illustrate how public officials used COVID-19 to justify undemocratic emergency laws [e.g., Orban in Hungary] and mandate drastic measures such as strict lockdown restrictions [e.g., Duterte in the Philippines. Similar results about using undemocratic measures are presented by Bayerlein and Gyöngyösi (2020). The article also focused on former USA Pres Donald Trump and his cabinet of science sceptics; strategy of denial; perpetuation of conspiracy theories; and his guiding light of *American exceptionalism* (Rudolph et al. 2021). His crusade of *alternative facts* and bizarre recommendations [e.g., no mask mandates and promoting ineffective medication] caused the USA to be the country with the highest number of COVID-19 cases in the. Masks and other science-based recommendations were highly politicized (Rudolph et al. 2021ibid.). On the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, a regional study conducted in Europe showed that a lack of trust for the respective governments and mass polarization were positively correlated with death rates during the first phase of the pandemic (Charron et al. 2020). The same issues are currently causing low vaccination rates (Satanovskiy 2021). This mistrust is fostered

by non-transparent policies, for example in the case of the Russian "Sputnik V" vaccine (Nogrady 2021).

This lack of confidence in the world's governments is also affecting peoples' acceptance of climate change. In their paper, Dasgupta and Cian (2018) found that mature democracies with an open society are more successful at implementing effective environmental policies than authoritarian governments, resulting – for the former – in better environmental conditions and stronger commitments to international agreements. The same study revealed that in the USA, the rise of right-wing populism has led to a decrease in public support for environmental policies. MacNeil and Paterson argue that Trump´s climate policy is not a disruption rather a continuation of 1980s, Reagan-era Republican Party policy. As democratic Hawaii Senator Brian Schatz – and former Green Party member - stated, "the Republican Party is the only major political party on the planet that is explicitly dedicated to making climate change worse." (cited in Michaels 2020, 184). In his latest book *The Triumph of Doubt - Dark Money and the Science of Deception*, Michaels (2020) illuminates this practice in the chapter titled "The Climate Denial Machine" (2020: 181-198). In it, he shows the connections between the oil industry, think thanks, media outlets (e.g., Fox News, Breitbart, and the Wall Street Journal), and the Republican Party and how their subliminal campaign of implanting climate scepticism in the American public culminated in the election of Trump. The role of online networks as an echo chamber for misinformation has also played a large role in the populist propaganda machine (Treen et al. 2020). In a case of convergent political evolution, Russia´s climate policy is less influenced by citizen populism but by the fact that fossil fuel exploitation contributes to a large portion of their gross domestic product, which has created another culture of climate denial. Russian Pres Vladimir Putin's increasingly autocratic policies and his desire to have Russia be recognized as a superpower is highly dependent on fossil fuels (Tynkkynen and Tynkkynen 2018). The discourse about climate change is thus controlled by the government and state-controlled media, which broadcast climate change denial propaganda that actually even highlights the *positive* effects of climate change to a certain extent, e.g.,

> "the melting of the polar ice cap is seen as an opportunity to develop Arctic energy resources that, along with new sea routes, will further strengthen Russia's role as an energy giant and a territorial Great Power." (Tynkkynen and Tynkkynen 2018: 10)

The mixed reactions to the current pandemic and the debate on climate change are imbedded in a larger discussion about scepticism of science, post-truth, populism, and the influence of political parties and governments. Former Pres Trump and former Pres Jair Bolsonaro of Brazil are the most prominent political figures who deny climate change and claim to not see any negative impacts on the environment. Both also dismiss the severity of the COVID-19 crisis (Ortega and Orsini 2020). Another less prominent but nonetheless disturbing example this politically sanctioned denial strategy is the right-wing party *Alternative für Deutschland* (AfD) in Germany.

Just a few short months after assuming office, Trump announced massive budget cuts for scientific and medical research and institutions, including a 31% budget reduction for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and 17% reduction for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (Collier 2017). It was a grand gesture of rejection of science and a stunning blow to those agencies (Compton et al. 2021). His self-destructive policy against the CDC continued far into 2020 (Editorial Board 2020). Similarly, Bolsonaro vehemently denied facts on deforestation in the Amazon and fired the director of the renowned National Institute for Space Research (INPE) who

had been publicly vocal about their critique of Bolsonaro's strategical denial (Escobar 2019a, 2019b). Additionally, Bolsonaro´s government cut the budget for education and research; he also changed the ministries' responsibilities and the attitudes of governmental institutions in favour of scepticism of climate change and nature conservation (Escobar 2019c; Ferrante and Fearnside 2019).

One study in Austria showed statistically significant correlations between populist attitudes and conspiracy theories on COVID-19, but with no clear sign related to left-right spectrum (Eberl et al. 2021). Nevertheless, right-wing parties like the German AfD; the Austrian *Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs* (FPÖ); and populist, right-wing presidents like Trump and Bolsonaro deny scientific facts and in favour of perpetuating conspiracy theories. It has been statistically proven that populist attitudes correlate with mistrust in science and institutions, who are considered to be societal elites (Eberl et al. 2021). Similar studies on populism and climate change in the UK and Sweden have also shown a connection between mistrust of elites in favour of scepticism towards climate change (Huber 2020; Jylhä and Hellmer 2020). In the USA, Huber et al. (2020) found a much stronger disparity between the two major political parties with much stronger sentiments of climate change denial among Republicans as opposed to Democrats. In Europe, right-wing parties seem to be more heterogenous concerning climate change and environmental change, some parties accepting the fact that climate change is manmade or discussing it controversially discussions within the parties (Forchtner 2019). Nevertheless, there is a strong tendency in right-wing parties towards climate change scepticism and denial which is also reflected in right-wing media (Forchtner et al. 2018). A study conducted on twenty-three European countries confirmed these findings, adding further insight, that countries with governments who perpetuate nationalist ideology have a stronger influence on climate policy compared to left-right positions with a differentiation between Eastern and Western European countries (Kulin et al. 2021; Żuk and Szulecki 2020). In a broader historical and theoretical frame, Hansson (2017) found strong ties between right-wing politics and male-dominated political bodies. A study using web tracking[3] and surveys across six countries support many of the previously discussed aspects (Yan et al. 2021).

The formation of the Fridays for Future movement inspired by Greta Thunberg raised the question if such a coalition is *climate populism*. Zulianello and Ceccobelli (2020: 8) dispelled this by stating that this approach "is substantially different from populism, and even contradicts some of populism's key ideological foundations" (2020, 8). Even though the Friday for Future movement shares some similarities with populist movements, the former has the potential to genuinely change "the democratic process and the socioeconomic system in their current forms, both in terms of their underlying key values and their practices" (Zulianello and Ceccobelli 2020: 8).

[3] The participants´ web activities on computers and cell phones were tracked by tools with URLs, domain names of websites, exact time stamps and duration

4 Conclusion and Postscript

During the long process, climate change processes and the pandemic have been continuing rapidly, but also the political landscape changed. Some discussed aspects are outdated but the general assumptions are still valid.

It is uncertain if a changing of the guards like with the election of USA Pres Joe Biden [democrat] will herald a new era of climatic justice and a turn towards more sustainable development. The discussion of his proposed budget plan in Congress – and its drastic reductions in spending – demonstrated just how deep the political dive is in the USA. Even though investment in sustainable, alternative energy sources is at an all-time high in the USA, it is criticized for still being insufficient (Joselow et al. 2021). In Germany, none of the major parties who competed in the general election met the 1.5°C target in their proposed climate action plans – not even the Green Party (Niedermeier 2021).

Ultimately, 2021 was the year which showed how truly devastating the impacts of climate change are and will be. There were record breaking temperatures in the on the western coast of North America; blistering heat and extensive forest fires in the Mediterranean Basin; and catastrophic flooding in Western Europe, China, and East Africa, among other weather-related emergencies (World Meteorological Organization 2021b). 2021 will outrank the previous years as the new hottest on record (World Meteorological Organization 2021b). It is very likely that the 1.5°C target will be reached much earlier than anticipated (World Meteorological Organization 2021a).

During the composition of this paper, the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference [COP26] was taking place in Glasgow. It was postponed for one year because of COVID-19. Despite lockdowns and travel restrictions across the globe, CO_2 levels did not drop, which was critiqued in a paper titled "Fiddling while the planet burns? COP25 in perspective" (Newell and Taylor 2020). The frustration with governmental inaction was unfortunately validated by the outcome of the 2021 G20 Rome Summit held immediately before the COP26, where the heads of state did not present a new agenda to address the problems (Jones et al. 2021). Therefore, it is quite possible that the COP26 will just be a continuation of the climate policy lip service that has predominated these fields.

COVID-19 is still affecting the world. At the time of composing this paper, the total number of cases is almost 250 million with over 5 million deaths (Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center 2021). Vaccination rates are stagnating in many countries because of vaccination scepticism, and there is still a large disparity between vaccination access in the Global North as opposed to the Global South (World Health Organization 2021).

In conclusion, populist attitudes and lobbyism continue to greatly influence policy making. Because both left and right leaning populist attitudes are anti-elitist – with elitism being associated with governmental and political institutions, academics, and mainstream media; the problem of climate change and the scepticism of science is more complex that portrayed by governing bodies (Huber et al. 2021). Generally speaking, populists are sceptical of science and prone to conspiracy theories, which fans the flames of distrust. Fischer (2020: 4) argues in the same direction and states that explains this phenomenon and stated:

> "liberal political elites, governmental agencies and the mainstream media have largely failed to adequately represent or portray the interests and concerns of the lower middle and working classes." (Fischer 2020: 4)

As a consequence, mainly right-wing populist movements and media outlets have successfully established a post-truth agenda with backing from lobbyists like the Koch brothers. Fischer (2020: 1) gave a poignant warning of the dangers of an unchallenged, post-truth agenda:

> "that fact-checking alone will not rid us of the post-truth phenomenon…The challenge ahead should not be underestimated; the future of both democratic politics, the relation of science to public policy and the ecological fate of the planet will depend on the ability of the forces of reason to politically counter post-truth politics and its spread of deceptive information and outright lies." (Fischer 2020: 1)

Hansson (2017) states that "Science denialism poses a serious threat to human health and the long-term sustainability of human civilization". This statement must be confirmed and needs to be extended. A sustainable future of the human civilization is only possible if environmental and climate justice is not only a lip service but the core of the agenda.

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