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AN Original - UNPOP Series

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By Nurdan Selay Bedir, Cristiano Gianolla



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Critique, decoloniality, emotion and populism: A reflection

AN Original - UNPOP Series

2024-03-22

By Maria Manuela Guilherme

The title of this article is a combination of antithetical concepts, which makes it a challenge. Critique requires time, reflection, deep thinking, which is something odd these days. Decoloniality takes history, philosophy and epistemology. Emotion flows from deep feeling. Populism implies audible roaring. Hence, they do not seem to inhabit the same layer of feeling or the same level of cognition. It seems, however, that we have been stumbling into the roaring twenties again, all of which negates critique, decoloniality and emotion ... as deep feelings, instead exacerbating the foam of feelings.



The tradition of modern thought made us acquainted to the idea of critique as the search for arguments, both explicit and implicit, to contextualise and relate them to specific needs and interests which might have triggered them (Giddens). The purpose would then be to find the underlying and darker areas of thought, those beyond superficial and visible layers, that is, one would be expected to carry out an archaeological investigation of power, feeling and being.

According to the Enlightenment vision of ideas, the concept of critique depended very much on a Eurocentric notion of rationality, one that presumed to be universal (Immanuel Kant). The notion of criticality, thus based on a criterium of universal reason, was therefore perceived as a superior and elitist capacity, one according to the hegemonic understanding of the idea of universality. This idea of a presumably universal rationality, hegemonically constructed, would be able to justify the movement of epistemological modernity, as well as political and economic colonization (Quijano).

A 'universal reason' may certainly imply common elements of criticality transversal to the human mind. Yet, one cannot infer that critique, being foundational to an epistemological structure of European origin, mirrors a type of superior rationality, of absolute judgement, or even one that it is homogeneous in itself (Mignolo & Walsh). For example, the discussion about Critical Theory by the Frankfurt School, itself with different approaches (Horkheimer, Adorno, Habermas, etc.), which coincides in introducing a rationality framed in the social context and which moves away from the 'individual' and the 'universal', still has some features of hegemony (Hoy and McCarthy). On the one hand, Habermas appeals to communication towards consensus, in his early work, by claiming for the construction of European solidarity amongst nation-states. On the other hand, it is precisely against consensus and the historical grand narratives that other European authors voice their thoughts (Lyotard, Derrida, Foucault).

This type of rationality, perceived as universal, with Eurocentric roots, is based on the dichotomy between reason and emotion. A kind of reasoning, as if created in a lab, despite its philosophical grounding, which would become foundational to scientific thinking. However, this notion of critique managed to gradually free itself, or perhaps it had never been completely tied up, by a pragmatist philosophy, more sociological and anthropological, a critical pedagogy for instance, or undoubtedly by literary critique. The dichotomy between reason and emotion ends up defining one by opposition to the other, that is, where one is, the other cannot be (Kincheloe & Steinberg).

To start with, the decoloniality of critique questions and deconstructs such dichotomy between reason and emotion. It is from such a 'place', where the 'abyssal line' between reason and emotion is deleted, that the idea of 'sulear' – navigating through the South - is made concrete in the Critical Pedagogy of Paulo Freire, and other followers such as José Eustáquio Romão, and in the Epistemologies of the South by Boaventura de Sousa Santos.

Critical interculturality responds to a broad range of possible relationships between reason and emotion by delivering a wide scope of possibilities and allowing very different approaches. On the one hand, for example, the one based on a democratic culture of dialogue rooted in Anglo-Saxon and Northern European hermeneutics such as, for example, the notion of 'critical cultural awareness' introduced by Mike Byram. On the other hand, on the notion of

decolonial 'critical interculturality' promoted by the work of Catherine Walsh, together with other South-American well-known scholars.

Scholarly work on populism has brought to the fore the emotional drive of these political movements by often introducing psychological lenses to political sciences, sociology, etc. Given that the so-called populist parties and political leaders (e.g., Brothers of Italy and Forza Italia, Chega in Portugal, Vox in Spain, National Front in France, Trump in the USA, Bolsonaro in Brazil and recently elected Milei in Argentina and Geert Wilders in the Netherlands) are institutionally based in nation-states whose framework is originated in the Enlightenment ideals, it seems relevant to bring in the paradoxical implications of including, at least in relation, these leading concepts, apparently contradictory or even colliding. To what extent does such a leading concept, emotion, make the political framework inconsistent? To what extent can emotion here simply translate verbal aggressiveness, or even a call for violence, social disorder, in this framework?

Given the transnational and pluricultural, even intercontinental, spread and dominance of populist political movements, it would be relevant to analyse how scholarship on populism refers to emotion, critique and decoloniality, in relationality, if it ever does, and on which bases. Several scientific fields have been questioning the lack of attention and even avoidance of the emotional elements in scientific studies, such as linguistics. Aneta Pavlenko (2005), for example, carried out an important study on Emotions and Multilingualism where, for example, she calls our attention to "differences in French emotion terms in France, Canada, Canada and Algeria" (p. 4). The concepts behind the words expressing emotions are culturally and interculturally loaded. Is it worth analysing such a perspective in what regards contemporary populist movements comparative studies? According to Pavlenko (2005), "if emotionality is reflected on changes in discursive style, then what counts as emotionality will differ across individuals and groups of speakers, because their discursive styles are different" (p. 48). This approach would demand an analysis of much deeper levels of emotionality than those which are evident at the surface of behaviours, claims and attitudes and which are those who generally count as emotions. It is also common understanding that making emotions visible is the only translation possible to feeling emotions while that is not equally assumed about reasoning. Expressing one's thoughts is not necessarily perceived as good reasoning. How does this apply to contemporary analyses of populism and emotions? Kaar (2010) deals with the role emotions play at the workplace "in the development of trust and assessment of other peoples' trustworthiness" (p. 100). The author assumes that "while emotions are cultural-general in their underlying dimensions, they become manifest in different behaviours. This is because every culture disposes of emotion display rules, prescribing which emotions are shown in which situations and how" (p. 98). The populist movements have been complaining about the functioning of democratic institutions, about the principles by which they have been abiding, about misuse of funds and even corruption by those involved in political governance. No matter what they complain about, emotion analysis in populism has focused itself on the behaviours in which these ideas are expressed. This is, nonetheless, about communication types, which is always cultural and intercultural. In my understanding, populist movements display emotions which need to be excessively audible and visible to be politically effective, while critique reflects upon emotions, unveils them, searches for their roots, assuming that these may be deep. If addressed separately, both 'the rational' and 'the emotional' miss both the construction of modernity and the deconstruction of decoloniality. Once decoloniality is reciprocal, it transforms the relation

between reason and emotion and it multiplies the possibilities of defining one and the other. Both critique and decoloniality, by bringing reasoning and emotions together, can become utterly pedagogical. Both John Dewey and Paulo Freire were able to introduce two different perspectives of democratic education, grounded in different historical and cultural visions of a democratic society, within which different practices of reasoning and feeling can co-exist in political education pedagogies (Guilherme).

This being said, the time urges for the clarification of the social and political 'givens' of contemporaneity and is therefore ripe with questions. How can populism respond to decoloniality? Is it possible or desirable? Can they even be put face-to-face in the same context? Which roles do emotion and/or reasoning play in the process? Which concepts of 'people' may respond to a notion of decoloniality or to today's definitions of populism, if we abandon the concept of 'people' which emerged from the French Revolution and has been the pillar of the democratic nation-state?



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NÃO É NÃO: frentes de luta no combate à violência de gênero

AN Original

2024-03-08

Por Marcos Silva

A violência contra as mulheres se refere a quaisquer atos de violência de gênero que resulte ou possa resultar em danos ou sofrimentos físicos, sexuais ou psicológicos para as mulheres: agressões, discriminações, ameaças, coação, abusos, assédios, privação de liberdade, entre outros, seja na vida pública ou privada. Em várias legislações, o conceito de violência de gênero é aplicado à violência contra as mulheres. A violência de gênero em diferentes idades, condição social, raça e etnia tem aumentado consideravelmente nas sociedades contemporâneas, seja ela física, sexual e/ou psicológica. Autoras como, Samira Vigano e Maria Laffin, frisam que «perceber as singularidades de cada violência é perceber que os marcadores sociais são mais desiguais em relação a raça, etnia, classe, orientação sexual, idade e identidade de gênero».



Foto do autor

Sueli Carneiro reforça este debate e diz que «grupos de mulheres indígenas e grupos de mulheres negras, por exemplo, possuem demandas específicas que, essencialmente, não pode ser tratadas, exclusivamente, sob a rubrica da questão de gênero se esta não levar em conta as especificidades que definem o ser mulher neste e naquele caso».

No que tange a idade, por exemplo, O Estudo Nacional Sobre Violência no Namoro do ano de 2024, realizado em Portugal, mostra que do total de jovens participantes do Estudo, e que indicaram já ter tido ou ter uma relação de namoro, 63% reportaram ter experienciado, pelo menos, um dos indicadores de vitimização, ou seja, controle, perseguição, violência psicológica, violência sexual, violência por meio de redes sociais, violência física. Isto pode indicar que a violência não é um fenómeno exclusivo das relações entre pessoas adultas, mas +e também um problema presente nos relacionamentos entre pessoas mais jovens.

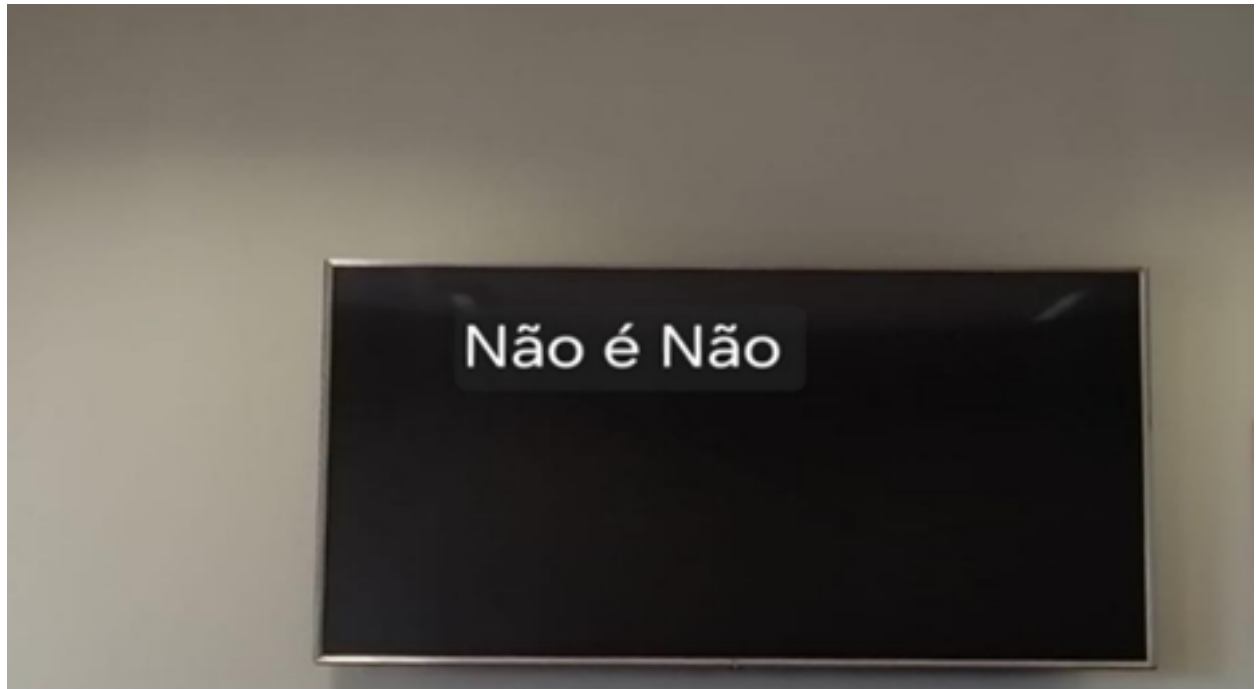


Foto do autor

Nesta direção, ressaltamos a importância para ações e programas educacionais na prevenção da violência em relacionamentos entre os jovens. E que incluam um currículo em todos os níveis de ensino que possam disseminar valores éticos de respeito à dignidade das pessoas a perspectiva de gênero e de raça ou etnia; e ao problema da violência doméstica, familiar e social contra a mulher. Além de reforçar estudos e pesquisas para a produção de conhecimento sobre gênero, avaliando intervenções para o enfrentamento da violência de gênero.

O assédio sexual, seja no ambiente de trabalho, instituições educacionais, transportes públicos, locais de lazer, entre outros, tem atingido dados preocupantes. O que tem levado diferentes países a implementarem e/ou atualizarem legislações voltadas a temática visando travar quaisquer violências de gênero.

Na Espanha, a Ley Orgánica 10/2022, de 6 de septiembre, de garantía integral de la Libertad sexual (Lei da Garantia Integral da Liberdade Sexual) tem sido bastante noticiada pela mídia e ganhou força para a sua introdução após o caso de violência sexual que chocou a Espanha e levou milhares para as ruas do país no ano de 2016. A onda de protesto serviu de base para a implementação da legislação de combate a violência contra as mulheres. A Lei resulta da pressão após o caso de violação em grupo em 2016.



Foto do autor

Em outros países, como o Brasil, o relatório Visível e Invisível: a vitimização de mulheres no Brasil-2023 mostra números nada positivos de violência contra as mulheres. Em comparação com pesquisas anteriores, todas as formas de violência contra a mulher apresentaram crescimento acentuado. As agressões físicas, ofensas sexuais e abusos psicológicos se tornaram ainda mais frequentes na vida das brasileiras. Tentar explicar este aumento não é uma tarefa fácil, entretanto, o Relatório sugere algumas hipóteses que foram agravadas, em geral, pela pandemia da covid-19. Isto é, o impacto da pandemia de covid-19 nos serviços de acolhimento e proteção às mulheres: as restrições de horários de funcionamento; a redução de equipes de atendimento; as interrupções de atendimentos, além de falta de financiamentos de governos anteriores no país de políticas públicas de proteção a mulher; o crescimento acentuado de todas as formas de violência baseada em gênero. Por mais esforços de legislações vigentes, infelizmente, ainda não temos vislumbrados a queda de números de violência.

Ressaltamos a importância da luta contante de movimentos sociais de base (movimentos sociais de mulheres, mulheres negras, mulheres indígenas, LGBTQIAPN+), entre outros, no combate à violência contra as mulheres. Por um lado, é importante problematizar sobre a cultura machista e patriarcal que ainda fazem parte das sociedades contemporâneas. Enquanto homens «devemos reconhecer as atitudes e os comportamentos do sistema patriarcal e machista [...] Refletir sobre este sistema e parar de reproduzi-lo no seu dia-a-dia. Esta é uma discussão que não podemos ignorá-la». Por outro, é fundamental continuar fortalecendo a integração entre redes de acolhimento do Estado (Segurança Pública, Defensorias Públicas, Ministérios Públicos, Poder Judiciário e Sociedade civil) e a aplicação e aperfeiçoamento de legislações vigentes quando necessários visando a travar a violência de gênero.

Na trilha de Sueli Carneiro Sueli Carneiro, apreendemos também que «a luta contra a violência doméstica e sexual estabeleceu uma mudança de paradigma em relação às questões de público e privado. A violência doméstica tida como algo da dimensão do privado alcança a esfera pública e torna-se objeto de políticas específicas».

Citamos como exemplo no Brasil, a Lei nº 11.340/2006 (Lei Maria da Penha) que cria mecanismos para coibir a violência doméstica e familiar contra a mulher, entendendo que toda mulher, independentemente de classe, raça, etnia, orientação sexual, renda, cultura, nível educacional, idade e religião, deve dispor dos direitos fundamentais inerentes à pessoa humana.

Assim como a Lei 14786 /2023 que cria o protocolo “Não é Não”, para prevenção ao constrangimento e à violência contra a mulher e para proteção à vítima, principalmente nos ambientes de casas noturnas, boates, espetáculos musicais realizados em locais fechados e em shows, com venda de bebida alcoólica

para promover a proteção das mulheres e para prevenir e enfrentar o constrangimento e a violência contra elas.



Foto do autor

É importante cada vez fortalecer as redes de proteção às mulheres e do enfrentamento da violência de gênero com ações governamentais e da sociedade civil com disseminação de informações, eficácia e monitorização por parte dos agentes da segurança pública e do sistema de justiça (aperfeiçoamento de legislações quando necessária), acolhimento e encaminhamento das pessoas que sofrem violência (escuta qualificada, abrigo, programa de geração de renda), dentre outros.

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A Time for Monsters

AN Original

2024-03-07

By Daniela Jorge

Today, March 7, 2024, marks five months since the start of the genocidal violence that has engulfed Palestine and in particular Gaza. The numbers, shocking as they are – more than 100,000 Palestinians in Gaza have been killed, maimed, or are missing – fail to capture the textures and depth of dystopian horror and overwhelming despair that has marked this period.



Getty Images, 14 December 2023

Since October, tens of thousands of tons of bombs, most of which have been manufactured by Israel's strongest ally and leading global arms dealer, the United States, have incessantly rained down over civilians. Most of these explosives have been delivered through experimental aerial and naval weaponry powered by AI software that is being tested for the first time in Gaza, one of the most densely populated places in the world that has been under siege for over fifteen years.

Israel's assault on besieged Gazans presents, according to the CEO of Israel's leading technology incubator, a unique opportunity to test new technologies of warfare. Through a disregard for human life and the creation of one of the worst humanitarian catastrophes in history, the arms industry is experiencing record highs and eager expectations for the future.

Approximately 80% of Gaza's population today are descendants of refugees of the 1948 Nakba, in which Palestinians were murdered, displaced and exiled to facilitate the formation of the Israeli state. In line with Israel's history of forced displacement, since October, nearly 90% Gazans have faced internal displacement due to the complete obliteration of critical civilian and public infrastructure. Many

displaced people have been forced to relocate several times during this period, often requiring dangerous journeys by foot risking further violence, due to Israel's constantly changing designation of so-called 'safe zones'.

The mass devastation of infrastructure has also included the destruction of hospitals. As of today only a handful of hospitals in all of Gaza remain partially functional for over two million people, constituting a complete collapse of Gaza's healthcare system. Coupled with preexisting limited medical supplies, the tens of thousands of severe injuries that have required surgical interventions have rendered supplies practically non-existent, forcing physicians to operate without anesthesia, oxygen cylinders or clean water – items explicitly prohibited from entering Gaza by Israel. Since October, over 1,000 amputations have been conducted on children without the use of anesthetics.

The complete collapse of Gaza's healthcare system, in conjunction with mass famine and inaccessibility of treated water has left Gazans at risk of contracting infectious diseases. Experts warn that the rise of epidemics is both grave and imminent. More than 20,000 babies have been born since the start of the war. Non-existent prenatal care, Israel's barring of maternity kits and the absence of medical supplies have led to significant rates of obstetric complications that have resulted in increased maternal and infant mortality.

While Israel has always tightly controlled food imports to Gaza as a method of collective punishment – including the use of a formula to calculate the minimum calories per person to determine restrictions – deliberate starvation has been an explicit method implemented since the beginning of this war. An analysis of food security conducted by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification shows severe food insecurity, demonstrating that 100% of Gaza's population is at "imminent risk of famine" as Israel continues impeding the delivery of critical aid. Last week, after one month of the complete withholding of aid distribution, a crowd of famished Palestinians were fired upon by the Israeli military while gathering at a humanitarian convoy. At least 112 Palestinians were killed and another 760 injured in what has been called the "flour massacre". This is the 14th incident of recorded shelling against people while seeking aid since October.

While critical attention has been provided to Gaza, Israeli forces have simultaneously unleashed a harrowing campaign of collective punishment against Palestinians in the West Bank. Mass arrests inflated already bloated political prisons. Accounts of systematic torture, sexual abuse, medical neglect, deprivation of food and water, among other horrific conditions echo among the thousands of Palestinians that have been rounded up during this period. Israeli settlers with support from military forces have emptied vulnerable Palestinian villages, threatening them with lethal violence. Raids in major West Bank cities, such as Jenin, have accompanied drone killings and the destruction of civilian infrastructure, while the construction of additional illegal Israeli settlements continues widespread with little pushback from its allies.

The harrowing conditions that shape Palestinian life under occupation and the excruciating cruelty that has taken place over the course of the last six months are possible only due to Israel's American and European enablers. As the largest recipient of U.S. foreign aid, Israel has been awarded unconditional material, political and institutional support with little condemnation for its war crimes.

In December 2023, South Africa accused Israel of committing genocide before the International Criminal Court. The court's interim ruling published a month later affirmed that Israel was possibly committing genocide. Despite the mounting evidence of Israeli war crimes that led to this ruling, the court did not call for a ceasefire. Once again, demonstrating to Palestinians adherence to international law and the recognition of human rights does not apply to their occupiers.

For Gazans, their lives have been reduced to fighting for their most basic needs. Surviving. Their stories, their lives, passions, futures, now a mere blur. "Now is the time of monsters," Gramsci wrote while imprisoned by the fascist regime. This is certainly the case today. United by their impunity, now is the time for volatile monsters.



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From populism to emotions in order to rethink democratic processes

AN Original - UNPOP Series

2024-02-29

By Nurdan Selay Bedir, Cristiano Gianolla

Populism has been a critical concept for many years, occupying political debates and academic fields ranging from political science, sociology and philosophy to psychology, communication and anthropology, among others. Populism has become a term increasingly used to characterise the state of politics today. In 2017, the [Cambridge Dictionary](#) announced “populism” as the word of the year. But efforts to overturn the social order have a very ancient lineage throughout the world. Therefore, we can say that populism has been present in world politics for a very long time. However, since the term was initially employed in the USA and Russia in the XIX century and in Latin America in the 1920s, it has become an intriguing point of reference from the 2000s onwards.

The early debates were about the struggle against big landowner-merchant capital (the anti-imperialist struggle), which required an alliance of worker-peasant-middle classes. Later, the debates of the post-World War II period signalled increasing political participation of the masses to guide modern industrial developments in colonial societies struggling for political emancipation. This was a response within the framework of the modernisation paradigm. Since the masses in these societies predominantly lived in rural areas, the urban-rural divide, combined with a hatred for elites who collaborated with the colonial administration, gave rise to populist movements, which emphasised the elite-people divide as the main contradiction in the social structure. To retain some degree of autonomy, the rural areas have long sought to give political rights and status to newcomers, often targeting immigrants. Populists also sought to retain traditions, as well as stable hierarchies of age and land ownership. More recently [populist logics](#) have been mobilised by the Far Right, in Europe and elsewhere, to foster nationalist, xenophobic, and racist agendas.

Debates on populism evolved from the grounds of preserving small producers and traditional ways of life and developed into anti-elitism and a phenomenon dominated by [exclusionary](#) agendas. These approaches to understanding populism demonstrate the malleability of this concept, which is useful for explaining many different political developments. Populism has been perceived as an [ideology](#), [political style](#), [strategic approach](#), political [logic](#) or sometimes even as a [spectre](#) or [danger](#). This breadth of approaches has facilitated the production of literature in different disciplines and created a [buzzword in Political Science](#). More recently, in response to the alleged irrationality of populism and building on the affective turn in the social sciences, the entanglement of [populism and emotion](#) has gained attention as an interdisciplinary field of research. However, modern understandings reject the ancient treatment of emotion as irrational. This shift has led to a richer and more dynamic perspective on the main roles of emotion in personal, social and political dynamics.

The academic attention to populism continues to grow in relation to issues within both democratic and authoritarian processes, for instance, regarding identity and political discourse. This strand of research

focuses on the role and place of emotions in socio-political narratives, mythologies and identities, along with their reflection on political behaviour, populist movements and parties. These topics have been core to the research of the UNPOP project (UNpacking POPulism: Comparing the formation of emotion narratives and their effects on political behaviour) coordinated by Cristiano Gianolla at the Centre for Social Studies (CES) and Lisete Mónico at the Center for Research in Neuropsychology and Cognitive Behavioral Intervention (CINEICC) of the University of Coimbra. One of the main results of the project, the UNPOP International Colloquium, entitled “*Emotions, Narratives and Identities in Politics, Populism and Democracy*”, was organised between 23 and 26 January 2024 in Coimbra. The event started with a synergy meeting between five Horizon Europe projects focusing on political emotions and the social contract. The colloquium featured five keynote speeches, rich roundtable discussion and 22 panels where 44 papers were presented for extensive debate. The colloquium served to deepen the understanding of the articulations of populism alongside emotions, affects, identities and narratives.



The International Colloquium started with the UNPOP Research Showcase session which included an introduction to Emotion Narrative Theory. This proposal focused on long-term collective emotions that shape personal, social and political identities in order to study the impact of emotions on individual political behaviour. The UNPOP also presented: the Exclusionary Populist Attitude Scale, a systematic literature review, an examination of the family-related emotion narratives of the Portuguese radical Left, the analysis of the anti-immigration paradigm on the Italian far right, and the scrutiny of the discourse on merit/meritocracy as opposed to equality/participation, comparing populist and religious leaders. The showcase exemplified how this interdisciplinary research uses and applies a mixed methodology operated through systematic literature review, meta-analysis, scale-building, qualitative interviewing, text analysis and comparative research. This extensive research unpacks one understudied dimension of populist politics, namely “emotion narratives”, which are related to mobilisation and framing.

The keynote speakers addressed different approaches to understanding the intricate connections between politics, emotions and social relations. While George E. Marcus emphasised the enduring and ever-present roles of emotion, reason and narrative as sustaining and changing political structures, Paolo Cossarini examined how the concept of “popular sovereignty” is maintained in everyday life, arguing for the perception of populism as a claim rather than inherent truth. Tereza Capelos explored the impact of emotionally charged grievance politics in contemporary democracies and discussed democratic responses to these emotionally driven claims. João Figueiredo analysed the role of past elites

in the creation of a right-wing common sense, as well as the challenges faced by emancipatory left-wing decolonial interventions and discourses, demonstrating the current ethical responsibilities of the narrative about the Portuguese overseas expansion. Finally, [Emilia Palonen](#) elaborated on populism as a logic rather than a form, highlighting affectively loaded constructions of the “us-building” and “othering”, processes which involve linking the ideas of contingency and temporality to the democratic ethos. The Round Table discussion moderated by [Gaia Giuliani](#) brought together all these speakers and approaches as well as one of the most renowned populist scholars of the event, [Paula Diehl](#). The broad debate touched on different key points at the intersection of emotions with politics, history, social identities and social relations.

The papers presented a diverse range of methodologies, from (critical) discourse analysis to visual analysis, from linguistic perspectives to qualitative protest event analysis, from analysis of interviews to the analysis of data mined from social media. Papers dealt with the rhetoric, discourse, narrative and storytelling of political ideas, movements, parties and leaders sometimes labelled as extremist, right-wing, far-right, left-wing, far-left or anti-establishment. In relation to populist politics, the focus was on emotional engagement, affective investment, emotional work, emotional modulation and affective repertoires at the periphery.

Those who view the growth and acceptance of democratic discourse as detrimental, seek to justify authoritarian forms of government in order to better protect their values and ways of life, despite insufficient public support. Thus, current populist movements use the language of grievance to marshal support. Herein, emotion becomes a unifying language of common understanding and expression. It is important to continue the research presented at the UNPOP International Colloquium for the sake of revisiting the debates on authoritarianism and democratic backsliding (also known as de-democratisation or democratic erosion). Stuart Hall adopted the term Thatcherism and emphasised the notion of [authoritarian populism](#), drawing attention to the practices of the Thatcher government, which relied heavily on populist discourses. As Hall highlighted, Thatcher's anti-state rhetoric contradicted her government's implementation of policies that worsened the conditions of the workers, ultimately creating a new – neoliberal – common sense in British politics.

We observe the authoritarian nature of neoliberalism and, therefore, it is urgent to analyse the relationship of “[neoliberal populism](#)” to the emotions of the oppressed segments of society in contemporary politics. [Ümit Akçay's work](#), for example, demonstrates that neoliberalism is kept alive by creating temporary welfare regimes, but at the same time oppressing the people. The mechanism of inclusion is financialisation, which gives loans to the lower strata of society and creates fear of survival. Akçay points to the social aid of the AKP rule in Turkey with the emotional discourses of the government. Rather than helping people, this legislation has paved the way for precarisation and flexibilisation through subcontracting, temporary and part-time, precarious working conditions. Neoliberal populism enables the poorest people to acquire cheap loans for social and financial inclusion in societies with a limited welfare regime. In other contexts, populism gives governments the ability to secure support by benefiting (e.g., through government funded pensions, housing, social security among others) those they favour. Especially for those depending on such benefits, this practice can generate resentment and distrust of what many see as a remote, unpredictable and unresponsive government. Thus, social welfare and rights translate into financial aid managed through loans and welfare. Moreover, poverty is reverted to a problem of the poor and decision-makers resort to solutions that actually create a structural dependence system, recreating poverty and structural division in society.

Liberal democratic regimes today suffer gradual decline in the quality of democracy and the establishment of undemocratic common sense. In order to revive the debates on democratic backsliding research should focus on “[longer-term strategic harassment and manipulation](#)”, especially of electoral processes in relation to populism. Moreover, future research needs to closely examine democratic processes that are capable of unpacking the responses – however (un)acceptable – given by populism to the systemic failures of liberal democracy. Regardless of the conflicting conceptions of populism, most of the scholarship agrees that populism indicates political failures that need to be addressed. It remains to be seen if and for how long liberal democracy is able to either ignore, diminish or misconceive these issues exploiting the ambiguity of populism.



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