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C O N T E N T S

Letter from the Editor

The Berkeley Center for Right-Wing Studies is now over fourteen years old. During this time we have become something of a collegial hub for scholars of the right in diverse disciplines and at universities around the world. Our programs have expanded over the years:

- We have mounted over sixty presentations open to the public on issues of the right.
- We have organized half a dozen conferences, from an early look at the Tea Party to broad right-wing-studies conferences that have had as many as ninety panels and speakers from a dozen countries.
- We have hosted large numbers of visiting scholars from universities both in the US and around the world.
- On the UC Berkeley campus we have mentored both graduate and undergraduate students of the right, and supported the research of many of them.
- We have developed a robust program of diverse archives, which have served scholars and media researchers.
- We have become a go-to resource for media of all kinds, print and electronic, participating in hundreds of interviews, which we believe have had an important role in shaping public awareness of the contemporary right.

Behind all this work we have nurtured the conviction that Right-Wing Studies constitutes a serious and important academic discipline. Throughout our expanding community of scholars this has become a widely shared idea. In our view, the launching of the *Journal of Right-Wing Studies* is the culmination of that conviction. With pride we offer *JRWS* as a principal organ of the field.

But *JRWS* has a larger scope. We are launching the journal in a period of extraordinary right-wing mobilization across the globe. Democracy versus autocracy has become a standard talking point of liberal politicians in the Western world. Militant movements in these countries have aligned ideologically with illiberal regimes, where political discourse focuses on maintaining ethnic, religious, gender, and racial hierarchies in the name of "traditional" values versus the imposition of the "woke" agenda. Such a government has come to power in Italy. Red states in the USA are copying the model of Hungary's Orbán government by institutionalizing in law restrictions on voting, on education, on the independence of the judiciary, and even on corporate behavior.

Perhaps not since the 1930s and 1940s have concerned citizens been so aware of the threats facing liberal democracy. In this environment, we want to make *JRWS* available to as wide an audience as possible, including beyond the academy. The journal will be published open access, without economic barriers for readers or authors, through the California Digital Library's eScholarship Publishing program. In addition to traditional academic research papers, we will publish essays, commentary, and book reviews.

With Issue One of the journal, we are presenting a look at the contemporary right across the globe, with articles on Turkey, the Philippines, India, Japan, Western Europe, Hungary and Poland, Brazil, the United States, and more. We welcome readers everywhere.

Lawrence Rosenthal

July 4, 2023

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ARTICLE

Kacyński's Poland and Orbán's Hungary

Different Forms of Autocracy with Common Right-Wing Frames in the EU

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Abstract: *This paper discusses the regimes of Jarosław Kaczyński in Poland (2015–) and Viktor Orbán in Hungary (2010–) from the perspective of a curious paradox: they are very different in functioning but adhere to right-wing ideological frames that are very similar. First, we argue for a dual-level approach to understanding the formal and informal nature of these regimes, and we identify Poland as a conservative autocratic attempt and Hungary as an established patronal autocracy. After a comparative analysis of the two systems, we analyze the regimes' common ideological frames and explain how legitimacy panels fit the purposes of an ideology-driven regime (Poland) and an ideology-applying one (Hungary). Finally, the analysis is used to explain the divergent responses of the Polish and the Hungarian regimes to the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine, which also brought the mutual relations of the two de-democratizing countries in the European Union to a breaking point.*

Keywords: Poland, Hungary, European Union, de-democratization, conservatism, patronalism

Introduction

Since the collapse of their respective communist regimes, Poland and Hungary have been going with the stream of history in the eyes of political scientists. In the 1990s, when "transitology" assumed a linear movement from dictatorship to liberal democracy, the consolidation of democratic institutions and swift transition to market economy in the two countries indicated that they were indeed fulfilling the teleological goal of Western development (Kopecký and Mudde 2000). In the 2010s, as "hybridology," or the study of hybrid regimes, observed the surge of illiberal forces around the globe, the regimes instituted by Jarosław Kaczyński in Poland and Viktor Orbán in Hungary became widely cited as examples of illiberalism and democratic backsliding (Bernhard 2021; Grzymala-Busse 2019). Poland and Hungary are also discussed together as the two "black sheep" of the European Union (Sedelmeier 2017). While the two countries joined the EU together on May 1, 2004, their current political leaderships—until the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine—coalesced on the international political scene to

advance their respective projects of violating the rule of law (Holesch and Kyriazi 2022). Both Orbán and Kaczyński adhere to right-wing nationalism (Csehi and Zgut 2021) and speak about protecting Christian conservative values such as religion and the traditional family (Grzebalska and Pető 2018).

Being part of the inaugural issue of the *Journal of Right-Wing Studies*, this paper will place the emphasis on a curious paradox: common right-wing ideological frames can be used by regimes that are, indeed, highly dissimilar. On the one hand, there are autocratic developments in the two countries. Interpreting the events on a simple democracy-dictatorship axis, it can be said that both regimes have moved from the liberal democratic pole in the direction of more oppressive systems, characterized by a tendency to eliminate autonomous social forces and to use control mechanisms under right-wing ideological frames. On the other hand, a more complex view that expands the scope of inquiry from the formal institutional setting to that of informal political-economic structures reveals that beneath the similarities on the surface these are attempts at establishing different types of autocratic regimes. Orbán's regime, which we define as a *patronal autocracy*, is built on the twin motivations of power centralization and accumulation of personal wealth, and the subject of its power is not Orbán's party, Fidesz, but an informal patronal network freed of the limitations posed by formal institutions. Kaczyński's regime is better described as a *conservative autocratic attempt* driven by ambitions for power and ideological inclinations, where the active subject of the Polish autocratic attempt is the ruling right-wing party, the PiS (Law and Justice). While the Hungarian regime uses ideology as a cover, the Polish one is more ideology driven.

In section 1, we give an overview of the ascension to power of Kaczyński and Orbán, and we use the conceptual triad of autocratic attempt, breakthrough, and consolidation to explain the different extent of de-democratization in Poland and Hungary. This is expanded in section 2 into a dual-level approach that leads us to analyze a series of differences between the Kaczyński and Orbán regimes.[1] Section 3 is devoted to the issue of common ideological frames of different forms of autocracy, as well as to an international event that put the two regimes at a crossroads both ideologically and functionally: the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine. The wedge driven between the Kaczyński and Orbán leaderships reflects the deeper character of their regimes, which was forced to the surface by the war. Understanding that character, as well as the context of the emergence and functioning of the Polish and Hungarian autocracies, reveals key forces behind democratic backsliding in Central Eastern Europe, and it contributes to a more realistic analytical framework for these processes.

1 The comparative framework of regimes used here is developed in our book, *The Anatomy of Post-Communist Regimes* (Central European University Press, 2020). The book is open access and can be downloaded from our website: https://www.postcommunistregimes.com.

Autocratic Attempt in Poland and Autocratic Breakthrough in Hungary[2]

Antecedents: The Defeat of the Polish Government Parties and the Collapse of the Third Hungarian Republic

In Hungary, the left-liberal coalition of MSZP (Hungarian Socialist Party) and SZDSZ (Alliance of Free Democrats) came to power in 2002. The electoral program of "welfare regime change" involved a spending spree that increasing indebtedness made unsustainable, leading to policies of halfheartedly accepted austerity (Bokros 2014). In contrast to the logic of János Kádár's communist regime before 1989—in which harsh reprisals and sanctions applied a single time were followed by the politics of continual, incrementally introduced little "rewards," concessions, and improvements in living standards—in this case a one-time allowance, which could be forgotten in a few months, was followed by a constant policy of austerity. This undermined faith in the future of the government and its credibility.

The concept of "welfare regime change," used in Hungary, is unknown in Poland. There, essentially three right-wing or center-right governments carried out shock therapy reforms: the Mazowiecki government in 1990, with Leszek Balcerowicz as finance minister; the Buzek government (1997–2001), in which Balcerowicz was deputy prime minister and finance minister; and finally, the first government formed by the PiS (2005–2007), when new radical changes were introduced in the battle against corruption, for lustration, and to "clean up" the secret services (Balcerowicz 2014). The leading politicians and intellectuals/experts of the PiS, in government between 2005 and 2007, and the Civil Platform (PO), in government from 2007 to 2015, were all the legacy of the Mazowiecki and Buzek governments. The Polish right wing has believed in the free market and capitalism right from the start.

Following the failure of the first PiS government, the coalition of the center-right Civil Platform and the agrarian Polish People's Party (PSL)—ideologically nationalistic, economically slightly left leaning—formed a government in 2007. The following calm and predictable world of Polish politics (Szczerbiak 2013) was in sharp contrast to Hungary, which then saw a great deal of political turmoil. A few months after the reelection of the MSZP-SZDSZ coalition in 2006, a speech given by Hungarian Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsány to the MSZP faction was leaked. In this infamous "Őszöd speech," Gyurcsány admitted the manipulation of budget deficit figures, causing an irreparable breach of confidence. The violent antigovernment protests that erupted in the aftermath, and the police reaction to them, were merely the prelude to a period of cold civil war, which composed the essence of Fidesz's politics in opposition (Pappas 2014).

Fidesz's strategy of cold civil war in opposition replaced the necessary consensus that had been built into the constitutional order with a politics of bribery and liquidation. On the one hand, Fidesz did not support systemic reforms requiring a two-thirds

2 This section is partly based on Magyar (2019).

majority in the parliament, regardless of whatever compromise they may have included; on the other hand, when it came to the election of heads or members of the institutional control mechanisms of liberal democracy, they either approved the appointment of their own nominee or paralyzed the operation of the institution by denying their cooperation. Going beyond the—at times, justly critical—tenor and norms of political battles until then, Fidesz used communications tools of character assassination and the prosecutor's office (led by an Orbán loyalist) to conduct campaigns to demonize government politicians.

In Poland, the defeat of the PO-PSL government in 2015 was a surprise to everyone, and it was due to the fact that significant social groups were left out of economic growth in small cities, villages, and the eastern regions. But the government left a prosperous economy and an internationally respected Poland. In Hungary, the erosion of the ability to govern, followed by the loss of credibility and paralysis of the governing parties, the revelation of cases of corruption, the economic crisis of 2008, and the political climate of cold civil war, finally brought about the collapse of the third republic (Magyar 2016)

Autocratic Change: Stages and Factors in the Breakdown of Democracy

Both Kaczyński and Orbán came to power with regime-changing ambitions. This was reflected in their rhetoric just as much as in their deeds, already during their first premierships. When Orbán came to power in 1998, he summed up his goals in the campaign slogan "more than change of government, less than change of regimes," and in the expression "all-out attack" (Sárközy 2019, 62–65). From 2005, the PiS, led by Jarosław Kaczyński and his brother Lech Kaczyński, were speaking about the need to build a "fourth republic" by placing the country on new moral foundations (Millard 2006).

In a consolidated democracy, a change in government means a change in the direction of state policies while keeping democratic institutions intact. The party system may be divided by deep cleavages, and the parties may conduct fiery debates on policy issues in which they hold opposing ideological (right-wing or left-wing) positions. But they do so within the framework of liberal democracy: they question each other's policies, not their opponents' legitimacy; and they accept the legitimacy of the system as well, adhering to the constitutional rules of the political arena. Regime-changing rhetoric, however, indicates the objective of changing the "rules of the game" and therefore is a sign of democratic deconsolidation (Morlino 2019). In the cases of Poland and Hungary, the electoral victories of Jarosław Kaczyński and Viktor Orbán were followed by a breakdown of democracy, albeit to different degrees.

The erosion of liberal democracy can be divided into three stages: autocratic attempt, autocratic breakthrough, and autocratic consolidation (see table 1). First, an *autocratic attempt* involves a series of formal institutional changes aiming at the systemic transformation of a democracy to an autocracy. Using their democratic mandate, the autocrat attempts to connect the branches of power by (a) strengthening the power of

the executive, (b) narrowing the competences of other branches and local governments, and/or (c) replacing their members with party loyalists (in more bureaucratic systems) or personal clients (in more personalist, patronal systems). Changes in this direction can be listed as follows (Kis 2019; Scheppele 2018):

- court packing, especially of the constitutional court (to ensure that no major public decisions are declared unconstitutional and nullified);
- replacing the heads of civil courts, weakening the judiciary, and transferring a significant part of their powers to a subordinate office of the government (to decrease the chances of citizens seeking redress for their violations of power);
- taking over legal prosecution with loyalists (to ensure politically selective law enforcement);
- changing the rules on the appointment, promotion, and possible replacement of civil servants (to be able to institutionalize a nepotistic system of rewards and punishments);
- weakening of local governments (to centralize their competences in an effort to further weaken the separation of powers);
- rewriting electoral rules one-sidedly, including gerrymandering and making the electoral rules more majoritarian (to facilitate future electoral victory);
- changing the constitution to expand the competences of the executive, president, or prime minister (to strengthen the autocrat's position).

The success of an autocratic attempt depends on mainly one factor: whether the autocrat succeeds in attaining a monopoly of political power, typically by winning the elections with a supermajority. Such power is required for changing "the rules of the game," that is, the constitution or so-called organic laws that define how the formal institutional setting will work. Acquiring such political power allows the autocrat to carry out a constitutional coup (Vörös 2017). Unlike a military coup, a constitutional coup maintains legal continuity, and the autocrat does not de jure eliminate the separation of powers. But they connect the branches through their appointments in a single vertical of vassalage, gaining neopatrimonial control over the state (Fisun 2019). This is the point, after an autocratic attempt, where we can speak about an *autocratic breakthrough*.

The third and final step is *autocratic consolidation*. This may happen only if the autocrat can disable what is described in Magyar and Madlovics (2020) as the second defensive mechanism of democracy: the autonomy of civil society, defined broadly as the autonomy of media, entrepreneurs, NGOs, and citizens, which is subjugated through the power of the state.[3] The autonomy of these groups is a sociological guarantee against autocracy because they represent alternative resources that can be the basis for the emergence of alternative centers of power. Autocratic consolidation means breaking these autonomies, and therefore cutting the social foundations for an effective opposition to arise.

The autocrat successfully disables…		
	First defensive mechanism of democracy (separation of branches of power)	**Second defensive mechanism of democracy (autonomy of civil society)**
Autocratic attempt	**–**	**–**
Autocratic breakthrough	**x**	**–**
Autocratic consolidation	**x**	**x**

Table 1. Different levels of autocratic change. Source: authors' construction.

The difference between the Polish and the Hungarian autocratic developments is that of autocratic attempt versus autocratic breakthrough, respectively. The difference can be captured quantitatively by indicators such as the V-Dem Institute's rule of law index and the World Justice Project's measure of constraints on government powers.

3 See https://www.postcommunistregimes.com/seminar/lecture6/.

Both measures range from 0 to 1, with higher scores indicating stronger rule of law and stronger constraints on power, respectively. Looking at the periods of rule of Kaczyński and Orbán, the rule of law index shows a decrease from 0.94 to 0.76 in 2015–2021 in Poland, and a decrease from 0.88 to 0.64 in 2010–2021 in Hungary. This means a decrease of 19.1% and 27.3%, respectively. The difference in the extent of de-democratization in the two countries is even more striking in the constraints on government powers. In 2019, Poland's score was 0.58, making it 50th among 121 countries (close to Romania and Georgia), while the same number in Hungary was 0.41, putting it in 103rd place (close to Russia and Kazakhstan) (Kaiser 2021; WJP 2019).

On the institutional level, the difference is explained by two crucial factors: the presence, in Poland, of divided executive power and a proportional electoral system. Established during the regime change, Hungary's political institutions were largely based on Germany's chancellor democracy (*Kanzlerdemokratie*), with a unicameral parliament, constructive vote of no confidence, a relatively extensive system of organic laws, and the prominent role of prime minister (Körösényi, Tóth, and Török 2007). In contrast to this setup with the undivided power of the executive, a system with divided executive power like the Polish one can offer more institutional possibilities for competing networks to keep each other in check, establishing more democratic conditions as they settle around the positions of president and prime minister as key seats of executive power. Similarly, a proportional electoral system is normally able to make sure that no single political actor acquires a supermajority or the exclusive opportunity to decide who staffs the key institutions of the system of checks and balances.

In Poland, the regional list electoral system resulted in a relatively proportional distribution of mandates in 2015. PiS won the elections with 37.6%, gaining a 51% majority in the Sejm. The results were distorted in favor of PiS by the fact that the United Left did not win mandates in spite of achieving 7.6%; if the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD) had alone been on the ballot, PiS would not even have got a majority in the Sejm. Nevertheless, even with this distorted distribution of the mandates, PiS was made capable of a change of government, but it was not able to completely appropriate political power. A change of constitution (requiring, unlike in the Hungarian system, the support not of two-thirds of all the members of parliament but only of those present) would have required some extreme manipulation. Appointments in the institutions of political control, however, do not require a two-thirds consensus, and the limits for changes are set rather by the fixed terms of their appointment. At the same time, as the Polish political system has no organic laws, it has more leeway in broader changes to the system, though all such changes can be just as easily undone by a new government.

In Hungary, the mixed electoral system effective until 2011 (a single-chamber parliament of 386 seats could be filled by 176 representatives elected from single-member constituencies, a minimum of 58 mandates from the national list, and a maximum of 152 seats from the regional lists) made it possible for Fidesz to secure a two-thirds majority in parliament with only 53% of the votes in 2010, providing it with practically unlimited political power. On the one hand, it could alone rewrite

the constitution (which it did in 2011, amending it eleven times since as its political needs dictated), and could pass any legislation as well. On the other hand, it was able to appoint the heads and other officials of the institutions meant to serve as balances of power in a liberal democracy (Constitutional Court, media authority, national council for control over courts, election oversight bodies, etc.) without any need for consensus with the opposition. The terms in office for numerous positions were also extended: the chief prosecutor and the president and members of the Media Council have terms of nine years, the president and vice president of the State Audit Office of Hungary are appointed for terms of twelve years each (Helsinki Committee 2021). Therefore, the systemic changes wrought by the Fidesz government are virtually irrevocable even if the government might be defeated, since the currently scattered opposition would be unable to gain a supermajority, and the people appointed by Fidesz will remain in their positions even after a change of government.

The Orbán regime changed electoral law as well, increasing the disproportionality of the system by redrawing the single-member constituencies, imposing shorter time periods for the collection of signatures required to stand for elections, introducing the one-round election system, forcing opposition forces to form a coalition prior to elections, extending the right to vote to ethnic Hungarians across the border, and so forth. These changes were crucial for Fidesz to secure its two-thirds majority in parliament in three subsequent elections (2014, 2018, and 2022), in the first case with only 44% of the vote (Magyar and Madlovics 2022b).

Changes to the Polish electoral law along the lines of the Hungarian changes are not allowed by the constitution, which demands proportionality. As a result, power machinations are limited mainly to the state-owned public media, which has been under increasing institutional and ideological control of the government (Kerpel 2017). Since the legal system forestalls the overthrow of the institutions of democracy and ensures a lack of the majority required to introduce a new constitution, the new regime turns to open violation of the constitution, or it modifies the old institutions in such a way as to be able to give positions to its own party loyalists (examples of this are alteration of the court system and the media) (Sadurski 2019). Yet these laws cannot be enshrined across terms of government.

Kaczyński's Conservative Autocracy and Orbán's Patronal Autocracy

The Necessity of a Dual-Level Approach to Understanding Autocratic Change in Postcommunist Regimes

The presence or absence of monopolizing political power explains the difference in the extent of autocratic developments in Poland and Hungary. However, it does not explain the differences in their nature. Mainstream hybridology, which places Poland and Hungary in the same group of "illiberal" countries, rests on a hidden axiom, that of the coincidence of de jure and de facto positions (Magyar and Madlovics 2022a). This

already appears in the applied language, used for describing the regimes' phenomena. When an actor like Orbán is recognized as "prime minister," or Fidesz as a "ruling party," it is implicitly presumed that they can be described by their legal titles, and that the powers they have and the function they fulfill in the regime are those assigned to their de jure formal position in the constitution. In the case of regimes with a dominant presence of informal institutions (Hale 2015; Ledeneva 2013), these presumptions may be unjustified as the actors' formal position does not coincide with sociological reality. In mainstream hybridology, interpretation through the lens of impersonal institutions means that actors are recognized by their formal titles and competences granted to them by the institutional framework, whereas the effects of informal, personal, strong-tie networks are seen as deviances, "bribery," "corruption," and so on. The regime's fundamental character is established by the impersonal institutional framework, and its deviations are recognized only to the extent they affect these institutions.

Dissolving the axiom of coincidence of de jure and de facto positions, we can replace such a single-level approach with a dual-level one necessary for the examination of postcommunist regimes. That is, we must consider both (1) the level of impersonal institutions, where we can talk about *democratic* or *antidemocratic transformation* in terms of de jure guarantees of rule of law and the separation of powers; and (2) the level of personal networks, where we can speak of a *patronal* or *antipatronal* transformation. Patronalism can be defined, as it appears in the postcommunist context, as "the personalized exchange of concrete rewards and punishments through chains of actual acquaintance," as opposed to "abstract, impersonal principles such as ideological belief or categorization like economic class" (Hale 2015, 9). Patronalism is also a vertical relation that involves inequality of power and a high degree of unconditionality between the participants involved, i.e., the patron and his client (Eisenstadt and Roniger 1980).

Table 2 summarizes the key dimensions by which postcommunist patronal relations can be distinguished from Western-type nonpatronal relations. First, postcommunist patronal relations are dominantly informal: they exist not by virtue of bureaucratic, legally defined dependence but the de facto power a patron disposes over and can use to extort their client. Second, nonpatronal relations involve normative rules and impersonally provided benefits or punishments to certain groups, while patrons in patronal relations select among actors on a personal and discretional basis. Rewards as well as punishments are meted out with the exclusive, personal authorization of the patron and by targeting the client directly.

	Nonpatronal	**Patronal**
Institutions	**formal**	**informal**
Regulations	**normative**	**discretional**
Authorization	**collective**	**personal**
Command	**bureaucratic/ institutional chains**	**clientlist / personal chains**

Table 2. Contrasting nonpatronal and patronal relations. Source: authors' construction.

Third, patronal systems place decision-making power into the hands of a single actor, the patron, and therefore authorization held or given in these systems is personal. This is in contrast to Western-type liberal democracies, which are characterized by collective authorization and decision-making (i.e., bodies decide instead of particular people) precisely to uphold impersonality and avoid arbitrary decision-making. Finally, in liberal democracies private or public organizations develop through bureaucratic, institutional chains with several levels of formally defined actors and corresponding procedures. In contrast, in patronal regimes the organizations characterized by informal patronal relations depend on clientelist, personal chains.

As a result of informal patronalism, actors who are de jure confined to the political sphere can act beyond their formal competences and exercise power in the other spheres where their clients are located. De facto, such actors act as members of an informal network that coexists with formal institutions, and they follow the unwritten norms and interests of the network rather than the expectations of the formal, constitutional order.

Going back to the two levels of transformation, we can say that, on the level of impersonal institutions, both Poland and Hungary have experienced antidemocratic transformation, although it has been fully realized only in the Hungarian case. This may be illustrated on the mainstream democracy-dictatorship axis (figure 1).

Figure 1. Kaczyński's Poland and Orbán's Hungary on the democracy-dictatorship axis. The Polish trajectory is a dashed line, the Hungarian a continuous line. Source: authors' construction.

This presentation implies that Poland and Hungary are walking the same path—as if the same process is taking place in both countries, and the de-democratizing difference between them is only quantitative. But going from a single-level to a dual-level approach, and considering the presence or lack of patronal transformation, it can be seen that democratic backsliding in the two regimes indeed follows qualitatively different trajectories (figure 2).

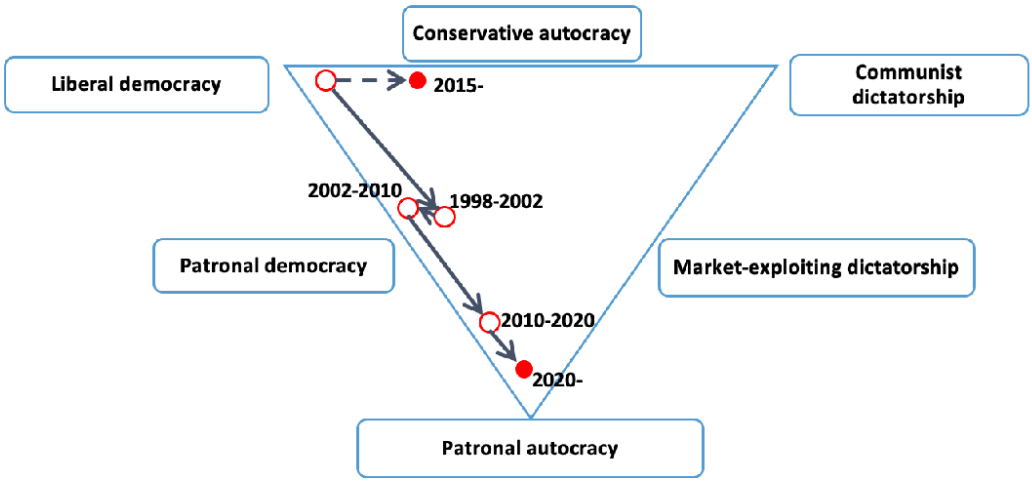

Figure 2. Modeled trajectory of the democratic backsliding of Poland and Hungary (1990–2022). The Polish trajectory is a dashed line, the Hungarian a continuous line. Source: authors' construction.

Mainstream concepts like "defective" and "illiberal democracy" recognize that the Hungarian and Polish regimes are no longer liberal democracies, but they fail to specify their nature on the level of personal networks. To embrace that level, we designed a triangular framework that keeps the democracy-dictatorship axis as its top side but expands it into a novel regime typology (Magyar and Madlovics 2020). First, we used Kornai's (2019) basic regime ideal types: *democracy*, where the government can be

removed through a peaceful and civilized procedure, and the institutions that guarantee accountability are well established; *autocracy*, where institutions that could guarantee accountability are weak; and *dictatorship*, where no legal parliamentary opposition exists (only one party runs for elections). These categories reflect the level of impersonal institutions. To capture personal networks as well, we doubled Kornai's triad into a six-regime typology: Western-type *liberal democracy*, based on pluralist power and the dominance of formal institutions (e.g., Estonia); *patronal democracy*, based on pluralistic competition but of patronal networks (e.g., Romania, Ukraine); *patronal autocracy*, dominated by a single-pyramid patronal network that breaks pluralism and embodies the unconstrained informal power of a chief patron in the political and economic spheres (e.g., Hungary, Russia); *conservative autocracy*, where the political sphere is patronalized but the economic sphere is not (e.g., Poland); *communist dictatorship*, which merged politics and the economy through the classical bureaucratic patronal network (e.g., the Soviet Union before 1989); and finally, *market-exploiting dictatorship*, which maintains a one-party system but operates the private economy in various forms (e.g., China).[4]

With these concepts, it can be said that Kaczyński's Poland represents a *conservative autocratic* attempt, while Orbán's Hungary, an established *patronal autocracy*. Conservative autocracy follows openly admitted conservative ideology, and formal, bureaucratic chains of dependence are built to subordinate the branches of power to the unrestricted implementation of this ideology. In contrast, a patronal autocracy follows its informal agenda of power monopolization and personal-wealth accumulation based on personal subordination and loyalty-based selection among political and economic actors.

While the Polish and the Hungarian trajectories move along the same horizontal axis in figure 1, adding the vertical dimension to their trajectories in figure 2 reveals the enormous qualitative difference between the two regimes.[5] The triad of of phases of de-democratization explained above—autocratic attempt, breakthrough, and consolidation—can be seen on the democracy-dictatorship axis of figure 1: Hungary went further and experienced a higher *degree* of de-democratization than Poland. But the *nature* of this process was different in the two countries as well. The dual-level approach in figure 2 reveals that even if PiS managed to go beyond autocratic attempt, it would have resulted in antidemocratic transformation but not patronal transformation. Hungary's going beyond the autocratic attempt was different not only in degree but

4 For an analysis of the countries in parentheses by this regime typology, see Magyar and Madlovics 2022a (193–251).

5 The trajectories are created, and the direction and size of the arrows is defined, by the analysis of eleven dimensions. The process of pinpointing is explained on our website: https://www.postcommunistregimes.com/appendix/. An interactive model of the complete trajectories of Hungary, Poland, and ten other countries can be found here: https://www.postcommunistregimes.com/trajectories/.

in its nature as well, as its antidemocratic transformation was carried out by a patronal actor.[6]

Figure 2 also reveals that democratic backsliding started earlier in Hungary, during the first government of Viktor Orbán (1998–2002). His rule back then already showed signs of an autocratic attempt as well as patronal transformation, breaking the autonomy of formal institutions (Sárközy 2012) and building an informal patronal network in the economy with powerful inner-circle oligarch Lajos Simicska, who was also made head of the tax office in 1998–1999 (Magyar 2001). Orbán would have succeeded had he had a two-thirds majority, that is, monopoly of political power. Thus, the democratic institutional system in this period was eroded, but it was nevertheless upheld—more or less—by the country's constitution and so-called "basic laws" that require a supermajority.

In 2002–2010, Hungary did not go back to liberal democracy but maintained a fragile equilibrium of patronal democracy. Fidesz retained informal dominance in the Prosecutor's Office, State Audit Office, and the Constitutional Court. President László Sólyom—who had weak formal powers—was also closer to Fidesz on an ideological basis than to the governing coalition. Orbán's network collaborated with the rival government forces, evoking a friendly sense of "trench truce." This has been widely recognized by the term "70/30," which meant that the illegitimate resources acquired (or simply acknowledged) in common would be divided, with 70% going to the governing party and 30% to the opposition (Mong 2003). Yet until 2010 neither access to resources nor means of sanctioning could be wholly monopolized by either political side. The parliamentary majority was normally surrounded by a colorful composition of parties in local government, and within the system a number of joint, or at least multiparty, committees had a say in the distribution of resources under state control.

When Fidesz secured a two-thirds supermajority in parliament in the 2010 elections, the autocratic breakthrough could finally happen. Unlike the Polish case, the long antidemocratic transformation of Hungary involved a steady patronal transformation, culminating in the establishment of a single-pyramid patronal network during the second Orbán government (2010–2014). The following years saw attempts at autocratic consolidation, eliminating the four autonomies of civil society, and it was further intensified with the expansion of government powers during the pandemic in 2020 (Madlovics 2020).

6 This also distinguishes the two-thirds majority after 2010 from that of the socialist-liberal government in 1994–1998, which was neither patronal nor organized into a single-pyramid network.

Comparative Analysis of a Conservative Autocratic Attempt and an Established Patronal Autocracy

After 1989, the trajectory of Poland and Hungary led to the same point: from a single-pyramid bureaucratic patronal system (communist dictatorship) to a multipyramid nonpatronal system (liberal democracy). However, their democratic backsliding had different directions. Poland went from the multipyramid nonpatronal system toward a single-pyramid nonpatronal system (conservative autocracy); whereas Hungary moved from the multipyramid nonpatronal system to a single-pyramid patronal system (patronal autocracy). Some key aspects by which Kaczyński's conservative autocratic attempt and Orbán's established patronal autocracy can be distinguished are summarized in table 3.

	Conservative autocratic attempt: Poland	**Established patronal autocracy: Hungary**
The state	**A bureaucratic authoritarian state:** an incomplete attempt to establish conservative authoritarian rule through the capture of political institutions	**A mafia state:** a business venture managed through the monopoly of instruments of public authority
Motives of the rulers	**Power and ideology:** accumulation of power and implementing ideology	**Power and personal wealth:** accumulation of power for wealth and vice versa
Actual decision-makers	**The head of executive and the governing party:** a formal body of leadership	**The chief patron and his court:** an informal body of leadership
The ruling party	**Centralized party:** decision-making centered in the leading bodies of the party, led by its president (a politician)	**Transmission belt party:** no decision-making in the party, just mediating and formalizing the wishes of the chief patron and his network
Ruling elite	**Party elite:** a political party determined by formal structure and legitimacy	**Adopted political family:** a patronal network (extended patriarchal family/clan) lacking formal structure and legitimacy

Dominance structure	**Nonpatronal network:** a chain of command in the political sphere built around the formal structure of party loyalthy	**Single-pyramid patronal network:** a centralized chain of command extending from the political sphere to every other sphere of social action, built on an informal patron-client network of vassalage and personal loyalty
Economic activity of the state	**Expanding state economy:** but still respecting free-market competition and freedom of enterprise (the loyal elite is mainly rewarded with offices and not wealth)	**Rent-seeking and centrally led corporate raiding:** wealth accumulation and patronalization of private property through the bloodless instruments of state coercion
Corruption	**State combating corruption:** sporadic cases of private actors corrupting public administration, against the will of the state authorities	**Criminal state:** top-down system constituting centralized and monopolized corruption, committing criminal acts according to current criminal code
The role of ideology	**Ideology-driven regime:** "fanatical," willing to represent ideological issues against political rationality (acts follow the ideology, value coherence)	**Ideology-applying regime:** "cynical," acting by political and economic rationality in the principle of elite interest (ideology follows the acts, functionality coherence)

Table 3. Comparative summary of Poland and Hungary (in 2022). Source: authors' construction.

The State and the Motives of the Rulers: Bureaucratic Authoritarian State vs. Mafia State

The lack of patronalism in the case of Poland means that the mainstream tools of hybridology are applicable to Kaczyński's regime. Thus we can state in line with the analysis of other scholars (Sadurski 2019; Grzymala-Busse 2019; Sata and Karolewski 2019) that since 2015 Kaczyński has enacted a series of reforms to establish autocratic rule through the capture of political institutions. Attempts to weaken the system of checks and balances and violate the rule of law, as discussed above, constitute the core of Poland's democratic backsliding, and therefore the process is mainly confined to the

political sphere and the political institutional setting. Kaczyński is motivated by power and ideology: the concentration of power goes hand in hand with the goal of achieving a hegemony of the "Christian-nationalist" value system.

Orbán's politics, on the other hand, are motivated by power and wealth: the concentration of power and the accumulation of wealth for the informal patronal network. In line with these twin motives, autocratic developments in Hungary are not confined to the formal political institutions. While Kaczyński's state can be identified as a bureaucratic authoritarian state, Orbán's state is a mafia state (Magyar 2016). As Hobsbawm (1965, 55) writes, a mafia is an adopted family, "the form of artificial kinship, which implied the greatest and most solemn obligations of mutual help on the contracting parties." At the same time, the mafia he describes is the classical mafia—we may say, a form of organized underworld—which exists in a society established along the lines of modern equality of rights. The patriarchal family in this context is a challenger to the state's monopoly of violence, while the attempt to give sanctions to the powers vested in the family head is being thwarted, as far as possible, by the state organs of public authority.

The mafia state—we may say, the organized upperworld—is a project to sanction the authority of the patriarchal head of the family on the level of a country, throughout the bodies of the democratic institutional system, with an invasion of the powers of state and its set of tools. Compared to the classical mafia, the mafia state realizes the same definitive sociological feature in a different context, making the patriarchal family not a challenger of state sovereignty but the possessor of it. What is achieved by the classical mafia by means of threats, blackmail, and—if necessary—violent bloodshed, in the mafia state is achieved through the bloodless coercion of the state, ruled by the adopted political family (see below).

In essence, the mafia state is the business venture of the adopted political family managed through the instruments of public authority: the privatized form of a parasite state. However, a mafia state also means that the patronal network is informal, and it works by the constant circumvention of formal legal rules and disabling the control mechanisms, such as checks and balances and prosecution, that would counteract the mafia's use of public authority. The mafia state is a state ruled by an adopted political family that treats democratic public institutions as private domain, routinely stepping over formal laws and operating the state as a criminal organization.

Actual Decision-Makers and the Ruling Party: Formal and Informal Institutions

A key difference between the Polish bureaucratic authoritarian state and the Hungarian mafia state lies in the informal exercise of power as opposed to formal bureaucratic chains of command. Kaczyński's regime is not completely devoid of informality (Zgut 2022) but the extent and nature of it is completely different from that of the Orbán regime. The actual decision-making remains centered within the framework of formal institutions in Poland. The PiS is a centralized party serving as a center of power.

Kaczyński occupies the peak of the power pyramid as the president of the PiS; the prime minister and the ministers of defense and the secret services have been the vice presidents of the party; and the leaders of the Sejm and the senate, as well as other ministers, have also been members of the party leadership.

Anyone with real power in the Polish regime occupies an appropriate position in the party hierarchy and fills a function in public office through this position (unless there is a constitutional prohibition on holding party and state functions together). This form of organization is focused on the concentration of power with the application of the formal, classical instruments of authoritarian systems (Linz 2000). In contrast, Fidesz looks from the outside like the "ruling" party of Hungary but in reality it is hollowed out in terms of de facto power. By 2010, encoding the personal decision-making capacities of the president in the Fidesz constitution relativized the power of the party's decision-making bodies and established a culture of centralized, one-person control (Körösényi, Illés, and Gyulai 2020).

The party, if we look at its members, is a vassal party; and if we look at its function, it is a transmission-belt party that legalizes decisions made outside of the parliament. For, as has been observed in other patronal autocracies like Russia (Kryshtanovskaya and White 2005), the actual decisions are taken away from the—nevertheless strictly controlled—bodies of the party, and through the chief patron they are transferred to the decision-making pool of the inner circle, which can be called the chief patron's court. The political insignificance of the formal leadership of Fidesz is illustrated by the list of its vice presidents, none of whom show any signs of autonomous action. However, oligarchs of the inner circle without any de jure political position (as well as the confidant of the prime minister, the communications and campaign guru Árpád Habony, who holds no position or office in formal public authority, and receives no remuneration) have real power and play a determining role in the decisions of the informal patronal network (Körösényi, Illés, and Gyulai 2020, 93).

Ruling Elite and Dominance Structure: Party Elite vs. Adopted Political Family

The ruling elite of Orbán's regime is not an order or a class but an adopted political family. This informal, clan-like organization (Collins 2006; Wedel 2003) is built along personal chains of dependence. In a pyramid-like configuration it is dominated by the patriarchal head, and it is not joined through a formal procedure but by adoption into the family. The chief patron does not govern within institutional boundaries but, on his own, disposes over positions, destinies, incomes, and wealth, whether public or private.

In Poland, an oddity of Kaczyński's rule is that he chooses to be a simple MP, not a prime minister (Sata and Karolewski 2019). He still acts within the formal institutional setting of the party and does not decide on matters like personal wealth accumulation that would reach beyond his formal office. Unlike in the clan-like mafia state, with its ruling structure stretched beyond the formal offices of public authority, relationships in Poland's power structure are not consecrated as family or kinship ties. Orbán's adopted

political family organizes different networks of extended personal acquaintance into a single-pyramid patronal network, into which not only individuals but families are incorporated. It has no formal membership, and it is based on personal loyalty rather than organizational loyalty. The classic bon mot of historian Miklós Szabó (2013), "the good communist firmly fluctuates with the party," characterizes the conservative autocratic setting. In the adopted political family, where one's de facto power position does not coincide necessarily with their formal administrative position, it is personal loyalty to the patron that matters rather than loyalty to a formal organization like the (transmission-belt) party.

Economy and Corruption: Market Economy with State Activism vs. Relational Economy with Predation

The party elite and the adopted political family differ in the distribution of favors among members. Party political nepotism in Poland means the distribution of state-political positions, state-commercial positions, media positions, and sinecures among PiS cadres. In order to make this easier, they have lowered the professional requirements to fill certain positions. Loyal members of the power pyramid are rewarded with office and not wealth. This is underlined by the work of Polish investigative journalists, who found in public data at least nine hundred people from the PiS community with employment in state-owned energy companies like KGHM and PKN Orlen (Mikołajewska 2021).

In the economy, the Kaczyński regime prefers centralized regulation and state investment as the main vehicles of development instead of foreign direct investment, accompanied by economic xenophobia and gradually extending state control over some parts of the economy via "crawling renationalization" (Kozarzewski and Bałtowski 2019; Rohac 2018). On the other hand, there is no evidence to date that the PiS would seek to replace the economic elite, to expropriate, redistribute, and channel private property into its own fields of interest. No new layer of owners has been brought up; there are no inner-circle "Kaczyński oligarchs," nor ones that are systematically built through discretional state support. Centralized top-down corruption is not present in the Polish regime (Zgut 2022).

Orbán's patronal autocracy features top-down, monopolized, and centralized corruption. The techniques of predation and centrally led corporate raiding (Madlovics and Magyar 2021b; Sallai and Schnyder 2020) involve the concerted operation of parliament, government, the tax authorities, the Governmental Control Office, the Prosecutor's Office, and the police. Traditional corruption is suppressed: it is not state officials who are offered bribes, but the state criminal organization that collects protection monies. The fortunes of the political family are piled up by the front men, the oligarchs belonging to the inner circle, laundering it through means supported by the state and the introduction of offshore companies and private equity funds (Szopkó 2022; Bódis 2021).

Corruption in the Polish autocratic regime is a deviance from the norm, and an act prosecuted by the authorities. Corruption in Hungary is a state function. In 2011–2021, over one-fifth of the EU funds distributed in public procurements were won by the same circle of twelve people (Tóth and Hajdu 2022). Lőrinc Mészáros, Viktor Orbán's childhood friend and the former mayor of his home village, was turned from a gas fitter, who in twenty years had amassed modest wealth, into Hungary's richest man, with approximately 479 billion forints (1.5 billion Euro) in 2021, which he won through EU tenders while he produced virtually nothing for export or the open market (Tóth 2019). The odds of winning, a metric proposed by István János Tóth and Miklós Hajdu, clearly indicate the presence of guided bids: in the 2011–2020 period, Mészáros won eight out of nine EU-funded tenders he applied for, while the industrial average was one out of three.[7]

For the time being, PiS's autocratic attempt in Poland respects market competition, the private economy, and private property. While the regime may have moved further from the ideal type of an open-access order, to use the category of North, Wallis, and Weingast (2009), it is still true of the Polish economy that entrepreneurs, as the authors write, "do not need to participate in politics to maintain their rights, to enforce contracts, or to ensure their survival from expropriation; their right to exist and compete does not depend on maintaining privileges." In the case of Hungary, the market economy is replaced by a relational economy, where property has a conditional character. Any actor's property may be taken over on a discretional basis if they challenge the interests of the chief patron.

The Role of Ideology: Ideology-Driven vs. Ideology-Applying Regime

Finally, Kaczyński is more ideology driven than Orbán, acting on the basis of a coherent set of values. Occasional "inconsistencies" in his case do not mean a multitude of 180-degree turns, as in the case of Orbán. As conceived by Jarosław Kaczyński, the state and the Catholic Church operate closely entwined. "The Church is an organic component of being Polish," as he put it. It follows from this that the liberal value system built on the autonomy of the individual is viewed as an enemy, since the nation considers the interests of the Polish collective as higher than the interests of the individual. At the same time, this church-state ideology essentially accepts free-market competition and respects freedom of enterprise because it considers the collectivist economy a greater enemy, a "communist invention" that destroyed Poland. It should be noted here that a majority of Polish society also rejects collectivism (Inglehart 2007).

Orbán's patronal autocracy is not ideology driven but ideology applying. Its ideological "coherence" is not achieved by the representation of a definite value system. Rather, it features "functionality coherence," meaning it uses ideological frames that fit

7 We are grateful to István János Tóth for making these data available to us.

with the patterns of enacted power tied to the patriarchal head of the family. It follows that it deals with the liberal value system built on the autonomy of the individual as an enemy. But it only chooses from leftist or collectivist values with caution. When necessary, it relies on the frames of social demagogy (Bozóki 2015). It pragmatically uses those conservative-collectivist values (religion, nation, and family) that can be attached to a centralized chain of command built on a patron-client network of vassalage.

Different Regimes, Common Ideological Frames: The Applicability of Right-Wing Nationalist Panels to Conservative and Patronal Regimes

Legitimacy Frames and the Divergent Policies Attached to Them

The divergent approaches of the two autocratic tendencies to ideology do not in the meantime exclude the possibility of common ideological frames. The main ideological panels used by Kaczyński and Orbán, as well as the media, journalists, and opinion makers on their side, can be summed up as follows:

- *They define their governance not as changes of government, but as changes of regime.* Already during his first administration, Kaczyński spoke about the need to build a "fourth republic." Since 2015, he has often described his governance as "cultural counterrevolution" (Hoppe and Puhl 2016) and stated that "the present Constitution of the Republic of Poland can be safely called postcommunist," using the adjective in a negative rather than a descriptive sense (Do Rzeczy 2017). In 2010, Orbán spoke of his victory as a "revolution at the ballot box," and he argued that it was one of "such moments in Hungarian history" like "the revolution in 1948 or the revolution in 1956, and . . . the regime change in 1990" (cited in Szilágyi and Bozóki 2015). At the same time, the period since the 1990 regime change was described as the "two turbulent decades" in the official Declaration of National Cooperation (Hungarian National Assembly 2010).

- *They distance themselves from the postcommunist regime change of thirty years ago, and interpret the history of that peaceful, negotiated process as a deal between elites concluded over the heads of society.* Kaczyński described the negotiations preceding the Polish regime change as having "proceeded in an atmosphere of moral ambiguity." He added that "the old and new times, the Polish People's Republic and independent Poland, were not separated. The inauguration element was missing. The Bastille had not been torn down. The Round Table was definitely not that, and neither was June 4, 1989. . . . It is not known where the PRL ends and the free republic begins" (Kaczyński 2014). Orbán contrasted the regime changes

of 1990 and 2010 as the "liberal" and the "national transformation," respectively, and added that "our task [in 1990–2010] was to defeat the returning successor groups of the socialist system in a political battle" (Orbán 2019). The Declaration of National Cooperation also speaks about "pacts" in the 1990 regime change, unambiguously referring to the nation-wide discourse of the "stolen regime change" that was an elite deal to the detriment of the people (Szűcs 2015).

- *They share a particular form of Euroskepticism and continue a "national freedom struggle against the dictatorship of Brussels" on the basis of a historicized grievance politics.* When asked about the EU's criticisms regarding the state of the rule of law in Poland, Kaczyński said: "We will not succumb to any blackmail. We fight hard, we will not give way in matters of fundamental importance to the state and Poles. . . . We defend Polish sovereignty; we also defend Polish rights in the EU, because they are now undermined brazenly, illegitimately, and in contradiction to treaties" (dziennik.pl 2021). Orbán argues that only "we Hungarians" have the right to decide in the cases of national interest. As he declared on March 15, 2012, on the national holiday commemorating the Hungarian revolution of 1848, Hungary "will not be a colony" of the EU. "For us," he added, "freedom means that we are not ranked lower than others. It means that we also deserve respect. . . . We need no guidelines and we want none of the unasked-for help of the foreign who want to lead our hand. We know the nature of unasked-for comradely help and we are able to note it also in the case when it is dressed not in a uniform with epaulets but in a well-cut suit" (Orbán 2012).

- *They refer to Christianity as the basic core value of the nation that has to be protected against attacks from Western progressivism.* Christianity has been always the moral basis for Kaczyński's abovementioned "counterrevolution," and for the conservatism of PiS in general. Recently, he talked about the church being under "brutal attack," and that "he who raises his hand against the [Catholic] Church and wants to destroy it, he raises his hand against Poland" (TVP 2019). Elsewhere, he explained that if the Poles do not defend their values they will end up like Ireland, which has become "a Catholic desert with LGBT ideology totally out of control" (TVP 2020). Orbán, a few years after his declaration of the "illiberal state" in 2014, argued that "I can't give a better definition of the meaning of illiberal politics than Christian liberty. Christian freedom and protecting Christian freedom. Illiberal politics working for Christian freedom seeks to preserve everything

that liberals neglect, forget, and despise." He added that "today there are two attacks on Christian freedom. The first comes from within, and comes from liberals: the abandonment of Europe's Christian culture. And there is an attack from outside, which is embodied in migration, with the result of this—if not its goal—being the destruction of the Europe that we knew as Europe" (Orbán 2019). Both the Polish and the Hungarian leaderships and government-aligned media find the model of the traditional family as one of the key Christian values under attack from the liberal progressive movements of the West (Grzebalska and Pető 2018).

- *They organize government campaigns to transform existing fears and suspicions of refugees, migrants, and aliens into active xenophobia.* The refugee crisis of 2015–2016 underwent politicization and mediatization in both Poland and Hungary, with both governments responding in a dismissive, xenophobic tone. In a speech in the parliament, Kaczyński talked about "the danger that . . . [when] the number of foreigners suddenly increases, then they do not obey—do not want to obey, they declare they do not want to obey—our customs . . . and then or even simultaneously they impose their sensitivity and their claims in the public space in different spheres of life, and they do so in a very aggressive and violent way." He added "we have to divide firmly between refugees, who really are fleeing the war, [and] economic migrants. . . . And who created . . . the magnet of inducing all economic migrants? Germany. . . . Orbán was right here, it is their problem, not ours" (cited in Krzyżanowski 2018). In 2015, Orbán exploited the tension between the anxiety of citizens and the inadequacy of European institutions to handle the European migrant crisis by organizing a "national consultation," an anti-immigrant billboard campaign, and the 2016 referendum on alleged migrant quotas to be defined by the EU (Madlovics 2017). The result of the campaign was striking: in 2014–2018, the ratio of people with positive sentiment towards non-EU migrants decreased in Poland and Hungary by 20% and 43%, respectively, while the EU average increased by 17% in the same period (Economist 2018). In 2016, 82% of Hungarians and 75% of Poles opined that refugees were a burden on their country, while the EU median was 50% (Wike, Stokes, and Simmons 2016). In Hungary, the level of xenophobia increased from 41% to 53% in 2015–2016, and 82% of all Hungarians in 2016 claimed that accepting refugees would have no positive effects at all (Sik 2016; Madlovics 2017).

The question arises: how can the ideological frames of two different forms of autocracy be so similar? Or, to put it differently: how can right-wing nationalist and

conservative panels, the arguments for national sovereignty and Christian values, be equally adaptable to the needs of a conservative and a patronal autocracy?

The answer is twofold. First, three of the five frames listed above center not on policy issues but issues of legitimacy. They are designed to legitimize the government and in parallel delegitimize any alternative position or criticism. Being unrelated to the actual functioning of the regime, these ideological panels can be used in relation to either conservative or patronal goals, which are presented as the only legitimate position.[8]

The general argumentative pattern is as follows: the government can label any position as "common good" or "national interest," and therefore make opposition to it illegitimate and anti-nation; and when it comes to justifying concrete acts of de-democratization, the autocrats criticize the status quo they want to change (they give a "diagnosis") and present their action as the solution (the "therapy"). But the diagnosis and the therapy are logically detached. The function of the former is only to legitimize changing the status quo, and to delegitimize any criticism of the change as a defense of the status quo. This is the key of the narrative of "actual regime change." Talking about the "turbulent decades" to be replaced, and the new "moral foundations" of the new era, the government grants itself the right to decide on the actual contents of the regime change—whereas everyone who criticizes them is framed as an opponent of change and, therefore, a supporter of the lack of change, i.e., of the illegitimate past. This is underpinned by symbolic legislation as well as the exclusion of opposition actors from the nation, which is redefined as a community of people committed to the government's ideology.

The narrative of "national freedom fight" is designed for the international arena, but it moves once again the question of the debate from what the government does to who has the right to decide on what to do—in other words, to legitimacy. On this basis, it is argued that foreign actors (from the EU to multinational NGOs and even influential individuals like George Soros) interfere with the actions of the elected government and therefore exert illegitimate influence against the legitimate holder of popular (national) sovereignty. At the same time, domestic opposition is presented as an agent of the foreign interferers, putting "the real sovereign who dares to follow his interests" in "a 'political vise' constituted by the allied local and Euro-Atlantic opponents," in the words of one of Orbán's longtime advisers (Tellér 2014).

Unlike traditional nationalism, the nationalism of these regimes is not directed against other nations but against those within the nation who are not part of the ruling elite, those who are not subordinated to the regime as clients, and those who oppose the regime. Kaczyński once stated that "our political opponents are ready to treat Poland as

8 The rhetorical stance of only one legitimate position and the resultant antipluralism are key components of populism (Pappas 2019; Müller 2016). At the same time, we do not label Kaczyński populist, only Orbán, because we associate further components with populism that Kaczynski does not have (see Madlovics and Magyar 2021a).

an addition to Germany. We want to be a great European nation—our opponents do not want to, because they know that when Poland is a great European nation, this 'elite' will have nothing to say in Poland" (rp.pl 2020). In 2013, Orbán stated:

> [W]e know that Hungarian freedom had not only heroes but it had traitors as well. We know that all of our revolutions were crushed from foreign lands. We know that, too, that there always were ones who helped the foreign enemy. . . . We know that they were and they always are those who are ready to give Hungary to colonizers again. . . . [They want to take] away the chance that indeed we, the Hungarians, could decide about our own life. Not about politics and not about political parties—about our own life. (Orbán 2013)

However, the Polish and Hungarian leaderships differ in what they use these arguments for, that is, in the actual content of the "revolutionary" politics they carry out. Kaczyński does not use the legitimacy frames to protect an ideologically eclectic assortment of policy positions. An ideology-driven actor, he defines his opponents on an ideological basis, not on a family or clan basis. The acts Kaczyński undertakes in the name of "cultural counterrevolution" and reverting Poland back to its conservative Roman Catholic roots reflect a value-coherent right-wing conservative program. In contrast, Orbán seeks to create a basis of legitimacy and an argument for excluding citizens critical of his regime from the nation, painting them as representatives of alien interests in order to defend the realization of rent-seeking and predatory policies on a national scale. Orbán's "sovereignism" or populism does not "drive" the system; the system's corrupt and autocratic functioning does not follow from these panels but it is the other way around. The panels follow from the functioning, which demands at least a vague legitimizing instrument.[9]

The last two of the ideological frames listed above are used in a different manner, and with different policy consequences, by ideology-driven and ideology-applying actors. They are similar in words, but not in deeds. With respect to the Christian basis of the regime, and to opposition to immigration, Kaczyński undertakes action while Orbán does not; Kaczyński pays the political price for insisting on policies that are ideologically important but bring no other (e.g., personal or economic) benefit. In Poland, the Kaczyński regime insists on a strict abortion law, even though such a policy is opposed by more than two-thirds of Poles (Roache 2019). Orbán would never undertake such politically harmful action that carries no private material gains for the

9 Ideological panels are attached to wealth accumulation in Hungary, too; however, they cannot be seen as regime drivers—either because the regime metes out rewards and punishments not on the basis of being "national" or "Hungarian," as it is claimed (cf. Lánczi 2015) but on the basis of being loyal. For further discussion, see Madlovics and Magyar (2021b); Magyar and Madlovics (2020, 582–87); Madlovics (2015).

adopted political family. Changes that were met with popular discontent have been introduced in Hungary, like the reform of education, but that also contributed to the goals of establishing structures of patronal dependence in the society, as well as wealth accumulation (Andor 2017). When such goals were not involved, the Orbán regime was willing to renounce its policies in the face of social resistance, such as in the case of the internet tax (Magyar 2016).

The Russian Invasion of Ukraine: Divergent Foreign Policy on Ideology-Driven and Ideology-Applying Bases

One further example of divergent policies attached to common ideological frames is foreign policy. For a long time, the Polish and the Hungarian leaderships supported each other in disputes with the EU, and both claim to be in a "national freedom fight" against the EU. But Orbán's reaction to rule-of-law criticisms from European institutions was more pragmatic. When the European Commission found that a new Hungarian law violated some EU provision, the government usually backed down and initiated cosmetic changes, just enough to be necessary to appease the critics. Orbán himself described this strategy as a "peacock dance" (Kingsley 2018). This strategy was alien to Kaczyński, and until recently, for example, the Polish government seemed unwavering in changing the laws that undermined the independence of the judiciary, despite EU criticism.

The real breaking point between the Kaczyński and the Orbán regimes on the international scene was reached after Russia invaded Ukraine, a neighbor of both Poland and Hungary, in 2022. Already before the war one of the cornerstones of Polish foreign policy was that Russia is a threat to Poland at all times. The PiS government has taken up the cause of the independence of any country or people fighting against Russia (Ukraine, Chechnya, Georgia), and supported the maintenance of the sovereignty of the Baltic states by every means it has at its disposal. Accordingly, Warsaw has usually criticized the West for not fully backing these causes.

In Hungary, the foreign policy of "Eastern Opening" aims to secure socially unchecked, freely expendable resources for the adopted political family through its connections to Putin and other autocrats. This is not traditional international commerce, as the primary good Hungary offers is its disloyalty to the EU, for which the adopted political family gains financial favors. Russian gas diplomacy, the renovation of the Paks II Nuclear Power Plant, and other similar deals put Hungary in an indebted, dependent position in exchange for private benefit (Pethő and Szabó 2018; Ara-Kovács 2017).

The Russian invasion of Ukraine coincided with the campaign period of the 2022 Hungarian national elections. Orbán found himself in a situation where the victim was supported by his formal ally he had previously attacked, the EU (and with it the US), while on the other hand he was tied to the aggressor, Russia, in a patron-client relationship. From the point of view of purely domestic power politics focused on winning the election, the obvious position would have been the support of Ukraine. This

was the position taken by most Western actors, governments, and opposition parties, as well as by all postcommunist members of NATO except Hungary.

Instead of such a *value-coherent* position, Orbán had to find a *functionally coherent* frame—one that was in line with his geopolitical path dependence. He had to reverse the emerging sympathy toward Ukrainians in the Hungarian population while balancing his international position between formal obligations to the EU and NATO and informal, corrupt obligations to Putin. Accordingly, Fidesz voters were absolved from showing solidarity with the victim and allowed to indulge themselves in openly asserted egoism. "Hungary must stay out of war" and "Hungarians should not pay the price of war" became the slogans of the government, legitimizing the rejection of solidarity in the name of collective national selfishness. The moral obligation to support Ukraine was further undermined by the public media spreading Kremlin propaganda (PC 2022) and the denunciation of Volodymyr Zelensky, who was called by Orbán an adversary in his victory speech (BBC 2022b). Already at the beginning of March 2022, a quarter of Fidesz voters blamed the Ukrainians for the conflict; by the end of the month, 43% of them opined that Russia's aggression was justified (HVG 2022).

Orbán is a corrupt client, whereas Kaczyński is a strategic opponent, of Putin. This explains the opposite reaction of the Polish government. Although it was not prepared for such a crisis, the Polish state took a leading role in the admission of Ukrainian refugees and delivering Western weapon supplies to Ukraine, strengthening its political position in NATO as well as the EU (Csurgó 2022). In March 2022, Kaczyński was among the first European leaders to visit Kyiv, and he called for a NATO peacekeeping mission to Ukraine and the recognition of Russia as a sponsor of terrorism (Higgins 2022; BBC 2022a). Mateusz Morawiecki, the prime minister of Poland, expressed sympathy for those "killed by Putin" in a war where "freedom fights against the world of tyranny," and he said that "Ukraine is the guardian of European values," which Europe must not lose (Visegrád Post 2022).

It was not long before the Polish and Hungarian positions clashed. When Orbán refused to explicitly condemn Russia over the events in Bucha, saying that an investigation should come first since "we live in a time of mass manipulation," Kaczyński said: "When Orbán says that he cannot see what happened in Bucha, he must be advised to see an eye doctor." He added that he had an "unequivocally negative" opinion of Orbán's attitude, which was "very sad" and a "disappointment" (Politico 2022), and that he had "no intention of underestimating" the "very serious problem with Hungary" (WPROST.pl 2022). In a speech in July, Orbán admitted that the war had "shaken Polish-Hungarian cooperation, which was [previously] the axis of cooperation in the Visegrád Group," an assessment echoed by Morawiecki as well (Tilles 2022).

In spite of similar ideological frames, the alliance of Poland and Hungary in the Visegrád Four (V4) was more of a tactical cooperation of regimes with different strategic visions. Orbán wanted to strengthen his position against Brussels in the framework of the V4 as a "blackmailing alliance," while Kaczyński wanted to have Poland's status as a regional middle power within the EU recognized. The two autocracies cooperated

and defended each other in EU forums only as long as Orbán's patronal-pragmatic and Kaczyński's conservative-ideological goals did not contradict each other.

In short, the international crisis forced the Polish and the Hungarian regimes to show their actual nature. The Kaczyński regime followed its ideological position, being an ideology-driven conservative autocratic attempt, whereas the Orbán regime created a suitable ideology for its patronal preferences, being an ideology-applying patronal autocracy.

Conclusion

The different nature of autocracy that emerged in Poland and Hungary was obscured in part by their common right-wing ideological frames, and their cooperation against the EU's criticisms of the state of the rule of law in the two countries. Now the two regimes' divergent reactions to the Russian invasion of Ukraine have led observers to recognize the divergent paths of de-democratization taken by Kaczyński and Orbán.

Kaczyński and Orbán both came to power with regime-changing ambitions and moved their countries from liberal democracy, but their actions cannot be properly interpreted along a linear democracy-dictatorship axis. Instead, we argue for a dual-level approach, represented here by a triangular framework of six ideal-type regimes. Focusing only on formal political institutions, the difference between Poland and Hungary is that of an autocratic attempt and an autocratic breakthrough; taking into account the sociological background, and the informal personal networks as well, we can observe the distance between a conservative and a patronal autocracy.[10]

Kaczyński's right-wing conservative regime is ideology driven, and its positions show value coherence; Orbán's mafia state is ideology applying, and its positions show functionality coherence. The Orbán regime uses ideology with value-free pragmatism. It assembles the ideological garb suitable to the anatomy of its autocratic nature from an eclectic assortment of ideological frames. It is not the ideology that shapes the system by which it rules, but the system that shapes the ideology—with a huge degree of freedom and variability. Analyzing the policies of Kaczyński and the PiS, one can find at their core a conservative, "Christian-nationalist" value system; but attempting to explain the driving forces underlying the power machinery of the Orbán regime from nationalism or religious values is as futile an experiment as trying to deduce the nature and operations of the Sicilian mafia from local patriotism, family centeredness, and Christian devotion.

While Kaczyński's PiS has been reelected in Poland, there are still strong chances of defeating the Polish conservative autocratic attempt. This is ensured by a proportional electoral system, social traditions of resistance to authority, the existence of moderate

10 For the interactive, visual presentation of the Polish and the Hungarian trajectories, see https://www.postcommunistregimes.com/trajectories/?countries=pl+hu.

right and liberal parties, and their access to firm media platforms for freedom of expression. The four autonomies of civil society, given that there has been no autocratic breakthrough or consolidation, are curtailed to a much lesser degree than in Hungary. At the same time, the possibility of a Hungarian scenario unfolding in Poland is also prevented by the very character of the PiS, its personal composition, principles, and program, as well as by the tradition and present composition of the Polish right. The chances of the opposition surmounting Hungary's patronal autocracy within the framework of the current institutional system are far more limited, especially considering that Fidesz has been reelected three times with a supermajority. The disproportional and manipulative electoral system, the lack of social traditions of resistance, the lack of a moderate right-wing or liberal party for any voters decamping from Fidesz, and the elimination and/or neutralization of spaces for freedom of expression forecast a continued path toward autocratic consolidation.

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ARTICLE

Three Routes to Autocratic Rule: Market Reforms, Politics, and Masculinist Performance in the Making of Right-Wing Regimes

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Abstract: *How do the economy, right-wing legacies, and personal style shape today's autocracies? Analysts have commented that especially three contemporary autocrats—Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Narendra Modi, and Rodrigo Duterte—have similar styles, motivations, or bases of support. Yet, this paper will show that the paths that took them to their thrones are quite distinct. Neoliberalization had disorganized society in Turkey, India, and the Philippines. The rule of "strongmen," in response, showed the way out of this disorganization. The main divergence, however, is that Erdoğanism introduced statism and mass organization as against the disorganizing thrust of neoliberalization. Modi parallels Erdoğan in the civic-paramilitary aspects of rule, but not in statism. Other than a weak infrastructure thrust, Duterte did not make the economy into a central issue in the way Erdoğan and Modi did. Moreover, he did not deploy civic activism at all. These three routes have thoroughly shaped and differentiated the autocrats' styles too, even though all involve a heavy resort to masculinity. Coming from a thick tradition of mass politics and moving in a state-capitalist direction, Erdoğan's performance incorporates women's civic mobilization and heavily emphasizes fertility and productivity. Shorn of such anchors and bedeviled by a fragmented polity, Duterte's rule sexualizes violence rather than production. Modi's celibate masculinity is similar to Erdoğan's in its dramatization of size and production but downplays reproduction, except for deepening the ethnic divide his party relies on. These differences have culminated in hegemonic autocracy in Turkey, ethnic autocracy in India, and oligarchic autocracy in the Philippines.*

Keywords: hegemony, autocracy, oligarchy, neoliberalism, masculinity, right-wing movements, statism

How do the economy, right-wing legacies, and personal style shape today's autocracies? Sweeping generalizations regarding contemporary authoritarian leaders lead us to neglect some core differences between them. After listing a dozen autocrats including Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Narendra Modi, and Rodrigo Duterte, one scholar states: "These individuals are *cut from the same cloth*, sharing an approach, an agenda, and a style. They

sound the same notes, appeal to the same followers, and advocate the same policies" (Hibbing 2022, 48, emphasis added). Some less sweeping generalizations point out commonalities between authoritarian populists of the Global South that distinguish them from those of advanced capitalist countries: Erdoğan, Modi, Bolsonaro, and Duterte all represent the winners of globalization rather than its losers (Foa 2021; Kumral 2022), the alleged backers of Trumpism.[1] By contrast, this paper calls for a more differentiating analysis of the dynamics of autocratic rule in the Global South.

Both journalists (Heydarian 2017) and academics (Arsel, Adaman, and Saad-Filho 2021; Contractor 2017; Kaul 2021) have commented that especially three of these autocrats—Erdoğan, Modi, and Duterte—have quite similar styles of rule, motivations, or bases of support (Larres 2022, xix). Yet, this paper will show that the paths that took them to their thrones are quite distinct. Moreover, one of them, Duterte, was also markedly different in terms of the way he ruled. In a nutshell, Erdoğan and Modi come from right-wing social movements and have relied on them to consolidate their rule. Duterte, by contrast, had no movement history, even though he has a special relationship to the anticommunist traditions of his country.

Some more commonalities do run across these cases. Neoliberalism has disorganized society in all three countries. The rule of "strongmen," in response, showed the way out of this disorganization without disrupting the entirety of neoliberalization. The main divergence, however, is that Erdoğanism introduced statism and mass organization as against the disorganizing thrust of neoliberalization (Tuğal 2022; Yabanci 2016). Modi parallels him in the civic-paramilitary aspects of rule but not in statism, even though presenting an economic vision was central to his appeal too (Chacko 2018; Jaffrelot 2015a). Other than a weak infrastructure thrust, Duterte did not make the economy into a central issue in the way Erdoğan and Modi did. Moreover, he did not deploy civic activism at all, even though he expanded the paramilitary reach of the state (Curato 2016; Rafael 2022; Rodan 2021).

We can tentatively, and with some caveats, call these three routes to autocracy (1) hegemonic,[2] (2) ethnic, and (3) oligarchic. Erdoğanism has thoroughly transformed Turkey's social, political, and economic structure. The analogous "Dutertismo," by contrast, has led to very little structural change and mostly reproduced entrenched oligarchic patterns of rule. Modi's regime stands somewhere in between but has so far been reactive rather than constructive like Erdoğan's. Whereas the contrast between

I would like to thank the editors and two anonymous referees for their ample critical feedback, comments, and criticisms.

1 The loose term "populism" obscures fundamental differences between these leaders. Even though they all voice hostility to the elite and to minorities in the name of a virtuous people (which constitutes the definition of populism as a logic of politics, see Laclau 1977), this paper will show that the reason they voice this hostility, their manner of expressing it, and the way structural dynamics shape these reasons and manners are dissimilar.

2 I use hegemony in Gramsci's (1971) sense: the unification, driven by "force plus consent," of state and civil society around a common set of (still contested) ideas and practices.

Erdoğan's rule and Duterte's is clearly one of "kind," that between Erdoğan's and Modi's is partially of kind, and partially of degree. Modi's ethnic autocracy is unapologetic and unwavering in its exclusion of Muslims. Erdoğanism, by contrast, is now ethnic, now cross-ethnic. Although Erdoğan's *Islamic* stance is explicit, the *Turkish-Sunni* basis of his rule is frequently denied or semi-denied in public, unlike Modi's explicit and public stance for "Hindutva" (a Hindu nationalist line based more explicitly on the exclusion of large minorities).

A similar differentiation is needed regarding these rulers' gendered performances. Whereas many analysts have emphasized the shared masculinism of "strongmen" (Gökarıksel, Neubert, and Smith 2019; Kaul 2021), this paper draws attention to what differentiates their gendered populism. This difference, although it has its own dynamics, is shaped by and reinforces other structural differences of these autocracies. Arguelles and Gregorio (2020, x–xi) state that "[p]opulism is a global phenomenon and its gendered nature is one of the elements most common to all cases. Similar to Duterte, casual sexism and promotion of sexual violence against women are prominent features of the speeches of populist politicians. . . . Despite the diverse socio-political contexts of these countries, a feminist analysis reveals a striking similarity among these populist leaders: a shared and deeply embedded ethos of hegemonic patriarchal norms." Problematic generalizations of this kind gloss over crucial contrasts, such as the active and organized women's support for autocratic masculinism in Turkey (Yabanci 2016), which did not have a counterpart in the Philippines (where most Duterte supporters are not civically organized). Moreover, Erdoğan's "fatherhood" is meant to unite the good citizens and increase their fertility (and thereby the population's productivity); by contrast, Duterte sexualized violence rather than production. Modi is much more similar to Erdoğan than to Duterte in the realm of masculinity, too, but relatively speaking, his celibate masculinity emphasizes development more than reproduction.

These differences and similarities in gendered performance become more interpretable when they are discussed in the context of the three countries' political and economic differences. This article therefore seeks to integrate performativity studies (Goffman 1959; Moffitt 2016) with more institutional and political-economic ones. In contrast to some of the literature, which is too leader- and performance-centered, I treat these performances more as *core components* rather than *causes* of authoritarianism. However, these do have strong trickle-down effects (as they further strengthen the parties and the regimes) and cannot be treated simply as "dependent variables." In other words, the primary forces that differentiate these regimes are political and economic, but this should not lead us to ignore gendered performance, as some political economists have done. The masculine performances of these leaders cannot be handled as curious side effects either, since they are quite intentional.

The following case analyses all start with mapping out the basic socioeconomic structures of each country before the rise of its autocrat. The sections on Turkey and

India then discuss how right-wing movements have interacted with these structures, and the section on the Philippines explores the implications of its oligarchic structure for (the paucity of) mass organization and mobilization. The third part of each case study focuses on structural changes induced by autocratic rule. Each case narrative ends with a study of how the autocrat's persona enables, reflects, and reorganizes his rule.

Turkey: Hegemonic Autocracy

Pre-Erdoğan Neoliberalization

The import-substituting industrialization (ISI) model in Turkey entered its terminal crisis at the end of the 1970s, under the pressure of not only stagflation but also increasingly militant labor movements. A military intervention in 1980 repressed labor and ushered in an era of market-oriented growth with high inflation. This new economy created many winners from across multiple classes, but it also resulted in growing inequalities. Market reforms got stuck in the 1990s as even centrist labor organizations remobilized to fight against them (Karataşlı 2015).

Hodgepodge coalition governments shifted the attention away from the economy and to struggles against Kurdish and Islamic mobilization. A military intervention in 1997 was backed by most business and labor organizations due to its promise that it would nip Islamization in the bud (Akça 2014, 24, 28). The bitter military fight against the Kurdish movement was also crowned by the arrest of its leader, Abdullah Öcalan, which resulted in a temporary cessation of hostilities. Centrist parties' hope that the mismanagement of the economy would be excused given these "victories" panned out only until the rise of a new Islamic market-oriented party (Keyder 2004): the Justice and Development Party (AKP). The establishment was taken by surprise since Islamist politics had thus far been (mistakenly) associated with backward-looking provincial forces. That perception was based on an ignorance of the country's quite rich right-wing legacies. These legacies are among the primary determinants of Erdoğanism's rise and persistence.

Right-Wing Traditions

Under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and his Republican People's Party (CHP), ethnic, class, and religious organizations were repressed in the 1920s and 1930s. Religious networks did, however, lead a clandestine life in these decades and then resurfaced with abundant vitality especially after the 1940s (Mardin 1989). Initially, rather than constituting a far-right alternative to the secular republic, they supported the centrist-conservative parties (DP, AP, and in the 1980s and 1990s, ANAP and DYP).[3]

3 These were the Democrat Party (DP), the Justice Party (AP), the Motherland Party (ANAP), and the True Path Party (DYP).

To the right of these conservative forces was an emergent ethnic nationalist line. Along with Alparslan Türkeş, an officer who was influenced more by Franco's Spain than by the Nazis, a few politicians gradually broke ranks with both the Kemalist center and the conservative main opposition. These forces coalesced into the Nationalist Action Party (MHP) in the 1960s. Even though the nationalist far right had solid sociological bases in modernity's existential and structural crises (Bora and Can 1991), it focused mostly on defeating the left rather than offering a program of its own. The main social bases of the MHP included rural to urban immigrants who mostly worked in the informal sector, small businessmen, traders and merchants, and peasants. The party's program and manuals offered only jumbled solutions to their problems (see, for example, Türkeş 1977).

The "left" they were reacting to initially consisted of anti-imperialist and antimarket interpretations of Atatürk's legacy. Nevertheless, growing mobilization gave rise to many splinter groups with more Marxist tendencies. From a right-wing point of view, all of these groups came to be framed as "communist." Militants dubbed "Grey Wolves" got organized under *Ülkü Ocakları* (Ideal Hearths), where paramilitary training was intertwined with anticommunist indoctrination. By the end of the 1970s, Grey Wolf–led ethnoreligious and political pogroms (as well as clashes between the Grey Wolves and several far-left factions) had culminated in a full-scale civil war, leading to thousands of deaths (McDowall 2007, 414–16).

It was in this atmosphere of paramilitary violence that a new actor emerged on the right. In contrast to the MHP, the emergent religious intellectuals and politicians were more motivated to challenge the established business interests, which were mostly represented by the conservative party (AP) of the time and business associations such as TÜSİAD. This challenge, and its attempted suppression, led to the founding of the religious-right National Order Party (MNP, afterward named the National Salvation Party, or MSP) (Sarıbay 1985).

This is also when a distinctively Islamic economy entered the public debate, even though neither the ideas nor the organization for this were yet mature. Despite sharing much of the conservatives' and the MHP's concerns regarding creeping "communism," the MSP's anti–big business stance led to a short-lived coalition between the Islamists and the CHP in 1974. By the end of the decade, however, the MSP participated in "national front" governments with the MHP and AP, even while the Grey Wolves were starting to target (and even kill) Islamist activists along with leftists (Albayrak 1989).

The harshest military coup in Turkish history, that led by Kenan Evren in 1980, closed down all existing parties and most associations, using left-right clashes as an excuse. The coup's not-so-hidden agenda, however, was implementing the market reforms formulated by planning bureaucrat Turgut Özal. The generals also commissioned a new constitution along anti–social rights lines (Parla 2016). MHP leaders exclaimed in amazement during their military trials: "We are in prison, but our ideas are in power!" (Doğan 2012). While permitting new parties in a controlled way after 1983, the

generals also staffed the military and civil bureaucracy with religious orders that had remained loyal to the conservative party.

Islamists regrouped under the Welfare Party (RP), which—as the name hints—aimed to steal the fire of social justice from the left. At this point, the left was disorganized by the military, and then demoralized due to the breakup of the Eastern bloc. Inspired by socialist-minded Islamists, the RP now formulated an economic program called the Just Order. Before its appropriation by the party, "the Just Order" was the motto of Owenite Islamists who were building Islamic communes. These included cooperative housing and allegedly exploitation-free, communally owned factories. Despite several instantiations, the party's version of the Just Order never went beyond an inconsistent combination of these Owenite ideas with the party's 1970s version of small business–friendly national developmentalism. Moreover, due to the increasing size and power of some provincial businessmen within the Islamist movement, free-market ideas were also added to this already inconsistent mixture. The RP shared power in a short-lived coalition government, but rather than attempting to implement any part of this program, it served as a prop for the conservative DYP (True Path Party). Nevertheless, a few (mostly symbolic) religious moves by the RP drew the ire of the secularist military, which again intervened in 1997 to ban the party and end the coalition government (Tuğal 2009).

This repression led to further emboldening of the business wing of Islamism. The post-coup religious party, FP (Virtue Party), shelved the Just Order. It downplayed economic issues and focused on religious liberties. Still, its coyness and incomplete break with the past encouraged business-friendly politicians to split and establish the AKP. The AKP's credibility was mostly based on the RP and FP's municipal record, especially in Istanbul. Erdoğan had been the city's elected mayor since 1994. Even though he was elected by promising an Islamic city much in line with the Just Order vision, he had quickly shifted to a pro-business line within his first year (Tuğal 2008). The repression of the left and of old-style Islamism, as well as the effectiveness of the new pro-business Islamism in municipal power, paved the way for the election of Erdoğan.

Inclusive Neoliberalization, the Statist Turn, and Their Mass-Organizational Underpinnings

As the previous subsection showed, Islamism's hegemonic capacity relied on appropriating many themes and strategies from the left and from neoliberalism. This subsection will show that Erdoğan intensified his capacity for both force *and* consent by also absorbing techniques and cadres from international financial institutions, competing growth strategies, and Turkish far-right nationalists. A severe financial crisis in 2001 terminated the era of relatively pure neoliberal parties that had ruled in the 1980s and 1990s (Karataşlı 2015; Keyder 2004). This removed another impediment in Erdoğan's path. The economy crashed after almost all of these establishment parties' market reforms got stuck. Kemal Derviş, a prominent World Bank technocrat, rushed

to formulate a novel aid package, which reflected the IMF's and (more so) the World Bank's turn to what has been labeled the "Post-Washington Consensus" (Öniş and Şenses 2005). This more inclusive version of neoliberalization mobilized state agencies to bring under control the most destructive results of market reform. Although this was a morale boost for the ruling coalition, and garnered hope among both educated and business circles, the governing parties had lost their credibility. The yet-unblemished AKP defeated them by a wide margin in 2002. Lacking a program, however, it mostly relied on the blueprint created by Derviş. The result was a steady growth rate for more than ten years, as well as health policies that generated support for marketization even among the poor, laying the groundwork for Erdoğan's hegemonic (i.e., mass consent–based) autocracy.

What was less noticed in this golden decade of the Turkish economy was the growing productive role of the state, which was not entirely in line with the World Bank–stamped Derviş version of inclusive marketization. This statism remained mostly under the radar for much of the 2000s but became more noticeable in the 2010s. State and state-guided investment in privileged sectors, direct state support to strategic firms, the development of sovereign wealth funds, import substitution measures, and abrogation of central bank independence came to be defining features of the economy. These were used to fight established interests *and* build more support among diverse strata (Tuğal 2023), deepening the hegemonic nature of Erdoğan's autocracy.

These inclusive and statist revisions of neoliberalism were not simply technocratic decisions. They were fused with Islamic and nationalist meaning, thanks to the mass organizations and patterns of mobilization that the AKP inherited from its Islamic past and then from its integration of the MHP into the regime. Unlike the technical way in which the failed coalition parties communicated the Derviş program, the AKP framed it in an Islamic way. Protecting the poor from the destructive aspects of marketization was not just an economic but an Islamic mission. Moreover, this appeared to be an almost natural part of the emerging Islamic regime, since the cooperation of civil society and state that the Post-Washington Consensus posits as a necessary part of good governance (Öniş and Şenses 2005) was organically built under the AKP, rather than only resulting from policy decisions. That is, the charitable Islamic organizations that had been spreading for decades (partially as a way to combat the secularist elite's weak hold over civil society) were now integrated into the welfare agencies and policies of the central government. These organizations also provided the government with a logistical basis for mass mobilization in its fights against secular and other opponents, as for instance during referenda (Tuğal 2017). In short, expanding mass organizations also helped deepen hegemony.

As important was the integration of a reconstructed MHP into the Erdoğanist regime. In contrast to the 1970s, when street fights were its main domain of activity, from the 1980s onward many MHP ex-activists became state personnel, and others became the leaders of a burgeoning criminal mafia (Karimov 2021), even if the party did not abandon ideological paramilitary organization. The MHP also gained popularity as

the Kurdish national struggle fomented fears of separatism and terrorism among many Turks. The MHP received its highest vote ever in 1999 (18 percent, whereas it had been stuck below 9 percent for thirty years). It joined an anti-Islamist and anti-Kurdish governing coalition (1999–2002) but fell into temporary irrelevance after the rise of the AKP. Especially following the resumption of hostilities with the Kurdish movement in 2015, the MHP offered its full support to the AKP regime, but the merger did not happen just at the top. Long before this official merger, the far-right nationalist tradition's street activism became a part of the regime's repertoire, as "Ottoman Hearths" (modeled after the MHP's Ideal Hearths) and other paramilitary organizations such as SADAT sprouted throughout the country (Bashirov and Lancaster 2018). After the merger at the top, the initially conflictual relationships between these pro-AKP organizations and the nationalist far right became brotherly (Oda TV 2016). The erstwhile MHP-connected criminal mafia (Bellut 2021) and nationalist trade unions, too, intensified their activities and increased their membership. The government also provided more bureaucratic positions and business tenders to MHP members after 2015 (Yılmaz, Shipoli, and Demir 2021).

As a result of the merger of civil society and state along both Islamic and nationalist lines, the AKP could present its fight against vestiges of pre-AKP economic policies and interests as a struggle of the people and the nation against privileged elites and their global connections (Öniş and Kutlay 2021; Tuğal 2022). While building on consent fueled by economic policies and mass organizations, this fight also had strong doses of force, as Gramsci's formulation of hegemony as "force plus consent" would lead us to expect. Not only previous elites but also labor activists, socialists, environmentalists, feminists, and later on center-right conservatives were severely repressed, with increasing help from paramilitaries.

Erdoğan: The New Father of the Nation

Masculinist performance has not created the AKP's hegemonic autocracy, but it strongly contributes to sustaining it. The Islamist movement in Turkey has developed as a reaction to the figure of Mustafa Kemal, who took the last name "Atatürk" (Father of the Turks).[4] This self-naming resonated with, transformed, and reproduced the "father state" (*devlet baba*) trope in Turkish political culture (Zürcher 2012). The state has been called a "father" for centuries, a naming that instills both fear and respect for authority *and* expectations of just provision among its subjects. The Islamist movement now upholds Erdoğan as the ultimate father and the masculine figure to model oneself after (Ozbay and Soybakis 2020). Erdoğan's biography is a point of inspiration for his followers. He comes from Kasımpaşa: a poor, rough neighborhood of Istanbul with legendarily tough young men. He played soccer in his youth and still poses with soccer jerseys.

4 See Özyürek (2006) for the Atatürk myth.

Even throughout the "moderation" phase of the Islamist movement, he preserved his tough posturing, which acted as a persistent magical reaffirmation of the movement's distinctiveness despite its integration into the system (Tuğal 2009, 175–78).

Erdoğan sets a model not only with his bodily comportment and aggressive language but also his family life. He has four children and frequently advises families to have at least three (Yazici 2012). He is also against abortion and has called it a massacre and murder. Erdoğan clearly links his own authority to a strong, virile, and vibrant population (Gökarıksel, Neubert, and Smith 2019). This pronatalist position is inseparable from his desire to create a huge pool of cheap labor in order to increase Turkey's competitiveness in the global economy. The government has developed intricate techniques (such as religious edicts, political speeches, financial incentives, provision of reproductive technologies, and informing husbands of positive results on pregnancy tests without the consent of women) that encourage especially married women to bear children (Korkman 2015). As Erdoğan "performs" masculinity, therefore, he is not only building on the economic path Turkey has taken but is further solidifying it. Production and reproduction are inseparable. In other words, a proper understanding of masculinism and performativity cannot be divorced from an analysis of the regime's political economy. Likewise, a thorough interpretation of both the hegemonic and autocratic nature of Erdoğanism is impossible without a scrutiny of his masculinist performance.

Erdoğan's metaphorical fatherhood also grants him the right and the responsibility to monitor sexual and gendered behavior. He portrays antigovernment protestors as sexually deviant (Korkman and Açıksöz 2013) and valorizes progovernment demonstrators as valiant people. His depictions of the latter are masculinized and imply that it is mostly up to men to fight on the streets. As he has repeatedly emphasized, a woman's natural place is the home, as a mother, even if she has a successful career (Ekşi and Wood 2019).

Erdoğan and his male followers are not alone in their monitoring of proper gender and sexual roles, or their encouragement of population growth. Several pro-AKP women's organizations were established to promote Erdoğan's discourse and policies.[5] These associations fight abortion, bolster patriarchal gender norms, and struggle against feminism. They argue that the latter is a Western import and an official imposition, alien to the Turkish people. They frequently repeat Erdoğan's arguments about women and the family, almost verbatim (Yabanci 2016). In short, Erdoğan's image and role as the father is not solely dictated from above but also endorsed by civic organization and mobilization from below. Along with complex economic policies that create and sustain a

5 Although women from all backgrounds are heavily active in almost all Islamist organizations and the AKP, emergent pious upper-middle-class women (especially professionals, see Aksoy 2015) and emergent upper-class women (the wives of the new pious capitalist class) are the primary activists (Tuğal 2009, 2017).

multiplicity of economic interests, and mass organizations that back them, such bottom-up embrace of the new father has put Turkey on a hegemonic path. A comprehensive solidification of this hegemonic autocracy has required complex economic policies, mass organization and mobilization, and a specific kind of masculinist performance.

India: Ethnic Autocracy

Inclusive Neoliberalization and Jobless Growth

Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) echoes Erdoğan's AKP in many ways but has not yet built as hegemonic a path, relying rather more on unifying the Hindus by dramatizing the "Muslim threat." The reason for this can be found in India's and the BJP's different engagement with neoliberalization, as well as Hindu nationalism's contrasts to Islamism.

Balance of payment crises at the end of the 1980s, IMF pressures, and ultimately the collapse of the Soviet bloc led to a decisive neoliberal shift in the India of the 1990s. Service and technology became the drivers of growth after these changes. Agriculture and industry suffered. Reliance on services and technology started to institutionalize a pattern of jobless growth, which would bedevil India for several decades (Chacko 2018). The first Hindu nationalist government (the BJP-led "National Democratic Alliance") only deepened these policies from 1999 to 2004 (Chacko 2018; Kaur 2016).

In 2004, the UPA (a "left-wing" coalition) came to power and ushered in a decade of inclusive neoliberalism. It both deepened market reforms and institutionalized many social policies, especially targeted at the poor, lower castes, and minorities (Nielsen and Nilsen 2015). The Congress Party–led UPA, however, did not implement an industrial, job-generating developmental strategy or land reform (Desai 2015, 165–69). Growth significantly slowed down toward the end of the UPA's tenure. The coalition also failed to bring inflation down and was rocked by corruption scandals (Torri 2015). Even when growth was stronger in the UPA's initial years, it did not generate many jobs (Sridharan 2014), though it delivered social-economic rights and relief. Especially among right-wing Hindus, the overall state of the economy started to be blamed on social justice policies, which intensified Hindu nationalism's turn away from its prior dedication to its particular brand of vague anticapitalism (Kaur 2015). One core difference between India and Turkey, then, was that the center-left (rather than the far right) implemented "inclusive neoliberalism," which was the World Bank–sanctioned model of the 2000s. Since the Hindu right remolded itself in reaction to inclusive neoliberalism, its hegemonic capacity was dented.

The balance sheet of this decades-old neoliberalization is quite complex. On the one hand, India significantly increased its overall rate of growth when compared to its 1950s–1970s ISI era. The average rate of growth was 6.3 percent between 1980 and 2015 compared to 3.6 percent between 1950 and 1980 (Varshney 2017). Also, since 1980, India's growth rates have fared significantly better when compared to OECD

nations overall, to the EU, and to high-income OECD nations (Kumral 2022). These developments have improved India's place in the hierarchy of nations (Karataşlı and Kumral 2017). They have also led to an extreme concentration of wealth within India (Varshney 2017).

Organized labor has lost most of its rights and welfare gains (Agarwala 2013). The rural poor have suffered from land dispossession (Levien 2018), as well as cuts in governmental aid (Topalova 2007). However, along with the top billionaires, there have been other winners. Urban middle and upper-middle classes have expanded in absolute numbers (Jaffrelot and Van der Veer 2008). Also, some of the displaced rural poor have found informal urban jobs, which has actually improved their welfare, leading some scholars to dub them the "neo-middle class" (Jaffrelot 2015a). These were the possible carriers of a new hegemony, which is still unfulfilled.

Other than protests against pension and insurance reforms, and sporadic farmers' protests against removal of tariffs, neoliberalization in general and labor market deregulation in particular did not meet much resistance in the two initial decades of market reform (Desai 2015, 156–57). Democratization deepened in India in these same decades, but the masses engaged mostly in ethnic-, religious-, and caste-based politics instead of fighting market expansion (Desai 2015, 158). Between 1991 and 2009, this communalization of politics resulted in the shrinkage of votes for national parties, and in the rise of state-level parties. The former ultimately came to depend on the latter in order to build governing coalitions. These smaller, state-level parties typically lack programmatic visions. They are mostly caste based and are nonideological. For two decades, then, what characterized India was the corrosion of hegemony: no active, national unity got organized around a common platform (Desai 2015, 169–72). It was this erosion that the Modi-controlled BJP would ultimately attempt to fix, starting with the state of Gujarat. In Gujarat, it had already subordinated caste identities to a unifying vision of anti-Muslim, Hindutva, national neoliberalism long before the 2014 elections.

Hindu Nationalism

It is only by looking at the Hindu right's similarities with and differences from the Turkish right that we can understand why Turkey ended up with a relatively more hegemonic autocracy and India with a more ethnic one. Despite certain discontinuities with the past, Modi's BJP has grown out of a peculiar right-wing legacy: that of Hindu nationalism. Colonial and precolonial India did not have an integrated Hindu-ness that could be cleanly separated from other traditions. The Hindu right, over a century, mimicked earlier, colonialist-inspired Western scholars' simplifying portrayal of Hinduism (as an integrated yet inferior religion) but reversed their moral judgment (Hansen 1999; Jaffrelot 1996). It strove to create a culture as unified as it perceived monotheist cultures to be in order to combat them and other challenges (the Christian-secular challenge from without/above and the communist and Muslim challenge from within/below).

Hansen (1999) points out that these attempts led to "contingent articulations": the ideas and practices of the main right-wing organizations, Hindu Mahasabha (under V. D. Savarkar's initially spiritual and, after 1937, political leadership) and M. S. Golwalkar's National Volunteer Organization (RSS), overlapped in many regards with Gandhi's more syncretic populism and even with Indian secular nationalism. The lines between the RSS (Hindu nationalism's most cadre-based and durable organization) and Gandhi's outlook were not as thick as they were later construed to be (cf. Jaffrelot 1996).

Golwalkar's views on the economy were thin and confused. Although he claimed to espouse an Indian path against both communism and capitalism, he stood for free enterprise, but not in a consistent or principled way. Savarkar was more elaborate, but not much more consistent (Iwanek 2014). Deendayal Upadhyaya contributed to the maturation of Hindu nationalism's economic doctrine. He was a full-time RSS organizer commissioned to craft the Hindu nationalist party's economic stance, and later the general secretary of the BJS (the main Hindu nationalist party of the time, and an RSS affiliate). His "integral humanism" fused Golwankar with Gandhi and promised an egalitarian, spiritual economy. The core ideas of this program were national manufacture, small-scale industrialization, and decentralization. Indigeneity, antimaterialism, and human-centeredness, argued Upadhyaya, differentiated integral humanism from both capitalism and communism. These ideas resonate strongly with what Turkish Islamists call the "Just Order." This new program led to Hindu nationalism's first public breakthrough—the rise to electoral prominence in northern India in the early 1970s (Hansen 1999, 185–86)—and created dynamics for a potentially hegemonic path. In the late 1970s, however, the BJS became reactive again. As the Congress Party emphasized "socialism," the BJS shifted back to upholding private property.[6]

After the mediocre electoral performances of BJS, BJP was established in 1980, invigorating the formal political muscle of Hindu nationalism (Jaffrelot 1996, 315–18). As a response to the Congress Party's market-oriented turn, the new Hindu nationalist party emphasized Gandhian socialism in its charter (Iwanek 2014; Jaffrelot 1996, 316, 336), but shifted away from it in practice. Even though mass organizations affiliated with it (such as SJM, "Forum to Awaken Swadeshi," and BMS, "The Union of Indian Laborers") still endorsed Gandhian socialism and fought against market reforms, the BJP came to favor trade liberalization throughout the course of the 1980s (Iwanek 2014). By the early 1990s, this shift became more systematic: the party published its most consistent economic program ever in 1992. Swadeshi (self-reliance) was still held up, but in a way that opened up room for foreign direct investment (FDI). The 1992 massacres, where two thousand people perished, culminated in the temporary banning of the RSS, but BJP's activities intensified. BJP led a coalition government from 1999

6 The BJS had a staunchly pro-property position in the late 1950s and 1960s, as a reaction especially to Nehru's farm cooperatives agenda (Jaffrelot 1996, 172–77).

to 2004. This government failed in delivering most of its campaign promises. These fluctuations, inconsistencies, and failures were apparently not moving the BJP in a hegemonic direction.

However, as the BJP's first term ended in disappointment and the UPA experimented with inclusive liberalism, a more Turkish-like path was emerging in one state of India. A BJP governor in Gujarat, Narendra Modi, was achieving high growth rates. A big part of this growth was in the construction industry. He had also overseen a pogrom against Muslims in 2002 and otherwise supported the RSS agenda, but he had turned the 2002 pogrom in Gujarat into a strength by presenting Hindus as the victims of a media campaign that allegedly exaggerated the violence (Bobbio 2012). He was himself indeed a lifelong RSS organizer. His policies had intensified income inequalities, but his Hindutva stance ensured the growing support of lower- and lower-middle-class Hindus (Chacko 2018), a pattern similar to the AKP's first two terms.

Modinomics: Religio-national Neoliberalism

Gujarat's success led to Modi's rise to national power in 2014. Much like the Turkish AKP's economic agenda, the BJP's post-2014 economic record needs to be interpreted as a religious-nationalist response to the strengths and limits of the secular coalition it replaced, and an uneven integration of that response with the legacies of the far right. But the differences are as telling.

Modi's rise has been frequently interpreted as a rebellion against the "inclusive neoliberalism" of the Congress Party (Sinha 2017a). In his national election campaign, he promised to ratchet up privatization and deregulation, cut subsidies, and remove environmental barriers. However, these privatizations would be politically and ideologically controlled, unlike much of the privatizations of the 1980s–2000s throughout the world. As in Erdoğanist Turkey (Madra and Yılmaz 2019), the defense sector was opened up to Modi-connected capitalists, who were heavily cushioned through massive land giveaways, subsidies, and tax breaks. Shopkeepers, small traders, and merchants were not favored in the same way, and were even left prey to foreign competition, which made them resist this new turn in economic policy (Sinha 2017a).

In his couple of initial years, Modi was careful enough not to push too publicly against farmers, since the latter are perceived as the soul of the Indian nation (Sinha 2017a). However, he eventually attempted to liberalize agriculture (e.g., through lifting tariffs). In late 2020, such agricultural policies ultimately led to one of the biggest uprisings of the twenty-first century (Baviskar and Levien 2021). However, even after that uprising, the BJP won elections in a state where the rebellions were exceptionally strong, mostly due to Hindus voting as a bloc to preserve the exclusion of Muslims (Biswas 2022). In other words, ethnoreligious fault lines became so clear cut and deep that they can easily override economic concerns (unlike in Turkey, where Erdoğanism

is still dependent on hegemonic politics that blend religious with economic concerns).[7] This episode further solidified the ethnic character of Modi's autocracy.

In short, though clearly moving in a similar direction especially starting with the 2010s, the BJP is not as hegemonic as the AKP. Its economic messages and policies do not foster the same level of consent. In the absence of as strong an economic inclusivity, the party has fallen back on thickening ethnic boundaries to shore up consent. The BJP's mass organizational bases are at least as strong as the AKP's (which bolsters the party's capacity for hegemony), but these mass organizations do not line up behind its economic program in the way the AKP's do. As a result, Modi's autocracy has a more ethnic than hegemonic character in comparison to the Erdoğan regime.

Modi's Persona: The Celibate Mass Organizer

Modi's appeal is not interpretable without studying masculine self-presentation, but that self-presentation is socially conditioned. This section will draw attention to strong parallels as well as stark differences between Modi's and Erdoğan's masculinities, and the economic and political determinants of these overlaps and contrasts. BJP's historical roots were in the upper castes and classes (Jaffrelot 1996). It opened to lower castes only after the 1970s. Modi's personal background, as a child of the lower castes, has provided the far right's populist refashioning with further credibility. Modi takes great care to emphasize the cosmopolitan and refined ways of the Gandhi family, and to contrast them with the ways of the "common man." He worked as a teaboy in his childhood (Jaffrelot 2015b). The parallels to Erdoğan, who in his childhood sold cheap pastries on the streets (Cumhuriyet 2018), are clear.

Again like Erdoğan, Modi has a street-hardened masculinity that is a central part of his appeal. Both Modi himself and the pro-Modi media frequently refer to his large chest (Srivastava 2015). For instance, Modi once lashed out at a Congress politician: "[D]o you know the meaning of converting to Gujarat? It means 24-hour electricity in every village and street. [Congress] can't do it. It requires 56-inch chest" (quoted in Jaffrelot 2015b, from the *Hindu*, January 23, 2014). Jaffrelot (2015b, 154) emphasizes the embodied and discursive nature of Modi's self-presentation, as well as its roots in the prime minister's organizational history:

> Modi, besides his organisational skills (inherited from his past role as a Pracharak [RSS organizer and propagandist]), is a gifted orator who knows how to galvanise large crowds by resorting to sarcastic formulas and plays on words. He cultivates his body language in the most expressive manner and

7 As I will show in more detail, the growing identification of right-wing Hindu-ness, both ethnically and religiously, with a single party (Chatterji, Hansen, and Jaffrelot 2019) also remains a feature that distinguishes India from Turkey. In Turkey, especially the ethnic/racial aspects of right-wing legacies remain more contested, and the ethnic and religious aspects of the far right more unevenly integrated.

systematically, as evident from the way he wore the typical hats of the local culture when he visited different regions of India.

Size is key to this masculinity, as it is to that of Erdoğan, who is venerated as "the Tall Man" by his supporters. Such obsession with size-based masculinity cannot be reduced to "Indian culture." The history of Hindu nationalism clearly shows that aggressive, muscular masculinity was not always the lynchpin of Indian politics, and its salience even among radical rightists was contested (Hansen 1999). That size is neither simply a physical attribute nor a cultural obsession is demonstrated by its links to capitalist venture in both countries: the size of roads, buildings, and bridges is central to Modi's symbolic strength as much as it is to Erdoğan's (Tuğal 2023). To repeat, even though masculinist performance is central to these autocracies' appeal, it is conditioned by their political economies, rather than acting as the prime mover that explains the paths of these regimes.

Although they converge on the glorification of size, Modi's personalization of politics diverges from that of Erdoğan. The latter's masculinity is based also on having many children, a behavior that should be modeled by other upstanding citizens. Modi's popular appeal, by contrast, is based precisely on *not* having a family and avoiding sex:[8] he emphasizes how the Gandhi dynasty corrupts the Indian state, and due to not having any offspring, he would never replicate their ignominy (Jaffrelot 2015b). Hindu nationalists take Modi's abandonment of his wife very early in the marriage as proof of self-sacrifice for the nation. By choosing not to be a biological father of any children, Modi has reserved the ascetic right of becoming the father of entire India (Kaul 2017).

Modi's abstention from sex (Jaffrelot 1996, 36, 40–43, 124, 132, 149) is perceived to be the overcoming of a bodily weakness only highly spiritual people can achieve (Hansen 1999; Copeman and Ikegame 2012). Despite Modi's rhetorical attacks against the Gandhi family, this perception has roots in a longer tradition of celibacy in India, of which Gandhi was a part (Chakraborty 2022, 198–200). Some Hindu and secular nationalists had developed a celibate and ascetic model of masculinity. Gandhi and Hindutva icons such as Golwalkar further sharpened the contours of this trope (Chakraborty 2022; Hansen 1999, 80–84). At the same time, the less aggressive aspects of this understanding of masculinity were actively challenged within the Hindu nationalist movement by the likes of Savarkar, who put more emphasis on the paramilitary training and activities of the organization. Although causing occasional tensions throughout the decades, these disparate conceptions of masculinity could sometimes be embodied in the same person, as in Modi's integration of both celibacy and asceticism on the one hand and aggression against Muslims on the other.

8 Such avoidance of *sex* by no means implies an abandonment of *sexuality*, since Modi's and his supporters' emphasis on size and their aggressiveness have obvious sexual undertones.

These performative moves have increased Modi's salience, but not to the detriment of mass organization. Despite increasing reliance on social media (Sinha 2017b), which creates the impression that the BJP has become identical with the person of Modi, Modi's populism still relies on organized mobilization. RSS activity has peaked during his second term. On top of that, RSS and kindred organizations have decided to keep on supporting his rule, even after Modi apparently turned his back on some of their core principles (Mukhopadhyay 2019), for example through further liberalization of the economy. As importantly, the still disciplined party organization kept on expanding, even into eastern India, where it has been historically weak (Hall 2022). This mass organizing ethos is not necessarily at odds with Modi's personalization of politics, since he is known as the RSS *Pracharak* to his base. Erdoğan had also worked as a mass organizer and mobilizer in his youth, but what truly differentiates Modi is the depth, level, and temporal duration of his role as a street-level leader. He was the main organizer of numerous protests and ceremonial processions in Gujarat at the end of the 1980s. These culminated in serving as the organizer of the Gujarat leg of the 1990 national procession to grab the Babri Masjid's site from Muslims (Outlook 2022), a turning point in Hindu nationalism. The cycle of mobilization that started with that procession culminated in the killings of more than two thousand in 1992 and the temporary banning of the RSS. Modi neither played an active role in the 1992 massacres nor worked as a street-level mobilizer after the 1990s. Nevertheless, he still embodies the aggressive and determined *Pracharak* who projects an air of invincibility. We should keep in mind that even Modi's celibacy is presented as the choice of a *Pracharak*: Allegedly, he abandoned his wife only in order to dedicate himself to RSS activities. He sacrificed sex for his nation *and his organization*.

Nevertheless, this stark contrast between the place of reproductive sexuality in Erdoğan's and Modi's self-presentations should not hide from view broader similarities and differences between Turkish Islamism's and Hindutva's obsession with reproduction. The latter has been crucial to Hindu activism ever since the end of the nineteenth century. However, what distinguishes Hindu nationalism's obsession with reproduction is its racialized rather than capitalistic orientation. As early as the beginning of the twentieth century, Hindu activists emphasized the need to produce more babies as a way to fight off the perceived threat from increasing numbers of Muslims (Sarkar 1998, 90–91), despite lack of solid evidence that there was ever any concerted, conscious, and durable Muslim strategy to outpopulate Hindus (Jeffery and Jeffery 1998, 139). The tales of Hindu women abducted by Muslims, which started to spread at that time, remained central to right-wing mobilizing appeals throughout the rest of the century (Katju 2022, 154; Sarkar 1998, 97–98) and into the next (Saluja 2022, 174). In 2020, the BJP codified this fear into law by placing unprecedented restrictions on interreligious marriage (Sarkar 2022, 19–21).

Even though the Hindu right initially expected a simple, nonactivist acceptance of their role from women, with the growth of the RSS following the 1930s, women's activism became essential to the mobilization of reproduction-related fears (Sarkar 1998,

95). Already in the 1990s, the number of women involved in the most activist kinds of work, including the use of arms and ammunition, was estimated in the thousands (Basu 1998, 167). Hindu women became so central to anti-Muslim mobilization that they were in leading positions during the campaign to demolish the Babri Masjid, including the street actions and pogroms (Basu 1998; Sarkar 1998, 102–4). Throughout the 2010s, women also became key to electoral machines and success (Williams 2022, 61–65) while, however, still expanding women's sphere of minority-targeting militant street action (Katju 2022, 156–57). For instance, activist women monitored cafes and ice-cream parlors to make sure that Hindu girls did not date Muslim men. Hindu organizations still trained activist women militarily so that they would be able to wield weapons during possible riots (Saluja 2022, 176–77). Throughout, fear of Muslims and the desire to keep them subordinated were at the core of women's embrace of Hindutva, rather than any scripturally or clerically guided spiritual renewal (Basu 1998, 170–73). This, too, presents a clear contrast to Turkey. Transgendered Hindus have become central to anti-Muslim mobilization as well, with trans women especially gaining more protection and privilege within the movement (Loh 2022, 225, 243). As a result of these decades of mobilization, Modi and the BJP are supported by women, even though traditionally their support has not been as strong as men's (Stokes 2016).[9] In short, despite all parallels with Erdoğanism, Hindu masculinity and women's active embrace of their place in right-wing mobilization have further entrenched the strongly ethnic characteristics of Modi's autocracy, as the disproportionate focus on subordinating Muslims has marginalized other aspects of the construction of masculinity and femininity.

What does all of this flexible deployment of masculinity tell us? Primarily that Modi and the BJP regime are heavily invested in this performance, but that the *specifics* of masculinism are heavily shaped by economic dynamics, organizational legacies, and dictates of the political conjuncture. Analyses that remain restricted to emphasizing Modi's commonalities with masculinist "strongmen" are misleading. Even though no full understanding of the Indian autocracy is possible without a focus on Modi's masculinity, any analysis of the latter that does not bring in the Indian economy and Hindu nationalism's mass organizational legacies would have little meaning.

In sum, Modi's blending of nationalist posture and celibate masculinity, combined with growing Hindu nationalist activity and organization, has resulted in resilient autocratic rule. However, due to a thinner set of consent-generating economic policies, Modi's BJP is not yet as hegemonic as the AKP. The party makes up for this shortcoming primarily by drawing a thicker line between Hindus and Muslims, i.e., ramping up the far right's cultural agenda at the expense of its historical economic agenda. So far, this has resulted in an ethnically more solid, but hegemonically not as settled, autocracy.

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9 Nevertheless, the BJP has significantly closed the gender gap in the 2019 elections (Chhibber and Verma 2019).

The Philippines: Oligarchic Autocracy

Neoliberalization in the Absence of Right-Wing Movements

The texture of Filipino market reform is different than that of Turkey and India due to its embeddedness in oligarchic structures that have persisted without assistance from right-wing mass movements. In their absence, death squads have played a similar structural role. Both a quite different path of neoliberalization and the contrasts between the civic-paramilitary legacies of the Philippines and those of India and Turkey explain the distinct shape of the Filipino autocracy.

Spanish and American colonialisms created local and national elites who owed their wealth to direct (i.e., nonmarket) forms of exploitation. These elites were structurally uninterested in developmental programs and/or creating employment at large scales because their bases of support were local and national patronage networks (Rodan 2021). As a result, political parties and the conflicts between them came to be built around dynasties and their game of allegiance switching, rather than on competition between programmatic differences (Teehankee 2012). Since this oligarchy also monopolized the electoral system, peasants could only resort to rebellions and insurgencies to make their voice heard and get their interests represented (Webb and Curato 2019, 52–53). Communists became the main leaders of these uprisings (Rodan 2021, 238), further locking in American support of the oligarchy throughout the Cold War (Hutchcroft 1991, 421–22). Even the arguably most dramatic episodes in the country's history, the Marcos dictatorship and its overthrow through popular rebellion, further reproduced these patterns (Hutchcroft 1991, 446–48; Hutchcroft 1998, 10–13, 236–40).

Marcos was first elected in 1965. He was reelected in 1969, declared martial law in 1972, and ruled until 1986, when he was overthrown by a popular uprising (Teehankee 2016). Although Marcos consolidated his one-man rule precisely with the promise that he would bring the oligarchs under control, he centralized and "streamlined" the oligarchic plunder of resources rather than upsetting the social order, let alone creating a non-oligarchic system (Hutchcroft 1991, 416, 442–43). Marcos's dictatorship also consolidated both Maoist and Muslim insurgencies—because it resorted to extreme repression, it acted as their "best recruiter"—and the coup-mongering factions within the military (Rafael 2022). The latter's division into Marcos cronies and professional soldiers was one of the factors that led to the removal of Marcos. However, neither the splits nor the coup-mongering tendencies subsided after his removal. Factions resisted peace with communists and stopped the negotiation process by threatening coups d'état on more than one occasion. Corazon Aquino, who initially wanted a peace process, ultimately tolerated the formation of anticommunist death squads in order to appease the military (Rafael 2022, 15). These anticommunist death squads would later morph into antidrug death squads through a quite complex process. Many former communist rebels themselves first joined the anticommunist death squads and then became core to the antidrug ones. They were disgruntled by the level of corruption and disintegration in

Duterte's hometown of Davao (including the widespread use of drugs and the frequent collaboration between the police and drug dealers), as much as by the communists' methods of fighting them. Former drug dealers and police officers also swelled the ranks of the antidrug death squads. The bitter fighting in Duterte's hometown inspired many in the rest of the country, who modeled their activities on Davao's paramilitaries (Human Rights Watch 2009).

EDSA (the People Power Uprising) ended the Marcos dictatorship and ushered in liberal democracy, but neither the uprising nor the administrations that followed it came to terms with military domination, torture, summary executions, and the plundering of public assets under Marcos. EDSA also brought back to power the oligarchs Marcos had fought and sought to control, starting with the landowning Aquino family (Rafael 2022, 21–22; Webb and Curato 2019, 55–56). This reproduction of oligarchic structures under liberal democracy also extended the shelf life of the death squads and indirectly facilitated their transmogrification into antidrug units.

The Marcos dictatorship relied on excessive debt, which was mostly used not for ISI-style development as in many comparable countries but for the enrichment of families and groups connected to political power. The Aquino presidency (1986–1992) that followed Marcos consisted of a broad coalition of industrialists, financiers, and left-wing groups, but the redistributive policies favored by the latter were repetitively thwarted by military coup threats (Ramos 2021). The Aquino years culminated in half-hearted liberalization rather than in any solid, sustainable path. The Ramos presidency (1992–1998), by contrast, was aggressive in its privatizations and more consistent in its liberalization, and it put the country on a relatively more straightforward neoliberal route.

On the surface, the Philippines became a typical case of semiperipheral neoliberalization after that point. Pro-market reforms "saved" the economy from political divisions that disrupted it in the 1980s. Starting with the early 1990s, the country embarked on a path of (apparently) sustainable growth, thanks to central bank independence, foreign remittances, and a booming business-processing and call-center industry. As in other cases, this has meant more poverty, more inequality, and joblessness. Just like in India, inclusive neoliberalism has only deepened "jobless growth."

Yet, oligarchic influences slowly recolonized the economy, turning public attention away from neoliberalization to corruption and resulting in a series of unstable governments in the 2000s. Throughout these decades of post-Marcos democracy, then, neither neoliberal hegemony nor resistance to it, but rather the persistence of oligarchy and the instabilities propelled by that, put their stamp on the Philippines.

The Turn to Inclusive Neoliberalism

Benigno Aquino III's presidency (2010–2016) focused on institutional reforms, including both growth planning and redistribution (Mouton and Shatkin 2020). His economic reforms led to the country's best rates of growth ever since the 1980s, with

gross national income increasing steadily 6 percent per year (Batalla 2016; Webb and Curato 2019, 57). These years could have established some potentials for a consent-based economic system.

Nevertheless, the attempt at inclusive neoliberalism was only partly successful. Initially, signs of victory abounded. While sustaining market reform, Aquino III also expanded direct and conditional cash transfers. He even involved poor communities in local budgeting, appropriating an important strategic item from the twenty-first-century left. Again lacking an employment-producing strategy under Aquino III, a liberal-left coalition focused on rooting out corruption and integrating popular participation (bottom-up budgeting) as the primary ways to alleviate poverty and inequality. It was hoped that community participation would prevent looting by the privileged. However, neither poverty nor inequality diminished, despite consistent GDP growth. In fact, Ramos (2021) shows that compared to similar countries in its region (Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia), the Philippines not only scored worse in terms of poverty and inequality but actually had lower rates of growth over three decades. Malaysia, the most heterodox in its economic policies, was the fastest-growing country among these four. These developments undermined the trust of the people in the established institutions and prepared the scene for Duterte (Rodan 2021, 243–45). What this shows us in light of the Turkish example is that neoliberalism, especially under oligarchic conditions, has very little chance of sustaining consent.

The semi-successful reforms had an even more pernicious under-the-radar result. The perception of disorder and chaos already had a particularly heavy place in Filipino politics, due to the geographically and culturally fragmented nature of the country (Contreras 2020; Kusaka 2017; Rafael 2022). Communist and Islamist insurgencies, and afterward drug wars, further reinforced this perception. With inclusive neoliberalism, World Bank policies created a new kind of perception of disorder: to the usual troublemakers—criminals, militant Muslims, and communists—were added, in the new "law and order" imaginary, the lazy and drinking poor, who were envisioned as new sources of disorder, allegedly nourished by misguided welfare policies. In other words, under oligarchic conditions, unsupported by right-wing mass organizations, even inclusive neoliberalism dynamited consent-based rule rather than acting as a policy package that led to hegemony.

Autocracy and Violence as Remedies for Fragmentation and Perceived Disorder

Enter Duterte. His populism was not explicitly a reaction to growing inequalities, but it was not independent from them either. As in Modi's populism, it expressed concerns about the disruptive consequences of inequality. These concerns were condensed in perceived "crime" in the Philippines (for India's parallels and differences, see Chatterji, Hansen, and Jaffrelot 2019, 6–9). Yet, in contrast to India, these concerns and their expression took shape in an oligarchic context, with no right-wing hegemonic tendencies in sight.

Before Duterte, populist leaders had rhetorically challenged the Filipino oligarchy. However, unlike in India and Turkey, this populism never mobilized *organized* followers. On the contrary, Garrido's (2019, 172, 177–78) research reveals that the poor supported Estrada (president between 1998 and 2001) independent of their organizational ties, and indeed, frequently, *despite* their organizations' opposition to this populist leader. Thompson (2010), who differentiates between "reformist" and "populist" leaders, also pointed out that Estrada's opponents had much better organizational links, and they did not come close to his popularity. According to Thompson, reformist leaders in the Philippines oriented programs and promises around "good governance," which populist leaders lack. Along the lines of this populist tradition, Duterte did not offer any consistent economic and developmental promises in his 2016 presidential campaign (Curato 2017). Strangely claiming socialist credentials during the campaign, Duterte in fact broke with the pro-poor populist tradition of the country, embodied in Estrada (Thompson 2016), and relied on the upper and middle classes as his (relatively more) solid bases of support.

Along with reaction against drugs and disorder, Duterte built especially on middle-class (but also poor) anger against bottom-up budgeting. The middle class felt it was being ripped off by conditional cash transfer institutions. And the poor found them redundant and ineffective. Duterte appealed especially to young, educated employees but also emerged as a protector of the heretofore neglected overseas Filipino workers (Rodan 2021, 245–46). None of these classes were organized, and Duterte's rule further discouraged them from organization, since they were "directly" represented by his discourse and actions. No institutional "mediation" was necessary. Rather than counting on organized supporters,[10] Duterte built on disorganized supporters' assumption that efficiency—ensured by an iron fist—was the way to prosperity. Across class divides, supporters perceived Duterte's discipline and harshness as the best remedy against the (allegedly) increasing laxity, illegality, and chaos in the country (Kenny 2019, 127–28; Kenny and Holmes 2020; Webb 2017, 91–93). Nevertheless, nonparticipatory aspects of inclusive neoliberalism continued under Duterte, which also partially accounts for the popular support behind him. His administration further expanded the highly conditional cash transfers, which involved monitoring the behaviors of the poor and eliciting their cooperation against insurgents (Rafael 2022, 27–30). His was a further pacifying and disempowering version of inclusive neoliberalism, and it helped appease middle-class concerns. The Turkish case clearly demonstrates that the political right is not necessarily against welfare and inclusiveness, especially when its mass organizations

10 In the initial months of his term, Duterte did attempt to bring some top leaders of the country's armed and nonarmed leftist actors into his cabinet. Among them, especially Leoncio Evasco helped build mass mobilization in favor of the regime's welfare and other policies. Once Duterte felt he had consolidated his rule, however, the left's organizational base was once again declared terrorists, and leftists either resigned from or were prevented from joining the cabinet (Ramos 2020, 492–93).

can steer them in a desirable direction. It was specifically the lack of mass organizations in the Philippines that sharpened right-wing reactions to a more inclusive neoliberalism, and thereby rendered the path to a hegemonic autocracy unimaginable.

A fundamental aspect of Dutertonomics was the departure from earlier neoliberalism, without, however, setting sails to a comprehensive state capitalism. In that sense, Dutertismo was an in-between case (i.e., between classical neoliberalism and Erdoğanism). Duterte did in fact develop statist policies in the realm of infrastructure. But unlike in the case of Turkey, these were not paralleled by statist policies in economic realms unrelated to infrastructure. Moreover, even his infrastructure push, arguably initiated under the "inclusive neoliberal" Aquino III's administration (Santiago 2019), remained more reliant on the private sector when compared to Erdoğanism. Duterte's market-reliant infrastructure projects also contrast with others in his region, such as Joko Widodo's in Indonesia, which have more clearly shifted in the direction of state capitalism (Wijaya and Camba 2021). Another weak spot of Duterte's infrastructure push was dependence on Chinese funds and expertise. Toward the end of his term, many of these projects were stuck "due to the Philippines' lack of experience in certain technology such as railway construction, the bickering among regional-local elite over train stops, and the ongoing negotiation to settle differences between Manila and Beijing," as well as resistance from the military to cooperation with China (De Castro 2019, 224).

The social result of these policies has been the persistence of the oligarchy. Even though Duterte came to power with the promise of quickly eliminating the oligarchy, both quantitative indicators and his relations to specific oligarchs show that he perpetuated it by transferring wealth from some to other oligarchs (Mendoza and Jaminola III 2020, 271–72). Since the wealth of the oligarchy was not redistributed or expropriated, Dutertismo failed to deliver on one of its primary infrastructural promises: free irrigation, in a country where access to irrigation has been one of the primary agricultural problems (Mendoza and Jaminola III 2020, 272–74). Even though the Filipino state made major strides in this direction, progress was ultimately thwarted by lack of funds. In short, *inclusive neoliberalism and a semi-statist infrastructure push remained under the shadow of oligarchic fragmentation* in the Philippines. In the absence of a party-movement nexus organized around an economic platform, many citizens' only hope was (and arguably, still is) for an autocrat to put an end to oligarchic divisions and smoothly implement the promised development. Such hopes, however, further entrench oligarchic autocracy and prevent hegemony.

The resultant "felt" and "experienced" politics on the ground had a flavor quite distinct from that among Erdoğan's and Modi's supporters. Ethnographic observations emphasize both regular voters' and the more active campaigners' strong identification with the president (Arguelles 2019; Curato 2016). Identification with Duterte led to spontaneous action among the poor, the middle class, and even overseas Filipino workers. These actions gave people a sense of agency: they felt they mattered, and they looked to the future with hope. In these regards, they were similar to Erdoğan and

Modi supporters. However, Duterte supporters did not feel any deep identification with his party, his ideas, his policy paradigm, or his cause. These were lacking *even among the activist campaigners* (Arguelles 2019). This is very different from many Erdoğan enthusiasts who fuse neighborhood activities with the cause, the party, and the ideology they *share* with the Turkish president (Doğan 2016; Tuğal 2009). Duterte's autocracy therefore reproduced the clientilistic relations between the power holders and the people rather than uniting them around a common program, ideology, or lifestyle. Such unification happened in India's autocracy along ethnic lines and in Turkey across ethnic divides.

The upshot of the above discussion of economics, party, and ideology is that Duterte did not drastically change patterns of accumulation and distribution, or their everyday experience among the population. Whereas Erdoğanism is based on an economic and organizational appeal to the masses, and Modi's BJP combines a strong organizational appeal with a relatively weak economic mass outreach, Dutertismo, by contrast, had weak ties to the masses both organizationally and economically. No wonder, then, that analyses of Duterte's mass appeal have turned mostly to his theatrical performances, and economic and political analyses mostly to his reproduction of older oligarchic structures. Duterte's economic reforms cannot be the reason for his disproportionate popularity in comparison to his predecessors, whose policies he merely tweaked. The scholarship on his popularity has therefore focused on the change Duterte *did* make: his resort to dramatic violence. To properly interpret his performance of violence, we need to situate it in both Duterte's biography and in the country's entrenched oligarchic path. It is not simply and only Duterte's performance that explains his autocracy. The oligarchic structures of the Philippines, which neoliberalization and the lack of right-wing mass movements have reproduced, thoroughly shaped that performance.

Duterte's Persona: The Predator and His Death Squads

If the obsession with fertility defines Erdoğan and celibate masculinity distinguishes Modi, sexual violence jokes were the signature move of Duterte. Commenting on a past prison riot where a missionary social worker got raped and killed, Duterte famously said he (as the mayor back then) should have been the first to rape her, since she was so beautiful (Curato 2016, 93). The ease with which Duterte could joke about sexual violence, and get popularly endorsed for it (Rafael 2022), was due to the specific ways in which oligarchy and neoliberalization intersected and reinforced each other in the Philippines. In other words, performance is not something actors simply choose. A study of the economic structures and organizational legacies that make some performances more likely and appealing than others is necessary.

Duterte hails from a local elite family. Instead of coming to politics from mass organization and mass mobilization, he first parachuted into politics as appointive vice mayor of Davao City in 1986, before he was elected as mayor in 1988. Even though Duterte built his credentials through local rule (Webb and Curato 2019, 61), just

like Modi and Erdoğan, his skill set was very different from those two. It was much less development centered and focused instead on crime (Kenny and Holmes 2020; Teehankee 2016, 293–94). During his local rule, he deployed vigilantes to kill suspected criminals (Breuilm and Rozema 2009). Duterte embraced the death squads on many occasions and once declared: "I am the death squad" (Curato 2017, 150). As president, he waged a brutal "war against drugs," culminating in five thousand deaths in his first two years (Ramos 2020). The number was close to thirty thousand toward the end of his term. Both the official police and the death squads were central to this campaign of violence, and the brutality of the death squads was at least implicitly sanctioned by the authorities (Kenny 2019, 126). Even though it is next to impossible to come up with reliable numbers due to systematic distortions by authorities, one study has disclosed that unofficial actors carried out close to half of the killings (Atun et al. 2019).

Several analysts have emphasized that not just violence itself but its manner of execution and popular reception were central to Duterte's rule. The cheering for the death of drug dealers at mass rallies, the video recordings and photographs of their killings (along with images of their frightened families), and the display of their mutilated corpses turned death into a "spectacle" (Reyes 2016). As importantly, these spectacles highlighted the manhood of the punisher. Masculinity and violence are important to Modi and Erdoğan also, but they combined under Duterte in a quite specific way.

Since pro-Duterte mass organization was so thin, the autocrat relied mostly on performance in the crassest sense of the term, again highlighting the relationship between organizational legacies and performative choices. He owed much of his popularity to joking about his erections, organ size, and his sexual pursuits, as well as about "sharing" beautiful women with police officers and the rape of his opponents (Parmanand 2020, 12; Rafael 2022, chap. 3). The jokes were not context free and "harmless," as his allies argued (Parmanand 2020, 15). For instance, he publicly encouraged anti-insurgent combatants to ignore human rights concerns and "joked" that each could rape up to three women (Parmanand 2020, 13). On more than one occasion, he also boasted that he ordered, and would keep on ordering, soldiers to shoot female communist militants "in the vagina" (Parmanand 2020, 22). Police, military, and death squad activities delivered on the promise of these jokes.

The payoff of violence for the upper and middle classes is obvious: they put the poor in their place. However, some studies have documented the acceptability of Duterte's drug war even in poor neighborhoods. Death squads and extrajudicial killings were embraced by many poor people, sometimes including drug users themselves, as well as their friends and families (Arguelles 2019, 2021; Kusaka 2017, 70–71). This violence built on and reproduced patronage (Jensen and Hapal 2022, 11–15, 18ff.). The older men and sometimes women who have patronage links with the police and politicians upheld local notions of generosity and reciprocity, and saved many people from hunger and sickness (in the absence of proper welfare mechanisms). But these people also enforced traditional morality and monitored the behaviors of their neighbors. They separated the good from the lazy drunkards and the criminally inclined. They even

provided information to violent actors regarding the poor who deserved punishment. In other words, the lack of welfare mechanisms, along with the absence of a hegemonic actor that promised them, prepared the social scene for a specific kind of masculine performativity and violence, and their favorable reception on the ground.

Finally, at first sight, Duterte's violence also seemed to reduce the fragmentation within the oligarchy. Duterte's mother had been among the top opponents of Marcos, although his father served in a Marcos cabinet (Rafael 2022, 15; Teehankee 2016). The family dynasty was among the peripheral members of the oligarchy, and their dissent was one the factors that spurred the EDSA revolution. Duterte's violent policies over his tenure appear to have mended this rift: the son of Marcos cooperated with Duterte's daughter and the duo won a resounding victory in the elections of 2022.

But even the 2022 elections were a mixed success for Dutertismo. Duterte initially tried to ensure the continuity of his rule through handpicking successors (Gera and Hutchcroft 2021). The election of his daughter as vice president could be read as the successful culmination of this effort, but the failure of his earlier attempts to have her run for the presidency showed the limits of Duterte's power. More broadly, the return of the Marcos clan to the presidency prevented any smooth entrenchment of Dutertismo. It is doubtful that there will be any Dutertismo beyond Duterte's six years in power. The situation is clearly very different from Erdoğanism's twenty-plus-year grip over Turkey. However, even though Duterte could not anoint his successor, through aiding the Marcos clan he was able to prevent an opposition figure from winning the presidency, which could have landed him in jail.

An institutionally focused analyst could object that variations between the resilience of these regimes is more readily traceable to differences in their institutional designs. Modi is not term limited. Reelected, Erdoğan will have five more years to serve, after the parliamentary system was conveniently presidentialized to serve his purposes. Duterte stepped down after one term, abiding by the no reelection principle that every post-1986 president has followed. But this possible objection actually lends further support to my argument. Erdoğanism became so hegemonic that the regime felt comfortable enough to alter entrenched institutions: the office of the presidency had been merely symbolic—with governmental power invested in the prime minister especially from the late 1940s onward—until Erdoğan quit the position of prime minister to become the president in 2014. By contrast, despite his apparently extreme arrogance and machismo, Duterte could not even attempt to meddle with the entrenched institutions of post-Marcos liberal-oligarchic government (which also rules out decontextualized versions of the performativity explanation of the rise of autocracies). Therefore, institutions cannot explain the variation: Erdoğan's power to alter institutions comes from the mass movement, as well as his regime's tampering with neoliberalization.

Conclusion

Can autocratic rule in India and the Philippines be as sustainable as in Turkey, if the parameters that have defined them so far do not change? Erdoğan has been able to hold on to power for more than twenty years thanks to a fluctuating combination of pro-market and statist policies, as well as a strong combination of state, civic, and paramilitary activity. Modi's rule integrates the latter, but not so much the former aspect of Erdoğanism. Will Modi's autocracy be as entrenched as Erdoğan's in the absence of a neoliberalism-statism hybridization?

In other words, can Modi's BJP become hegemonic? Contrasting today's autocratic tide with classic populism, Sinha (2017b, p. 4,178) asserts:

> [T]oday's populism cannot become hegemonic, and we will not have the long-duration rule by populists as seen in the days of classic populism. [T]he crises to which populism is a response are continuous, and newer dimensions of it are revealed daily. In Modi's case, the crises of growth, jobs, and agricultural productivity have deepened due to his own policies, such as demonetization. That the leader who promised to resolve the crisis, and to compose a people around such a promise, is unable to fulfill his promise is testing Modi's capacity to maintain his hold over the people and prevent their disintegration into alternate compositions.

Indeed, as stated earlier, Modi's rise was partially due to politicized grievances with inclusive and statist aspects of Congress-led rule. Nevertheless, Sinha's argument does not apply to Erdoğan, who has stayed in power *longer than* classical populists such as Lázaro Cárdenas, Juan Domingo Perón, José María Velasco Ibarra, Atatürk, and Getúlio Dornelles Vargas (who respectively ruled for six, ten, thirteen, fifteen, and eighteen years). Erdoğan's surpassing of the classical populists is already remarkable, and the 2023 elections did not terminate his spree. What sustains popular support for Modi's reversion to a less inclusive and less statist version of neoliberalism is primarily ethnoreligious, organized populism, but as Sinha points out, this might cause crises as much as solidify the BJP's base (cf. Manor 2019, 128). This article has therefore argued that "ethnic autocracy" is a fitting label for this regime. By contrast, the AKP's more hegemonic autocracy incorporates (albeit in inconsistent fashion) inclusive neoliberalism, statism, and relatively more classical neoliberal reactions to both. The Turkish ruling party's record of experimentation with all of these allows a more hegemonic domination. Despite this contrast, it would be rash to conclude that Modi's BJP is bound to stick to a bland neoliberalizing program and thereby remain less hegemonic than the AKP. The BJP can revive and reinforce Hindu nationalism's rich antimarket strands in the coming years, just like the AKP first appeared to forgo and then flexibly remobilized the Turkish Islamist tradition's antimarket tendencies.

The BJP therefore has the potential to move "toward hegemony" (Palshikar 2019), even if it still faces many impediments on this road (Manor 2019).

Autocratic rule in the Philippines faces challenges of a different kind. Duterte's shift away from the economic policies of the relatively democratic (post-Marcos) era was almost negligible. What constituted his appeal was rather a spectacular increase in police and paramilitary violence, and a populist framing thereof. Duterte's political heirs (Marcos's son and Duterte's daughter) might choose to perpetuate the economic, military, and paramilitary aspects of Duterte's rule, but it is dubious that they could replicate his populism, which (unlike in the Turkish and Indian cases) is attributable more to Duterte's (still socially conditioned) biography than to party- and civic-based legacies. It is too early to tell what a violent regime shorn of stylistic-personalistic populism will look like, but it is quite possible that its popularity will not be as intense as that of Duterte, which might push his heirs to marginalize electoral politics in a way Erdoğan and Modi have not had to, or to change other structural aspects of the regime.

The comparative analysis of these cases problematizes both globally comprehensive statements regarding the links between neoliberal crisis and the rise of strongmen, and case-specific statements regarding the weight of masculinity in each regime. Performance of masculinity, even though itself creative and generative, is largely shaped by the specific paths of liberalization and deliberalization, and by the repertoires of social movements and political parties in each nation. Rather than treating dramatized masculinity as a constant feature of contemporary autocrats, scholars need to study the social and political-economic making of these performances, and the differences generated by these variegated makings.

In short, it is the mass organizational attributes of these regimes that account for their differences from each other, along with their economic dynamics. The more amorphous differences in masculinities create a lot of analytically meaningful variations among these cases. However, these do not shed as much light on the *core differences* between the regimes this article has explored (e.g., dissimilarities in their capacities for consent-generation and their resilience). Those contrasts can more readily be traced back to variations in their mass organizational attributes and economic characteristics.

In conjunction with comparative studies of other twenty-first-century right-wing elected autocracies (Tuğal 2022), the analysis here suggests that the most fruitful way forward for the study of the right integrates political-economic, organizational, institutional, and performative dimensions of social experience. Each of these levels informs us even when handled separately. Still, their multipronged analysis across several cases gives us the deepest insights into the rise and resilience of right-wing autocracy.

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ARTICLE

I Want My Country Back . . . and Also My Crown: Monarchists as a Yardstick for the Contemporary Right in Brazil

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Abstract: *The terrorist attack on Brazil's capitol on January 8, 2023, showcased the country's empowered, embittered extreme right, whose hallmarks will be familiar to students of conservatism further afield: anachronistic anticommunism; hostility to liberal democracy; a sense of embattlement, despite controlling key institutions and platforms; a tapestry of disinformation and conspiracy theory; vaguely Christian cultural sensibilities and militantly Christian chauvinisms; and increasing adherence across national and denominational frontiers to an amorphous, antiglobalist brand of antidemocratic and patriarchal autocracy. This article argues that this right represents the migration of formerly extreme iterations of conservatism—including, remarkably, monarchism—from the fringe to the center of reactionary and even national politics. Monarchism, while by no means controlling Brazil's fractious and unruly right (or series of rights), shows us what conservativism in Brazil looks like in the present moment—firstly, because it has gained acceptability and even celebration in Brazil's government and among its most exalted right-wing leaders; and secondly, because its historic and more recent tenets are now virtually indistinguishable from those of the broader right in Brazil. Monarchists, I contend, provide a prism, even a roadmap, for understanding the defiantly retrograde yearnings and (necessarily) vague and contradictory proposals of the current right.*

Keywords: conservatism, traditionalism, Catholicism, monarchism, Brazil, Jair Bolsonaro, authoritarianism

In the final days of June 2022, Brazil's then president, Jair Bolsonaro, continued to march in lockstep with other high-profile right-wing leaders, intensifying, for example, his attacks on the country's electoral system and making Trumpian claims of voter fraud and rigged machines. Given this synchronicity, Bolsonaro furnished less surprise than sheer spectacle when he sat down for an interview with Fox News host Tucker Carlson. After the interview—recorded amid international outcry over the assassinations in the Amazon of Indigenous rights champion Bruno Pereira and British journalist

Don Phillips—the two posed for a photo (see figure 1), in which Carlson laughs as Bolsonaro appears to crown him with an Indigenous headdress or a facsimile thereof. The incident led one Brazilian news magazine to admonish mildly, "[R]esearchers and scholars hold that the improper use of artifacts and vestments . . . is a form of cultural appropriation." Some reports indicated that Carlson submitted somewhat unwillingly to this (in)dignity; what is certain is that both men subscribe to a political agenda that celebrates the history of colonization that brought the headdress into Bolsonaro's hands. In fact, their agenda advocates the revival of several glorified pasts—including a past in which whiter men like Carlson and Bolsonaro could enjoy uncomplicated "fun" with the accoutrement of subjugated peoples.[1]

Figure 1. Tucker Carlson and Brazilian president Jair Bolsonaro. Source: Tucker Carlson (@TuckerCarlson), Twitter, June 29, 2022, 8:06 a.m., https://twitter.com/TuckerCarlson/status/1542132511790317569?s=20.

The interview itself proved unsurprising indeed, though it did map out the shared landscape of fantasy, nostalgia, defensiveness, and disinformation that Bolsonaro and Carlson inhabit and propagate. Carlson opened by contrasting Bolsonaro favorably with international representatives du jour of liberal democracy: Canadian prime minister

1 Valmir Moratelli, "O constrangedor presente que Bolsonaro deu ao apresentador da Fox News," *Veja*, June 29, 2022, https://veja.abril.com.br/coluna/veja-gente/o-constrangedor-presente-que-bolsonaro-deu-ao-apresentador-da-fox-news/.

Justin Trudeau ("a low-IQ fascist," in Carlson's estimation) and embattled Ukrainian president Volodomyr Zelensky ("who," according to Carlson, "shuts down television stations that dare to criticize him and outlaws opposition parties and arms Nazis"). Carlson further affirmed that Bolsonaro stands on the right side of the divide that viewers have come to expect from conservative media outlets. "We asked [Bolsonaro]," Carlson concluded, "about his faith, which is on display, something else that triggers them [i.e., his opponents]." Identifying Bolsonaro's enemies, the Fox host employed the erstwhile dog whistles (now more appropriately just "whistles") of the populist right, maintaining that the president is "opposed by a coalition of billionaires, college professors, and CNN."[2] Carlson then doubled down on falsely casting himself and Bolsonaro as victims of a globalist media conspiracy, despite clear evidence that corporate media helped Bolsonaro win in 2018: "[The network] *Globo*, which dominates television here," Carlson blandished, "are opposed to you. How did you win, how could you win, with the entire Brazilian media against you?" Bolsonaro, in turn, brandished what was already a great canard of the twentieth-century right and is even more so in the twenty-first: the specter of communism. Should ex-president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (known as Lula) defeat Bolsonaro at the polls in 2022, the latter warned, "all of South America will be colored red, and . . . the United States will become an isolated country."[3]

The terrorist attack on Brazil's capitol on January 8, 2023, mere months after this interview, would bring these views into sharp and violent focus. Foreshadowing that day of delirious rage, the Carlson interview epitomized the right today, in Brazil, in the United States, and—as I am sure many readers will attest—in various realms farther afield: it is a right that is anachronistically anticommunist; hostile to liberal democracy, yet using its language as justification and rationalization; holding power and championing rightist causes from powerful platforms, but presenting conservatives as underdogs; fully at home in an established tapestry of disinformation and conspiracy theory; vaguely Christian in its cultural sensibilities, and militantly Christian in its cultural chauvinisms; and increasingly united across national and denominational frontiers as a global antiglobalist force for antidemocratic and patriarchal autocracy. As I shall argue here, this right has seen formerly extreme iterations of conservatism—including, remarkably, monarchism—move from the fringe to the center of reactionary and even national politics. To put this another way, monarchism, while by no means controlling Brazil's fractious and unruly right (or series of rights) shows us what conservativism in Brazil looks like in the present moment—firstly, because monarchism has gained acceptability and even celebration in the halls of power and among Brazil's

2 Carlson's description is an example of how both he and Bolsonaro construct their enemy as "the left," when in fact the chimera they describe is ludicrous. The opposition to Bolsonaro is not that unified, not that left-wing, not that conceivable as a "them." Indeed, no one is triggered in the way Carlson suggests.

3 "Tucker Carlson: Allowing Brazil to Become a Colony of China Would Be a Significant Blow to Us," *Fox News*, June 30, 2022, https://www.foxnews.com/opinion/tucker-carlson-allowing-brazil-become-a-colony-of-china-significant-blow.

most exalted right-wing leaders; and secondly, because its historic and more recent tenets are now virtually indistinguishable from those of the broader right in Brazil.[4] The facility with which Carlson and Bolsonaro identify with and reinforce each other makes it difficult to deny that, as one longtime scholar of Brazil noted in 2021, the nostalgic, embittered, empowered right described at the outset of this paragraph is no chimera: "I started to realize that [my] visits [to neomedievalist and traditionalist Catholic centers] were not an excursion into a parallel world but into a rather real Brazil, and that no time machine was needed." The revanchism on display in the Carlson interview goes beyond a "rather real Brazil," revealing an interconnected world of revived, flourishing, exclusionist reactionisms, a web in which Brazil and the United States are central.[5]

The role of Brazil and the United States as centers of the contemporary transnational right is not coincidental. While no single place, to my knowledge, was the point of origin for this right, Brazil indubitably served among several key repositories for its gestation, and it did so across a long and determinative history.[6] If we need no time machine to witness the renovated right, at least two factors contribute to this: First, the very nostalgia of the right itself, which relies on mythologizing the past; in other words, no time machine could take us to the fantasy-rich places the right seeks to reconstruct. Second, and more germane to understanding the current moment, we might examine the reliance of the current right on *real* pasts that lie not in the Middle Ages or the fanciful imaginings of "great again" proponents, but in conservatisms of old. In Brazil, as elsewhere, the ascendancy of present-day rights is founded upon continuities with and debts to nineteenth- and especially twentieth-century reactionaries.

In this short space I shall further argue for understanding the state of the right in Brazil in the 2010s and 2020s not only via its consistency with other iterations of right-wing populism currently drawing attention across the world, but also, and indispensably, via its continuity with deeper histories, previous iterations of Brazil's right that help to explain this moment. I am by no means alone in reaching into the past for comprehension of this present. Indeed, where for years there was little will to historicize the right in Brazil (and elsewhere in the Americas), the last election cycle has seen an absolute explosion of interest. Recent critical scholarship increasingly, seemingly inescapably, illuminates right-wing continuities across the past century. Leandro Pereira Gonçalves

4 I use the pluralization of "the right" here not as a literal translation of *as direitas* (the rights) but as an acknowledgment of the complexity of, diversity within, and ongoing contestation over the prevailing nature of conservative movements in Brazil and elsewhere.

5 Georg Wink, *Brazil, Land of the Past: The Ideological Roots of the New Right* (Cuernavaca, Mexico: Bibliotópia, 2021), 5.

6 Rodolfo Costa Machado, "Por dentro da Liga Mundial Anticomunista: filonazismo, contrarrevolução asiática e o protótipo latino-americano da Operação Condor (1943–1976)" (PhD diss., Pontífica Universidade Católica de São Paulo, 2022), https://repositorio.pucsp.br/jspui/handle/handle/26515; Benjamin A. Cowan, *Moral Majorities across the Americas: Brazil, the United States, and the Creation of the Religious Right* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2021).

and Odilon Neto Caldeira, leading experts on Integralism (Brazil's World War II–era fascism), have brilliantly connected the 1930s to the 2020s in their most recent study, whose preface pointedly asks, "[W]ho let out the characters from my history book?"[7] Georg Wink, longtime student of Brazil, has illustrated the Catholic integrist heritage of Brazil's current antimodernisms.[8] Rodrigo Patto Sá Motta, one of the most renowned historians of twentieth-century Brazil and the late military regime (1964–1985), puts perhaps the finest point on it with his latest title, *A Present Past*.[9] Most sweepingly and ambitiously, Lilia Moritz Schwarcz's recently translated *Brazilian Authoritarianism* clarifies, "for those who, to this day, cannot understand why we are living through such an intolerant and violent period," how such intolerance and violence are "intimately tied to the country's five hundred years of history."[10]

As a nucleus of superb scholars have pointed out, then, the deeper histories of the rightist present in Brazil include fascism, integrism, Cold War military autocracy, and colonialism; furthermore, today's conservatisms in Brazil and abroad grew out of the transnational, calculated efforts of a cadre of twentieth-century traditionalists.[11] Here, however, I wish to draw attention to the ways in which the deeper histories of the present right also include monarchism, a thread in Brazilian conservatism that has survived—with minor variations in its prominence—more than a century of constitutionally democratic rule. Monarchists, I contend, provide a prism, even a roadmap, for understanding the defiantly retrograde yearnings and (necessarily) vague and contradictory proposals of today's right in Brazil. Indeed, monarchists practically crow with ideological (if not practical) vindication—and they do so because they epitomize, and have epitomized, the qualities that have recently coalesced into the contemporary right in Brazil and elsewhere around the world. For context: Brazil first became a republic in 1889, dethroning the branch of the Portuguese Bragança dynasty that had ruled independent Brazil since 1822. In the aftermath of 1889, early restorationists sought to defeat liberal democracy from a vantage point that was expressly elitist and antipopular; but like the monarchists of today they looked for a broader appeal through an ethnonationalist, romanticized species of authoritarian populism—based fundamentally in the veneration of hierarchy. As one scholar of these decades has put it, early monarchists espoused "a rejection of popular participation, because inferior qualities were attributed to it, in favor of the aristocracy, chosen by tradition and by

7 Pereira Gonçalves and Odilon Caldeira Neto, *Fascism in Brazil: From Integralism to Bolsonarism* (London: Routledge, 2022).

8 Wink, *Brazil.* I use "integrist" here for the ideological orientation in a European and global context to distinguish it from the Brazilian fascist movement formally called Integralism, which was founded in 1932.

9 Rodrigo Patto Sá Motta, *A Present Past: The Brazilian Military Dictatorship and the 1964 Coup* (Liverpool, UK: Liverpool University Press, 2022).

10 Lilia Moritz Schwarcz, *Brazilian Authoritarianism: Past and Present,* trans. Eric M. B. Becker (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press), 14–15.

11 Cowan, *Moral Majorities.*

heredity."[12] They exalted a new nationalism while simultaneously extolling Portuguese colonialism; presented the Crusades and the Middle Ages as paradigmatic, ideal social forms; and rolled antisemitism, Catholic chauvinism, anticommunism, and flirtations with fascism into what historian Teresa Maria Malatian calls "an authoritarian proposal" designed to provide "an exit from what [royalists] considered national degeneration."[13]

Monarchists have, perhaps patently, always resided among Brazil's staunchest antidemocratic partisans; once relatively marginal or even laughable, this antidemocratic legacy has now spread to other more politically powerful and functional elements of the right, growing bolder in each moment. Present-day monarchists trumpet this legacy as proof that they have had the solutions (to the problems of modernity, real and imagined) all along. In a sense, therein lies the unique characteristic of monarchism across the decades: that it most boldly and brazenly cultivates the vague organicism that can knit together core conservative causes and sensibilities: settler colonialism, Eurocentrism, Catholicism and Christian chauvinism, capitalism (or at least yawning wealth gaps), and various other unequal social relations and cultural and political traditionalisms. This article will use monarchism in the current moment as a lens for assessing the nature, status, and stance of Brazil's unwieldy—yet powerful—right, as well as for recognizing how intertwined are the nouveau conservatisms of 2023, and how determined by the aforementioned deeper, continuous and contiguous histories.

Restorationism, as descendants and supporters of Brazil's ex-royal family would have it, is in vogue today, 123 years after the Orleans e Bragança family lost the throne by military proclamation. By 2018, this vogue reached not only into the darker and more esoteric corners of the internet but into the halls of government. Though no credible sources would expect any impending reestablishment of formal monarchy, its adherents have gained visibility in recent years, not least because of their closeness to the Bolsonaro government's view of the world, which in turn reflects the views of the transnational right. On January 8, 2023, that visibility reached spectacular, violent heights, as insurrectionists brandished the banner of the defunct Brazilian Empire while storming the national government palaces. Even before this cataclysm, however, monarchists' visibility and closeness to government had grown to levels that were recently unthinkable. One prominent descendant of the ex-royal family currently serves in Brazil's legislature; others have regularly hobnobbed with government ministers, presidential advisors, and congressional leaders—up to and including a so-called Monarchist Caucus within the Chamber of Deputies. Even the mainstream journalistic establishment, previously dismissing the monarchy as a joke, now takes monarchists and

12 Felipe Cazetta, "Pátria-Nova e Integralismo Lusitano: propostas autoritárias em contato por meio de revistas luso-brasileiras," *Tempo* 24, no. 1 (2018): 42.

13 Teresa Malatian, "O Tradicionalismo monarquista (1928–1945)," *Revista Brasileira de História das Religiões* 6, no. 16 (2013): 80.

their voices seriously.[14] By early 2020, Luiz Gastão de Orleans e Bragança (hereafter Luiz Gastão), then head of the family branch that most vociferously agitates for a return, had grown concerned (or rather, confident) enough to remind his followers that despite his and his relatives' political leanings, royal duty required him to forbid his followers from engaging in party politics or in any way diminishing his own "national leadership of the monarchist movement." This proclamation appeared in the monarchist magazine *Herdeiros do Porvir* (Heirs to the future), whose ambitious headline for that issue was "Great Events Herald Monarchist Revival in Brazil."[15]

To monarchists within and outside of the former royal clan, Jair Bolsonaro and his effects on Brazil's political culture now incarnate the antidemocratic populism of old. Where the restorationists of early republican Brazil once chanted "For God, For Brazil, For the Emperor," Bolsonaro upcycled and shortened the formula in his own catchphrase "Brazil above Everything, God above Everyone."[16] The similarity encapsulated therein prompted monarchists' dramatic adherence to Bolsonaro, reminiscent, among other historical episodes, of Portuguese monarchists' rallying around Antônio Salazar as an authoritarian and traditionalist stand-in for formal restoration. The ex-royal family's current leader, Bertrand de Orleans e Bragança, exemplifies this adherence, loudly proclaiming that Bolsonaro combines all the right stuff: nods to mythic pasts, hierarchicalism and respect for divine order, free enterprise and private property, sexual and cultural traditionalism, and Christian supremacy. Bolsonaro, the self-styled "Dom" Bertrand affirms, was "elected by the conservative Brazil, by the Brazil that asks for its authentic Brazil back, which is Christian, which is Catholic, and wants an order based on the natural order, on the good order put in place by God, which is based on the family, based on free enterprise, based on respect for the principle of private property and the principle of subsidiarity."[17]

To the average observer, Bertrand and his relatives may seem eccentric, delusional, even laughable. Yet his sentiments about Bolsonaro demonstrate the troubling and revealing truth this article seeks to highlight: the proposals, aspirations, and even aesthetics central to Brazilian monarchism—including the pretenders to the throne—epitomize the nature of today's right, both in Brazil and abroad. In fact, restorationists' platform,

14 See, for example, João Filho, "Carla Zambelli e sua turma de monarquistas se aliaram a Bolsonaro para revogar avanços do século 20," *The Intercept Brasil,* May 19, 2019, https://theintercept.com/2019/05/19/o-casamento-de-monarquistas-e-bolsonaro-nao-e-acidente-ambos-querem-revogar-avancos-do-seculo-20/.

15 "Atuação dos Príncipes," *Herdeiros do Porvir* 27, no. 60 (2020): 2.

16 Malatian, "Tradicionalismo," 84; "'O Brasil acima de tudo. Deus acima de todos.' Frases marcantes dos 100 dias de Bolsonaro," *Diário de Notícias,* April 9, 2019, https://www.dn.pt/mundo/principais-frases-do-presidente-brasileiro-nos-primeiros-100-dias-de-mandato-10776106.html.

17 Pró Monarquia, "Pergunte ao Príncipe: Dom Bertrand (Parte 1)," Facebook, July 21, 2020, https://www.facebook.com/promonarquia/videos/992099554555643/.

loosely speaking, consists of planks that will seem familiar (albeit with modifications) to readers in the United States, Great Britain, Hungary, India, the Philippines, and elsewhere. The core principles include devotion to an idealized, indeed mythic past (here including colonialism and pugnacious or even petulant white supremacism); hierarchy and authoritarianism, defined vaguely as "natural" or "divine" order, and characterized by a penchant for supernaturalism; capitalism premised upon glorified notions of free enterprise and private property (coterminous with a demonization of the welfare state); ferocious anticommunism, including support for Brazil's Cold War military dictatorship (1964–1985) carried forward into the present day; family, sexual, and gender traditionalism; religious chauvinism, here encompassing Catholic and more vaguely Christian militancy; and a persecution complex, which positions conservative identity as antiestablishment, fighting from below, and oppressed by mainstream media, corporations, and social and cultural institutions. In the following pages, I will explore ways that monarchism has anticipated and exemplified these pillars of contemporary conservatism, making it a sort of urtext of the latter. Monarchists thus serve as a window into today's right in Brazil, and, crucially, into how that right stitches together and attempts to naturalize a contradictory, unwieldy series of justifications for injustices and inequalities past and present.

Making "Us" Great Again—Mythic Pasts

Brazilian conservatives are certainly not alone in their invocations of mythic pasts. As scholars of the right in other contexts have pointed out, conservatives across oceans and borders have defined themselves as proponents of premodern pasts lost in the mists of time. They see the present epoch, by contrast, as the winter of their dispossession. For conservatives, to quote Corey Robin, "the Left has been in the driver's seat since, depending on who's counting, the French Revolution or the Reformation."[18] These mythic pasts tend necessarily toward vagueness and fictionalization, from Putin's rewriting of Russia's Soviet and imperial history to "Make America Great Again."[19]

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18 Corey Robin, *The Reactionary Mind: Conservatism from Edmund Burke to Sarah Palin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 23.

19 Indeed, it is this very vagueness that provides for the broadened appeal of niche and/or fringe movements like monarchism, and makes for the seemingly improbable alliances across denominational and ideological lines. Though there are, of course, major fault lines among conservatives in Brazil, many of those fade into the background when it comes to the kinds of nostalgic yearnings epitomized by monarchists—hence macro- and microlevel disagreements among rightists can be papered over to the extent that all can support, say, Jair Bolsonaro. I have written about such alliances elsewhere, but the point here is that while, for example, Catholics and Protestants—or at an even more granular level, various extreme Catholic groups like Tradition, Family, Property (TFP) or the Society of Saint Pius X (SSPX)—might differ greatly among themselves, those differences lose meaning when these erstwhile antagonists join forces behind a political leader like Bolsonaro or an ideological one like Olavo de Carvalho (discussed below). See Cowan, *Moral Majorities.*

From a certain vantage point, monarchists merely render such mythmaking obvious, even spectacular, holistically promoting a utopia—as aesthetic as it is political—in which the Pandora's boxes of the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the age of Atlantic revolutions can be reclosed. Prominent royalists, and the so-called royal family itself, hold up a version of the early modern and/or colonial past—by turns sanitized and contorted to suit present-day sensibilities—as the height of good governance, a time when strong authoritarian rulers imposed a prosperous order. In this, monarchists join a decades-long tradition on Brazil's (formerly) extreme right.[20] They echo, for example, the long-expressed yearnings of Tradition, Family, and Property (TFP), a stalwart of authoritarian anticommunism in Brazil and supporter of the country's 1964–1985 military dictatorship. Plínio Corrêa de Oliveira (1908–1995) founded TFP in 1960 as an organizational home for far-right Catholic militancy; his final book, *Nobility and Analogous Traditional Elites in the Allocutions of Pius XII*, argued for the reinstitution of a stylized medieval, hereditary ruling class, a "standard of excellence" to remedy "our society, poisoned by egalitarianism."[21] As the book's promoters put it in a 2011 appeal to the putative descendants of that class, the future "common good" necessitates rule by "elites directly derived from the natural order—the result of inevitable inequalities."[22]

Oliveira's book, not coincidentally, featured a preface by the late Luiz Gastão, writing as "head of the Brazilian branch of the House of Bragança" and reaffirming the "special mission of the nobility to act in defense of kings, [whether or not] they be in possession of power and the fullness of the respective prerogatives."[23] Fittingly, it is from Luiz Gastão and his clan, as spokespersons of monarchism, that we have the most precise distillations of the present-day restorationist movement's reconfiguration of aristocracy and a mythicized Middle Ages as an original version, for Brazil's right, of what Erich Foner would dub an "imaginary golden age."[24] In this version, making Brazil "great again" requires recuperating a hybrid golden age that interweaves medieval and colonial hierarchies and validates the implicit white supremacist patriarchy of settler colonialism,

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20 Cowan, *Moral Majorities*; Rodrigo Coppe Caldeira, *Os baluartes da tradição: o conservadorismo católico brasileiro no concílio Vaticano II* (Curitiba: Editora CRV, 2011); Gizele Zanotto, "Tradição, Família e Propridade (TFP): as idiossincrasias de um movimento católico (1960–1995)" (PhD diss., Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, 2007); Rodolfo Costa Machado, "Alfredo Buzaid e a contrarrevolução burguesa de 1964" (master's thesis, Pontífica Universidade Católica de São Paulo, 2015).

21 Plínio Corrêa de Oliveira, *Nobreza e elites tradicionais análogas nas alocuções de Pio XII ao Patriciado e à Nobreza romana* (São Paulo: Civilização, 1993), 120. For the English translation, see *Nobility and Analogous Traditional Elites in the Allocutions of Pius XII: A Theme Illuminating American Social History* (York, PA: The American Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family, and Property, 1993).

22 "Às elites cabe uma missão a favor do bem comum," Nobreza (TFP website), April 28, 2011, https://nobreza.org/apelo-as-elites/.

23 Oliveira, *Nobreza,* 19–20.

24 Erich Foner, "Soviets Rewrite History Again," *Tampa Bay Times*, December 17, 1990, https://www.tampabay.com/archive/1990/12/17/soviets-rewrite-history-again/.

or "harmonious hierarchy in all the dominions," as Bragança's 1993 preface would have it. The "prince" and his family glorify their forebears' rule, advocating a return to it while making common cause with extremist (racist, xenophobic) groups of the twenty-first century. Thus, while restoration per se has not become the organizing principle of Brazil's right, monarchism's broader precepts, long espoused by the royals and their supporters, have become effectively identical to those of mainstream conservatives in Brazil.

Though less vocal than his elder brother, Luiz Gastão, Antônio de Orleans e Bragança has likewise epitomized the family's propagation of the notion that their ancestors' regnum constituted the "great again" past, not only desirable but actively desired by the renovated right of today. In an interview in 2013, the year Brazil erupted into nearly unprecedented public protest, Antônio declared that the turmoil in the streets proved that "the republic is in its last days" and that "to return to harmony, the only option is the return to Christian and Catholic monarchy." Luiz Gastão, meanwhile, more directly claimed that the uprisings stemmed from popular yearning for an elusive, bygone, better Brazil. "A profound discontent," he said, "manifested in . . . the street demonstrations" showed "a great desire for something different, something better, something which already existed and which we have lost." Should anyone doubt that that something was restoration, Luiz Gastão made it explicit: "When that desire becomes majoritarian, the monarchy—time-worn political expression of Christian civilization—can be reestablished in Brazil, in a stable and beneficent way. When that will happen, only God Our Lord knows, but I believe it will be well before it might seem at first glance."[25]

Another scion of the ex-emperor, Luiz Philippe de Orleans e Bragança, likewise proposes monarchy as salvation and the ancient repository of civilization, albeit in ways slightly more oblique than the elder statesmen of the family. Perhaps this is because Luiz Philippe is more savvy than his uncles Luiz Gastão and Antônio; then again, perhaps it is because of his personal political ambitions. Styled "Prince and Deputy Luiz Philippe" by his fans, he currently serves in the national legislature, and was even briefly considered as a 2018 candidate for the vice presidency under Jair Bolsonaro.[26] Whatever his reasons, Luiz Philippe can exhibit more subtlety than his elders, making monarchism seem, by default, the "only viable option" to save Brazil. Nevertheless, he too glorifies a romanticized past in which his own ancestors, alongside other absolutists,

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25 "Atividades dos Príncipes," *Herdeiros do Porvir* 19, no. 35 (2013): 3; Yuri Al Hanati, "Foi uma emancipação dentro da mesma família," *Gazeta do Povo*, September 6, 2013, https://www.gazetadopovo.com.br/vida-publica/foi-uma-emancipacao-dentro-da-mesma-familia-bh07d1r6mggqliyb0qphahumm/.

26 "Dom Bertrand e Dom Luiz Philippe participam de reunião com pré-candidatos ao legislative," Pró Monarquia, website of Imperial House of Brazil, February 1, 2022, https://monarquia.org.br/agenda/dom-bertrand-e-dom-luiz-philippe-participam-de-reuniao-com-pre-candidatos-ao-legislativo/; Estadão Contéudo, "Príncipe Luiz Philippe diz que dossiê íntimo o tirou da vice-presidência," *Exame*, November 14, 2019, https://exame.com/brasil/principe-luiz-philippe-diz-que-dossie-intimo-o-tirou-da-vice-presidencia/.

oversaw the pinnacle of human social organization. The prince-deputy's 2017 book—whose title translates as "Why is Brazil a backward country?"—opens by lionizing the Tudors, the Habsburgs, and the Bourbons as architects of a utopian early modern system of governance, strong enough to rule without the hated scourge of stifling, liberal democratic bureaucracy.[27] Luiz Philippe attempts to "rescue" the reputation of this fabled age of governance, limning an early modern paradise in which aristocracy truly represented "government by the best," the "real value" of whose rule has been lost to popular knowledge.[28] Luiz Philippe's golden age extends, unsurprisingly, right up until the moment when his ancestors relinquished royal power. Before the republican coup of 1889, the book indicates, Brazil experienced a golden age similar to that of great societies from the early modern monarchies of Europe to ancient Rome: "When Dom Pedro I commissioned the first constitution, in 1824, he applied the same Spartan wisdom that inspired . . . the Roman Republic. The structure of power in Imperial Brazil [1822–1889] . . . proved extremely stable and created prosperity during the whole nineteenth century."[29]

An inherent, essential benefit of such "gold-washing" (so to speak) is its capacity to explain away—with inevitable contradictions—historic and present-day injustice as necessary, inevitable, or simply not unjust. As in other contexts where today's revanchists seek to make someone or something "great again," whom that greatness has included or will include is a key part of the appeal and the discursive acrobatics. That is, when monarchists proclaim "I want my Brazil back" (Quero meu Brasil de volta) and offer a mythicized past as a blueprint for that erstwhile Brazil, their view of *whom* they wish to make "great again" relies on a blend of white supremacy and a truculent, sullen celebration of settler colonialism. Racist and/or patriarchal resentment will surely strike readers in other national and regional contexts as eerily familiar. In Brazil, the current right's version confusedly mixes pride in precontact Portuguese and Christian chauvinism (the Crusades, hazily) with romanticization of the colonial period (1500–1822) and nationalist pride in the post-independence empire (1822–1889), all while exalting and appealing to whiteness and Eurocentrism. While monarchists, like other Brazilian conservatives, evoke the time-tested mythology of Brazil's racial democracy (the fantasy of Brazil as a racism-free paradise), they do so in ways that, on the one hand, dovetail quite precisely with "post-racial" pushback against racial justice in other contexts; and on the other, proclaim Brazil's essential Europeanness while crediting the

27 Luiz Philippe de Orleans e Bragança, *Por que o Brasil é um país atrasado? O que fazer para entrarmos de vez no século XXI* (Ribeirão Preto, SP: Novo Conceito, 2017), 19.

28 Bragança, 134.

29 Bragança, 206.

imperial and early modern Luso-Brazilian past for the creation of a racial paradise that, to quote Bertrand, lacked "a racial problem."[30]

Figure 2. Olavo de Carvalho, pictured shortly before his death in January 2022, wearing a Brazilianized version of a "MAGA" hat. Source: Olavo de Carvalho, Facebook, August 27, 2021, https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10159351241707192&set=pb.698992191.-2207520000.&type=3.

In other words, for monarchists, Brazil's mythic past takes an extreme yet foundational form, granting the Bragança regnum (and by extension ongoing socioeconomic hierarchies) divine right or sanction according to the logic that racial inequalities—especially the oppression of Indigenous and Afro-descended Brazilians—can be historically and theologically *justified*. To take perhaps the most popular version of this among monarchists and other conservatives, such inequalities inhere in Brazil in a natural and positive way, uniting the "faith and entrepreneurial spirit of the Portuguese" with the "intuition of the Indian" and the "strength, goodness, warmth, and loyalty of the black race."[31] Monarchism does not supply these justifications alone—rather, monarchists have been articulating such rationalizations for white patriarchal hierarchy

30 Augusto Fernandes, "'Príncipe imperial' do Brasil diz que não há racismo no país," *Correio Braziliense,* June 16, 2020, https://www.correiobraziliense.com.br/app/noticia/brasil/2020/06/16/interna-brasil,864363/principe-imperial-do-brasil-diz-que-nao-ha-racismo-no-pais.shtml. The term "Luso-Brazilian" refers to the culturescape stretching between Portugal and colonial and postcolonial Brazil.

31 Fernandes, "Príncipe imperial."

for decades upon decades, doing so from a traditionalist Catholic point of view to which, in its basic outlines, the contemporary right has now full-throatedly returned. After generations of liberal-democratic platitudes and lip service to the (deeply flawed) notion of Brazilian racial democracy, the right of today has sharpened its willingness to defend racist colonialism and especially antiblackness in ways that monarchists, to give them their due, never really shied away from. As one insightful commenter put it, monarchism's current acceptability is a "lagging indicator" of a far right whose defense of inequities has breached almost all of the norms that used to contain it.[32] Bolsonarist genocide against the Yanomami and racist imprecations against "quilombolas" (afro-descended peoples residing in the legacy communities of escaped enslaved people) bear witness to such shattered norms.

As head of the family and a consistent arbiter of monarchists' guiding precepts, Bertrand once again exemplifies this. The self-styled prince has repeatedly voiced the movement's lament for the loss of a glorified past of settler colonialism and white Christian conquest, going beyond defense of the genocides of Indigenous people and enslaved Africans. In the monarchist retelling of these histories, Catholic Portuguese and later Brazilian patriots (and their descendants) should be celebrated for creating and/or defending "civilization," from the Crusades to enslavement to the forced conversion of non-Christians. "The Catholic Church," writes Bertrand with his typical lack of varnish, "converted and civilized the barbarous peoples, teaching them to cultivate the soil and preserve nature, with wisdom and the desire for perfection."[33] Bertrand, joining contemporary rightists in Brazil and elsewhere, now openly articulates the ever-implicit racism that haunts settler colonial societies, and that appears in sharp relief when it comes to the defense of white "homelands" and battles against climate and ecological justice. (In this, right-wing proposals for land use in the Amazon mirror those for pipelines in the North American West.) Here, again, today's monarchists draw on Brazil's twentieth-century restorationists, including protofascists known as *patrianovistas* in the 1920s and 1930s, and especially TFP founder Plínio Corrêa de Oliveira, who across the course of the last century derided even potential deviations from Eurocentrism as misguided, communistic, and harbingers of collapse.[34] In 1992 Oliveira called the UN-sponsored Earth Summit an "act of the devil" that sought, absurdly, to emulate Indigenous social organization. "Scientists," Oliveira marveled in horror, "affirm that it is necessary to take the Indian as a model for human behavior," that Eurocentric

32 My thanks to the anonymous reader who contributed this insight.

33 Bertrand de Orleans e Bragnça, *Psicose ambientalista: os bastidores do ecoterrorismo para implatanar uma 'religião' ecolótica, igualitária, e anticristã* (São Paulo: Instituto Plínio Corrêa de Oliveira, 2012), 16–17.

34 Today's monarchists certainly hearken back to the *patrianovistas*, for whom "nationality, formed in the colonial period, was founded on institutions transplanted from the 'mother country' and acclimated to . . . a land sparsely populated by ignorant, brutish heathens as yet untouched by redemptive grace." Malatian, "Tradicionalismo," 92.

"civilization is wrecking the earth, and that the tribe is the ideal toward which man should progress." Anticipating Brazil's empowered, evangelical right of recent years—which takes demonizing Afro-Brazilian religions as a point of departure—Oliveira published photos of Indigenous activists, African women, and the Dalai Lama as a visual aid for his denunciation of their religious and cultural practices ("fruits of a sick imagination or the devil's business"). Bertrand, in turn, directly quotes Oliveira's decades-old defense of Catholic chauvinism in the former's ongoing justification of early modern white colonial Catholicism as a boon to "barbarous peoples." Bertrand has warned that liberal democracies seek to compound the errors of abandoning Catholic absolutism, abolishing not only European theology itself but the very organization of white society. When "do[ing] away with theology," he writes, "everything shall appear loosed, ungoverned, and unconnected, just like among the Indians."[35]

Implementing the time-tested strategy of foregrounding a minority-identified spokesperson, Bertrand and his allies appeared in 2019 alongside a right-wing Indigenous activist who crystallized these sentiments. Empaneled beside Bertrand, Jonas Marcolino accused environmentalists and Indigenous rights movements of promoting "hatred of white people."[36] As Oliveira's abovementioned photos of nonwhite people and practices indicate, however, it is not just "Indians" who threaten white civilization. Royalist appeals to white identitarian pride and prejudice are not new—early twentieth-century restorationists unsubtly touted the "blond hair and blue eyes" of essential Europeanness.[37] Decades later Corrêa de Oliveira fretted, as today monarchists fret, over perceived sundry challenges to white supremacy. Beginning in 1960, TFP and Oliveira fought what then seemed an unlikely battle against Afro-Brazilian religions, denouncing them as "witchcraft," even as mainstream Brazilian culture prided itself on religious tolerance. Oliveira warned that these faiths, worshipping "apparitions and things like that," constituted "the devil . . . projecting his shadow onto the earth."[38] Accepted by and coincident with the empowered right, today's monarchists carry forward this racist mantle in a much more welcoming milieu. Joining the Bolsonarist backlash against social justice initiatives, royalists limn the slaveocratic past as a haven that *helped* Africans and Afro-descended people, bringing them into a Brazil where, as Bertrand reaffirmed in March 2022, "there is no racism or racial discrimination."[39] The manifesto

35 Bragança, *Psicose ambientalista,* 94; Plínio Corrêa de Oliveira, "Eco '92: Aparência e realidade profunda," *Catolicismo* 501 (1992): 18–19.

36 "Contrassínodo em Roma critica o Papa sobre Amazônia," *Istoé Dinheiro*, October 5, 2019, https://www.istoedinheiro.com.br/contrassinodo-em-roma-critica-o-papa-sobre-amazonia/.

37 Malatian, "Tradicionalismo," 84.

38 See, for example, Cunha Alvarenga, "Crendices Medievais?" *Catolicismo* 167 (1964): 2; Oliveira, "Eco '92."

39 Bruna Silva, "Pinda tem protesto após príncipe Dom Bertrand garantir que 'não existe racismo no Brasil,'" *Jornal Atos,* March 22, 2022, https://jornalatos.net/regiao/cidades/pindamonhangaba/pinda-

Cartilha Monárquica (Monarchist primer), published in 2015 and emblazoned with the slogan "I want my country back," succinctly summed up this apologia for slavery. Monarchists' have long held that they cannot be racist because Brazil's Princess Isabel signed the law formalizing emancipation in 1889; the primer expressed the equally familiar corollary: "it's also a fact that the blacks who came here were already slaves in their own countries . . . where they lived in subhuman conditions."[40] To the monarchist rank and file, this appears to open the floodgates of white resentment and a sense of justified rage against antiracist activism. When, for example, Antônio de Orleans e Bragança commemorated the 2021 anniversary of emancipation by crediting his ancestor Princess Isabel, one monarchist Twitter user derided the Brazilian variation of Black Lives Matter: "Where are the Black Lives Matter [activists] now, in this moment made for honoring this princess?" Brazilian BLM activists, another monarchist cackled in response, "are stuck in the leftist slave quarters, licking the balls of Lula."[41] Similarly, roused by the critique that the Bragança dynasty oversaw enslavement and genocide, one monarchist leapt to fulminate against "reparations," admonishing Bragança critics that "today you are here, enjoying all the evil that, according to your vision, they created. Demonstrating that you are just the continuation of the evil of all that they created. If you think that the *povos* (Indians, blacks) should receive reparations, you'd have to kill yourself . . . first."[42]

Deus Vult: Authoritarianism and the "Catholic City"

The "inevitable inequalities" cited above constitute a staple of Brazil's formerly extreme (now mainstream) right, once again typified by monarchist positions—especially authoritarianism based in notions of organicist, divinely ordained natural order. Monarchists crystallize the right's penchant for time-honored hierarchies, presenting as ideal a system in which inequalities guaranteed the prosperity of a past deemed by conservatives to be lost to the scourge of democratization. This formulation neatly packages hostility to democracy (familiar to any student of the rising tide of reaction in Brazil or elsewhere) with a longstanding tenet of Brazilian conservatism and especially of restorationists: the ethnocentric ideal of re-Christianization, or reconquest of *civilização cristã*—Christian civilization—in Brazil. This abiding demand of the Brazilian extreme

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tem-protesto-apos-principe-dom-bertrand-garantir-que-nao-existe-racismo-no-brasil/.

40 *Cartilha Monárquica* (São Paulo: [Pró Monarquia?], [1993?]), 22.

41 Anderson Gabrielli (@Gabrielli64A), Twitter, May 13, 2021, 2:06 p.m., https://twitter.com/Gabrielli64A/status/1392919137635155969?s=20&t=DbTxFVirC8N2lnNavBFySA; Socorro Mendes (@Socorro68750312), Twitter, May 13, 2021, 9:01 p.m., https://twitter.com/Socorro68750312/status/1393023655681142790?s=20&t=DbTxFVirC8N2lnNavBFySA.

42 Bruno Torezan (@BruTorezani), Twitter, April 17, 2020, 12:04 a.m., https://twitter.com/BruTorezani/status/1251375973695660033?s=20&t=RKFyMkx3S6e1MaxuPnNZMw.

right found a comfortable home in Bolsonarist Brazil, a *país cristão* (Christian country) overseen by a Catholic president whose theatrically evangelical wife campaigned in 2022 on the phrase "Brazil is the Lord's . . . and [Bolsonaro] is God's Chosen One."[43]

In this, monarchists demonstrate the facility with which they translate their nineteenth-century agenda into the language of the twenty-first. They couch open opposition to democracy in the language of *saving* democratic polities from themselves, and doing so by recourse to ancient monarcho-Christian precedent—what the House of Bragança's media outlet calls the "authentic democracy" of a simpler, better organicist past.[44] The younger faces of the former royal family demonstrate the strategy of undermining Brazil's republic (and liberal democracy in general) as a tragically un-Christian failure wrought by discredited left-wing policies and structures. Luiz Philippe warns his readers of the "extreme precarity in which Western Civilization finds itself." Eulogizing culturally conservative authoritarian regimes (including Augusto Pinochet's Chile), the prince-deputy dismisses the victims of such regimes as a lamentable "cost," but insists they remain superior to less absolutist systems, with their "tyranny of the majority." Luiz Philippe assures his readers that "democracy has never managed to serve as the only political force," and that modern democracies' Enlightenment-based focus on social rights and welfare-state policies is deeply flawed. Mirroring the arguments of North Atlantic conservative think tanks, he argues that post-absolutist Western governance has erred principally in the adoption of "'acquired rights'—like the right to health, to employment, to shelter, to food, to education, . . . to motherhood, to strike, to rest, to retirement benefits, to pleasure, to unionize." Other family members and supporters reiterate that monarchy is the solution to these problems, restoring true democracy by abolishing democratic republicanism. "A democratic country," Luiz Philippe's cousin Rafael counseled in a 2014 speech, "gives voice to the people. . . . The truth is that democracy is much more present in a monarchy."[45] As if rehearsing the claims of election-fraud conspiracists in the United States in 2020 and Brazil in 2022, the *Cartilha Monárquica* presents conservative autocracy as the *true* articulation of the national self, even if not chosen by a majority. In this view, restoration and interference with democratic processes are a heroic move to save an elite-led, quasi-spiritual democracy based in unexpressed—but presumably traditional—national

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43 "Bolsonaro oficializa candidatura à reeleição e ataca STF," *Deutsche Welle*, July 24, 2022, https://www.dw.com/pt-br/bolsonaro-oficializa-candidatura-%C3%A0-reelei%C3%A7%C3%A3o-e-ataca-stf/a-62578853.

44 Pró Monarquia (@ProMonarquia), Twitter, January 10, 2022, 8:50 a.m., https://twitter.com/ProMonarquia/status/1480552585438367746?s=20&t=yyzOHzYda5SV1alMN-MWDA.

45 Rafael de Orleans e Bragança, Speech at the XXIV Encontro Monárquico do Rio de Janeiro, September 6, 2006, YouTube video, 3:17, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=muvGylYIThE.

virtues currently stymied by party politics. "Monarchy," the document reads, "is the guardian of *true* democracy."[46]

Monarchists, like the core of the right in Brazil, insist—have long insisted—that such national virtues are based in an ethnocentrically determined Christian order. Ultra-traditionalist Brazilian Catholics set this tone early in the twentieth century, extolling medievalesque, organicist hierarchies as a lost expression of human submission to divine wisdom. Hence antiprogressive Brazilian activists at the Second Vatican Council execrated any deviation from pre-Reformation social organization as "the Revolution," a disembodied and satanic force behind every innovation from Protestantism to communism and ecumenism. They agitated for a return to the perfect "Catholic society" they imagined in the Middle Ages, holding that democratic societies lack the precise, sanctified hierarchies of the romanticized past—the "beauty of inequality," to use their words. Bertrand continued to repackage this in 2019, as he hobnobbed with the Bolsonaro administration and rejoiced that, after his years of wandering in the wilderness of a revanchist fringe, "it has become attractive be rightist and conservative." Bertrand boiled down the meaning of "rightist and conservative" to precisely those sanctified hierarchies, by whose logic democracy must give way to righteous conservative autocracy: "The beauty of society," he advised, "does not lie in equality but in differences that should be proportional, hierarchical, harmonic, and complementary. Exactly like a symphony."[47]

The restorationist credo takes this rejection of equality as a point of departure, one "firmly grounded in the Judeo-Christian tradition." Humans are not equal among themselves, and neither are religions and ethnic identities—a contention that rejects both democratic egalitarianism and deviation from traditionalist Christianity. Monarchists continue their Cold War rejection of liberation theology and ecumenism as "viscerally anti-Christian revolutionary" blasphemy—just as they reject social justice and liberal democracy themselves as disastrous deformations of God's order, not least because republics have lost the putatively selfless "influence of [absolutist monarchs and aristocrats] as a positive for the collective."[48] This is constantly reiterated today, for example, by a polyglot web of organizations calling themselves "Nobility," associated with the international chapters of TFP and set on globalizing the campaign for restorationist nobility begun by Oliveira himself. A transnational "Appeal to Today's

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46 *Cartilha Monárquica,* 18–19.

47 See Cowan, *Moral Majorities*; João Fellet, "Monarquistas ocupam cargos em Brasília e reabilitam grupo católico ultraconservador," *BBC News Brasil*, April 4, 2019, https://www.bbc.com/portuguese/brasil-47728267.

48 Bertrand de Orleans e Bragança, "Quo vadis, Domine? Reverente e filial Mensagem a Sua Santidade o Papa Francisco do Príncipe Dom Bertrand de Orleans e Bragança," TFP website, February 8, 2014, https://tfp.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/www.paznocampo.org.br_destaques_Reverente_e_Filial_Mensagem.pdf; Luiz Philippe de Orleans e Bragança, *Por que?,* 134, 222.

Elites" again advocates the abolition of liberal democracy in favor of rule by "families and individuals . . . especially endowed in nature and grace." To monarchists, these hereditary elites "are the yeast, the others the dough," a metaphor whereby the general population (the dough) should enjoy "seeing itself thus elevated" by aristocratic and monarchic noblesse oblige in a scheme of rulership "based on the teaching of the Divine Master."[49]

The belief that God, in fact, calls monarchists to a fuller "restoration of Christian civilization" is a longtime hallmark of restorationists and other extreme-right groups.[50] Their vision continues to include heralding the medieval Crusades as an aesthetic-cum-political model for regaining a lost authoritarian Christian ideal. TFP members have, (in)famously, been marching and congregating in dramatic organizational "habits" (designed by the founder and imagined as recreations of Crusader garb) for decades (figure 3).

Figure 3. TFP founder Plínio Corrêa de Oliveira wearing the organization's trademark vestments. Source: "Dr. Plínio Corrêa de Oliveira," Reconquista (website), accessed May 4, 2023, https://reconquista.arautos.org/dr-plinio-correa-de-oliveira/.

49 "Às elites cabe uma missão a favor do bem comum," Nobreza (TFP website), April 28, 2011, https://nobreza.org/apelo-as-elites/.

50 The phrase *civilização cristã* is everywhere across the right. For two contemporary examples, see Dom Bertrand's letter to Pope Francis (note 45) and the modern-day integralist movement's hagiography of the Brazilian fascist Plínio Salgado: "Bandeira nova dos tempos novos: O Pensamento Revolucionário de Plínio Salgado," Deus, Pátria, Família (website), April 21, 2020, https://integralismo.org.br/sintese-doutrinaria/o-pensamento-revolucionario-de-plinio-salgado/bandeira-nova-dos-tempos-novos/.

Today, monarchists present the ex-royal family as paragons of Christian culture and devotion, seamlessly blending claims of dynastic piety with calls for their return to rule. Interviewed about his certainty that God will occasion the "return to Christian and Catholic monarchy," Antônio cited his own and his family's devoutness, their adherence across generations to "Catholic training, the backbone of everything [our family] does."[51] In a 2014 open letter of protest to Pope Francis, Bertrand took on the air of a traditional spiritual authority, endowed with the piety and wisdom to chide the pontiff. The letter (Quo Vadis, Domine?[52]) implied that the current pope's relative openness to social justice impeded "restoration of Christian civilization" and fallaciously sanctioned "current society, of lay inspiration." Secular modernity, Bertrand declared, had "penetrated the West like a poison after the rejection of the austere and sacral order that reigned in Christendom when . . . 'states were governed by the philosophy of the Gospel.'" Here Bertrand quoted two extremely conservative papal encyclicals: Pius X's *Notre Charge Apostolique,* which in 1910 rejected labor-oriented Catholicism, insisting on a traditionalist, counterrevolutionary faith that would keep society "the Catholic City . . . as God has built it"; and Leo XIII's 1885 *Immortale Dei.* Bertrand's "austere and sacral order" refers specifically to the time when, according to that encyclical, "Christian Europe . . . subdued barbarous nations, changed them from a savage to a civilized condition," "victoriously rolled back the tide of Mohammedan conquest," and "retained the headship of civilization."[53] In late 2019, members of the ex-royal family appeared at an event calling Brazil itself "the last Crusade." The event was sponsored by Brasil Paralelo, an extremely successful extreme-right media outlet associated with the Bolsonaro government.[54] The organization's glitzy productions (available for streaming via subscription service) trace Brazilianness back to a glorified medieval Christendom, "linking the future of the nation with the legacy of the European Middle Ages." The 2019 event accordingly advertised Bertrand himself as "the Imperial Prince, bona fide crusader in the fight for the restoration of the true Brazil."[55]

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51 "Entrevista com o Príncipe D. Antônio de Orleans e Bragança," *Herdeiros do Porvir* 19, no. 35 (2013): 4.

52 See note 45. The phrase is Latin for "Whither goest thou, my lord?"

53 Bertrand de Orleans e Bragança, "Quo vadis"; Leo XIII, *Immortale Dei*, November 1, 1885, https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_01111885_immortale-dei.html.

54 Alexandre Bazzan, "'Netflix' dos bolsonaristas gastou R$328 mil em anúncios de Facebook e Instagram," *O Estado de São Paulo*, September 28, 2020, https://politica.estadao.com.br/noticias/geral,netflix-dos-bolsonaristas-gastou-r-328-mil-em-anuncios-de-facebook-e-instagram,70003455670. On Brasil Paralelo's profile and reach, see Wink, *Brazil*, 248.

55 Pró Monarquia, "Fórum 'Brasil: A Última Cruzada,'" Facebook, September 5, 2019, https://www.facebook.com/promonarquia/posts/2550248258545082/.

Brasil Paralelo, with its unsubtle glorifications of the medieval, colonial, and imperial pasts and its alignment with the Bolsonaro regime, exemplifies the ways that this worldview, long championed by monarchists and like-minded fringe groups, has moved into the mainstream. Brazil's restorationists have consistently fabricated ideological and cultural genealogies, weaving fictive histories that sought to link their movements with romanticized epochs of militant Christian theocracy. Often this has bound racism and religious chauvinism together in one ethnocentric bundle—certainly this was the case for the "re-Catholicization" envisioned by early restorationists. "[L]acking an epic narrative, confronted with a national populace of Indigenous people and [formerly] enslaved blacks," one historian observes, "the *patrianovistas* found their greatest models in Christian Europe of old and in the heroes of medieval knighthood."[56] Today, this nostalgic ethnocentrism based on "Christian civilization" surfaces not just in esoteric monarchist circles but in the most influential and visible echelons of Brazilian political culture, from social media celebrities to top-level advisors and even Olavo de Carvalho, the sometime guru of the right and architect of its current configuration. As others have observed, right-wing activists have created a media universe in which rehabilitating the Crusades as heroic and ancestral serves as a mark of antiestablishment wisdom.[57] The expression *Deus Vult*! (God wills it) now serves as a Bolsonarist cri de coeur because—as one right-wing podcast would have it—"there isn't the least possibility of being conservative, or even pro-freedom, without saying the latest trend in Western tattoos: *Deus Vult!*"[58] The Latin phrase is a slogan attributed to participants in the First Crusade, and its usage constitutes another marker of how Brazil in the 2010s and 2020s has seen these ideas, historically championed by monarchists and other fringe groups, rise to new prominence. To quote historian Paulo Pachá, in "Bolsonaro's Brazil, the . . . government and far-right groups are propagandizing a fictional version of the European Middle Ages, insisting that the period was uniformly white, patriarchal, and Christian."[59] More than ever, monarchist attempts to restore the "Catholic City" of an imagined theocratic, white-, and male-dominated Middle Ages have found a home in the mainstream of Brazil's right—so much so that Bolsonaro insider, Olavo de Carvalho student, and Tucker Carlson guest Filipe G. Martins celebrated Bolsonaro's 2018 election by tweeting: "The new era has arrived. Everything is ours! Deus Vult!"[60]

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56 Malatian, "Tradicionalismo," 92.

57 Ethel Rudnitzki and Rafael Oliveira, "Deus vult: uma velha expressão na boca da extrema direita," *Pública,* April 30, 2019, https://apublica.org/2019/04/deus-vult-uma-velha-expressao-na-boca-da-extrema-direita/.

58 "Deus Vult: como as cruzadas salvaram o mundo," *Guten Morgen* (podcast), April 5, 2019, http://sensoincomum.org/2019/04/05/guten-morgen-74-deus-vult-cruzadas-salvaram-mundo/.

59 Paulo Pachá, "Why the Brazilian Far Right Loves the European Middle Ages," *Pacific Standard*, March 12, 2019, https://psmag.com/ideas/why-the-brazilian-far-right-is-obsessed-with-the-crusades.

60 Filipe G. Martins (@filgmartin), Twitter, December 31, 2018, 8:15 p.m., https://twitter.com/filgmar-

Free Enterprise and Private Property: Monarchism, Capitalism, and Anticommunism

Like their counterparts elsewhere, conservative podcasters in Brazil use terms like "pro-freedom" to dog-whistle several causes, free-market fantasies and destruction of the welfare state prominent among them. Drawing on their forebears and especially on conservative interpretations of the history of Catholic social doctrine, monarchists (and other traditionalist Catholics) anticipated, and now serve as ballast for, coterminous promotion of capitalism, demonization of the welfare state, and ferocious anticommunism. Heedless of the complex historical relationships of the Church and of European monarchies with capitalism and private property, monarchist leaders today trumpet the right's approaches to economic theory, social programs, and the chimera of communism. In so doing, they reinvent monarchy as the eternal bulwark of unfettered capitalism.

Like reactionaries of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Bragança and their supporters harken back to an imagined golden age of economic hierarchy and harmony governed by absolutists. Amid the chaos of 2013, *Herdeiros do Porvir* (Heirs to the future) quoted "Prince" Antônio mourning the illusory old days in which his family's moral culture and indomitable Catholicism meant "there was no rivalry between boss and worker . . . there existed great harmony among everyone." The monarchist magazine added that the republic, and especially the Workers' Party governments of 2003–2016, had created an "insufferable tax burden" and, worse, "a Leviathan State."[61] Luiz Philippe's book laments the passing of even older days, before the "weakening of absolutism" permitted liberal democracies' stultifying "bureaucracy." He follows this paean to the lost wisdom of Europe's early modern royals with an anachronistic nostalgia for the economic heroes of the Anglo-American New Right: Margaret Thatcher, Ronald Reagan, Friedrich Hayek, Ludwig von Mises, Milton Friedman, Murray Rothbard, and others. These politicians and "philosophers," Luiz Philippe argues, rescued the dreamlike legacy of early modern capitalism and "privatization" from the depredations of social democracy, epitomized by the "statified" regime of the US New Deal. The self-styled prince jumbles Reagan-Thatcherism with sixteenth- to eighteenth-century dynastic rule to promote their conflated heritages as the answer to the world's ills. In this version of history and contemporary policy, democracy and social programs have been an aberration; without them "the rich" will cause a rising tide to lift all boats. "In truth," Luiz Philippe instructs an anonymous, socratically conjured worker, "what we'd need is more entrepreneurs and businessmen creating more and more jobs and

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tin/status/1079923922760540160?s=19.

61 Interview with Antônio de Orleans e Bragança, *Herdeiros do Porvir* 19, no. 35 (2013): 8.

wealth. . . . All the improvement in Brazilians' quality of life would come from . . . entrepreneurs and not the government."[62]

A quarter century before the publication of Luiz Philippe's book, the movement's "Propostas básicas com vistas à restauração da monarquia no Brasil" (Basic proposals for the goal of restoring the monarchy in Brazil) argued that Catholic monarchy must save Brazilians from a bloated and weak (if not downright evil) liberal democratic state, complete with its unions, social programs, and "hyper-regulated" protections. Under monarchy, the "basic proposals" asserted, "the institutions of free enterprise and private property will be guaranteed with especial rigor," including policies like so-called freedom to work and other impediments to enfranchised labor. The proposals warned that Brazil could not survive without "an effective and urgent diminution of the hypertrophied state machine and . . . correspondent privatization of state firms."[63] In the current climate, this commitment to dismantling the state both extends outward to other conservative causes célèbres and continues a pattern of claiming these principles as Catholic precepts. The Cold War chapter in this story saw reactionary Catholics painting social programs, land reform, and even democracy itself as immoral, anti-Catholic, and a death knell for private property—and eventually making common cause with free-market evangelists and neoliberals.[64] Like those Cold War precursors, Bertrand denounces environmentalism, Indigenous rights, and rural antipoverty efforts because they "gravely violate the right to property, undercut agricultural production, and impose limits on the legitimate economic progress of all layers of the population."[65]

Though Catholic reactionaries innovated in many ways as they helped to create the New Right—not least by moving toward full-throated endorsement of economic liberalism—they have always clung to the Church's inveterate anticommunism. Thus while monarchists' embrace of mainstream right-wing neoliberalism may be relatively novel, their fear and loathing of communism replicate more than a century of traditionalist activism. Not by chance do the Braganças and others quote Pius X and Leo XIII; virulent, faith-based anticommunism lay at the heart of these popes' teachings, and it lies at the heart of monarchist thinking today. For monarchists in the 2010s and 2020s, as for their predecessors and for their allies on the contemporary Bolsonarist right, communist machinations—seen or unseen—lie behind nearly every foe. In other words, the anticommunism of the monarchist and Bolsonarist right in 2022 is an only slightly updated version of the anticommunism of the nineteenth-

62 Bragança, *Por que?*, 72, 166–67.

63 "Propostas básicas com vistas à restauração da monarquia no Brasil," Pró Monarquia, January 2009, https://monarquia.org.br/monarquia-hoje/propostas-basicas/.

64 Cowan, *Moral Majorities.*

65 Bragança, *Psicose,* 7.

and early twentieth-century Church. It appears across the spectrum of restorationist discourse, with an astonishing variety of targets. Luiz Philippe predictably dismisses the PT (Workers' Party) governments (2003–2016) as "Marxist," their "Marxist narrative" of "statification"—a charge which ignores the PT's adherence to privatization schemes—constituting "the pattern of ideology that leads to communism." The prince-deputy even uses the language of Cold War–era anticommunism, comparing communism to fascism and accusing the "so-called left" of "seducing" Brazilians with "machinations to keep itself in command."[66] The late Luiz Gastão, meanwhile, spent decades combating the Red Menace. Addressing the nation's constitutional convention in a 1987 letter—repeatedly posted online by today's monarchists—he complained that "communist propaganda" was gaining free reign in Brazil's fledgling democracy.[67] In 2013, he heralded the arrival of medical doctors from Cuba as a communist conspiracy—"tools of unspoken designs" wrought by "agents of the socialist-communist ideology" that would lead to "slavery" in Brazil.[68]

Like others in his family, the elderly Luiz took to social media to continue this work, teaching monarchist and other conservative followers that—to quote one observer—Brazil's republican structure meant the country would "remain subject to communists, socialists, populists."[69] Continuity between monarchists' time-tested anticommunism and the configuration of the right in our time takes its most ferocious form in the pronouncements of Bertrand, however. In a series of arguments made on social media and in his book *Psicose Ambientalista* (Environmentalist psychosis), Bertrand argues that "green" has replaced "red"—that is, climate change and Indigenous rights activists in the 2010s and 2020s, in concert with the execrable scourge of liberation theology, "have substituted the 'red' of communism with the 'green' of environmentalism" and have "revealed their objectives: socialism, poverty, totalitarianism, communism." His list of "notorious reds" includes Hugo Chávez and Evo Morales alongside Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., Jeffrey Sachs, Barack Obama, and Osama bin Laden. As if to clarify throughlines with older iterations of anticommunism, Bertrand, too, uses the language of the Cold War, even decrying "useful idiots," lingo for the putative pawns in a Red conspiracy.[70]

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66 Bragança, *Por que?,* 73, 75, 115.

67 Pró Monarquia, "A carta aos constituintes de 1987," Facebook, June 21, 2017, https://de-de.facebook.com/promonarquia/posts/1965819716987942/; "Carta aos Constituintes de 1987," *Diário Oficial* (blog), February 8, 2017, http://odiarioimperial.blogspot.com/2017/02/a-carta-aos-constituintes-de-1987.html.

68 "Atividades dos Príncipes," *Herdeiros do Porvir*, 3.

69 Rodrigo Polo Pires, untitled blog post, Notícias Agrícolas, January 22, 2017, https://www.noticiasagricolas.com.br/fala-produtor/mensagem-87821/

70 Bragança, *Psicose,* 86.

Sexual Counterrevolution

The "red meat" of right-wing culture wars—abortion, homosexuality, unconventional sexual and gender behavior—is well known in Brazil and elsewhere, and monarchists can again claim to have been fighting these battles longer than almost anyone else. Traditionalist Catholics in Brazil have historically incorporated sexual conservatism as a central plank of their proposals; they perceive a timeless conspiracy to undo the rightful order of the world, a satanic, capital-R "Revolution," which they discern behind everything from the Reformation and the Renaissance to the French Revolution and the Soviet Union.[71] Even before the Cold War, restorationists established their bona fides in this regard—as one historian of interwar monarchist corporatism writes, leaders took "the family and the monarchy" as "bases" in their attempt to "cure the supposed deterioration of the country, occasioned by the republic and liberal democracy."[72] In the twenty-first century, monarchists find themselves aligned precisely with the family and gender politics of a broader Christian (and lately, Bolsonarist) right that has caught up to the royalists in its vitriolic opposition to abortion, women's rights, LGBTQIA rights, and other issues of sexual and gender freedom and expression.

This alignment stems from monarchists' insistence that the Christian European social and cultural structure they have perennially sought to defend must be based in heteropatriarchal families. The "basic proposals" stated this unambiguously: "Let the family, mother cell of society and fundament of Christian civilization, be effectively protected." Presaging Bolsonaro's own exploitation of homophobia and antifeminism—for instance, his infamous demonization of the ersatz "kit gay" and "gender ideology," both conspiracy theories about left-wing sexualized threats to the conventional family and to children—and the current right's focus on abortion as a wedge issue, the monarchists' Magna Carta likewise called for restricting the "mission of educating children" to "the family" and demanded "cultivation, in all households, of a conscience opposed to infanticide."[73] Prominent monarchists repeat this on various platforms, cementing the notion of traditional sexuality and gender as the cornerstone of a presumedly coherent right-wing platform that binds together authoritarianism, heteropatriarchy, and various social and cultural canards. Echoing right-wing moral panics past and present, conservative author Bruno Garschagen complained in 2017 that "it is easier today for a kid to tell his parents that he has twelve sexual identities . . . than to tout . . . the superiority of monarchism."[74] At a 2012 meeting of monarchists in

71 Cowan, *Moral Majorities*; Coppe Caldeira, *Os baluartes*; Zanotto, *TFP*.

72 Cazetta, "Pátria-Nova," 46.

73 "Propostas básicas," Pró Monarquia.

74 Bruno Garschagen, "Monarquista, Graças a Deus," *Gazeta do Povo*, October 16, 2016, https://

Florianópolis, the president of a local royalist chapter condemned the permissiveness of a proposal for a new penal code in terms that ranged from sexual to social to economic, arguing that it "completely unfetter[ed] abortion," liberated "criminals," and harmed free enterprise. During the same meeting, Bertrand waxed triumphant, insisting that ordinary Brazilians desired "the return of the monarchy" and rejected the combined scourges of left-wing government, sexual "revolution," and republicanism: "Despite the government and the media insisting on promoting social revolution and a revolution of morality, the Brazilian populace is orderly and conservative."[75]

Once fringe, monarchists now find themselves in the gratifying position of seeing their politics of sexuality and gender move beyond political acceptability and into a terrain of empowered revanchism that stretches from social media to the top echelons of government. As late as 2017, Bertrand touched off a minor scandal when (as an aside, while dismissing Amazonian deforestation as a "myth") he declared: "I see homosexuality as a defect . . . [as] Catholic doctrine sees it. And the majority also sees it." Monarchists have also met the wider right on the broader field of antifeminism and renewed gender strictures for women, a trend that has been on the rise on the Brazilian right for years. Where putschist center-right Brazilian president Michel Temer (who helped oust democratically elected reformist Dilma Rousseff in 2014) can point to his young, manicured, and apparently submissive wife, monarchists offer their own royal examples as paragons of femininity—in both contexts, women are relegated to subordinate, largely ornamental positions in movements led and spoken for by men.[76] A 2016 interview with then First Lady Marcela Temer touched off a firestorm of reaction that epitomized conservative visions of proper womanhood and its place in the culture wars. The magazine that ran the interview, apparently following Marcela's lead, described her as "bela, recatada, e do lar"—beautiful, demure, and domestic. When opposition voices criticized the restrictiveness of this as a model for women, the phrase quickly became a hashtag, with reactionaries on social media supporting the idea that Mrs. Temer embodied proper womanhood. "While Marcela Temer cares for the children of this country, the feminists," one Twitter user mocked, "complain about her being beautiful, demure, and domestic."[77]

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www.gazetadopovo.com.br/opiniao/colunistas/bruno-garschagen/monarquista-gracas-a-deus-0iv6ae12s332qtywps2qfyrlg/?ref=link-interno-materia.

75 "IV Encontro Monárquico Sul Brasileiro," *Herdeiros do Porvi*r 19, no. 35 (2013): 7.

76 The exception that proves this rule is arguably Carla Zambelli, a federal deputy who has been outspoken about her own 2017 conversion to monarchism. Even among the younger circles of monarchists, whose meetings I have observed, membership and representation is overwhelmingly male, reflecting the unanimity with which conservatives, monarchists or not, tend to seek the reinstitution of patriarchal gender roles.

77 Antifeminismo (@feminazisnao), Twitter, October 5, 2016, 11:54 a.m., https://twitter.com/feminazisnao/status/783711890635628544.

If the Temers serve as republican icons of reformulated, traditional gender roles, monarchists chime in with the feminine icons they have perennially proposed: literal princesses, or would-be princesses. Bertrand and Luiz Gastão's niece, the self-styled princess Maria Gabriela de Orleans e Bragança, cultivates a public image that emphasizes her delicacy, conventional femininity, and attendance upon the needs of her family. The princess has posted many videos of herself singing classical music, and spoken in interviews of her desire for a "dynastic marriage" that attends both to needs "of the state and of the heart."[78] While she, like her aunt, has had a professional career outside of homemaking, the public messaging of the ex-royal family and monarchist organizations emphasizes her respect for order, traditionally feminine pursuits, and subordination to the men of her family. "Raised according to the notion that the Imperial Family of Brazil has serious obligations to the *Pátria*," reads the Pró Monarquia website, Maria Gabriela is "dedicated to Christian charity [and] regularly visits hospitals, where she sings, bringing relief to the sick." She is, moreover, "vice president of the Monarchist Youth of Brazil, whose president is her brother Rafael."[79] Over the course of the past generation, monarchists have watched these chauvinisms, from restricting acceptable womanhood to restricting queerness, gain further ascendancy in Brazil's ever-expanding protestant Churches as well as in the corridors of governance. As one writer put it, such reversals in the public square (and in accompanying policymaking) now form a "wave of . . . social retrocession" in which "women suffer restrictions in their rights, so hard won."[80] Accordingly, little more than a year after Bertrand's dismissal of homosexuality as a "defect," Jair Bolsonaro would be elected on a wave of electoral sympathy for his own nearly identical bigotry and untruths.[81]

International Underdogs: Monarchism, Perceived Persecution, and the Right beyond Brazil

Bruno Garschagen's claim, partially quoted above, that "few confessions cause more shock today than declaring oneself monarchist" indicates another characteristic of alignment between monarchists, paragons of the twentieth-century New Right (from

78 "Entrevista com a Princesa Dona Maria Gabriela," *Herdeiros do Porvir* 67 (2021): 4.

79 "Dona Maria Gabriela," Pró Monarquia, accessed May 4, 2023, https://monarquia.org.br/a-familia-imperial/dona-maria-gabriela/.

80 "'Bela, recatada e do lar': por que a expressão gerou tanta polêmica nas redes sociais?," *Donna*, April 20, 2016, https://gauchazh.clicrbs.com.br/donna/noticia/2016/04/bela-recatada-e-do-lar-por-que-a-expressao-gerou-tanta-polemica-nas-redes-sociais-cjpl6oxcz009vwscnq3poc9v1.html.

81 "Príncipe imperial destila homofobia e critica ambientalistas," *Catraca Livre,* May 2, 2017, https://catracalivre.com.br/cidadania/principe-imperial-destila-homofobia-e-critica-ambientalistas/; Filho, "Carla Zambelli."

the Heritage Foundation to the TFP), and the authoritarian conservatism newly resurgent in Brazil and beyond: a sort of persecution complex, in which rightists across ideological and national divides identify as antiestablishment and as victims of (and/or heroic resisters to) a conspiracy of leftists, globalists, sexual deviants, environmentalists, and communists. For restorationists, this sense of suffering dates back decades. Luiz Gastão, for example, complained to legislators in 1987 about the "ideological 'apartheid' against monarchists"—thus likening himself and his supporters to the victims of murderous segregation then regnant in South Africa.[82] In this, typically, monarchists and other rightists style themselves as underdogs while simultaneously occupying positions of power and influence, and they align themselves with national power brokers and internationally celebrated right-wingers. When Tucker Carlson interviewed Bolsonaro in an international broadcast, the two agreed on their mutual marginalization by "the media." Luiz Philippe's book opens by positioning the author as David to the Goliath of the establishment intelligentsia, the "majority" of academics and journalists who are "politicians in disguise" and who "pollute and contaminate millions of minds with false truths, made-up statistics, . . . distortion of historical fact, . . . and attempts to create myths and new narratives to validate themselves as the representatives of 'the people.'"[83] *Psicose Ambientalista,* echoing religious fundamentalists of the twentieth century, accuses the UN of trying "to transform humanity into a society hostile to and even persecutory toward Christian civilization."[84] The "monarchist primer" sniffs that liberal governments ("republicans") and "the media" have waged a campaign of defamation against the Brazilian Empire and restorationists. Echoing Trump, Bolsonaro, and their political kin elsewhere, the document presumes monarchism's victimization by a grand, corporate media–borne conspiracy: "[S]chool textbooks, financed by the republican governments, when they spoke of the princes, always did so in a pejorative way, never recognizing what the monarchy had done for the country. Many outlets of the mainstream media do the same today, silencing . . . the glorious period in which Brazil was a monarchy, successful and well-respected throughout the whole world."[85]

The Brazilian right's resonance internationally is no coincidence. Indeed, Brazilian restorationists and their close allies, including traditionalist Catholics and early twentieth-century fascist and protofascist movements such as the *patrianovistas* and Integralists, have long harbored an intoxicating blend of militant nationalism and sympathy with like-minded ideas and movements abroad. By the middle of the Cold War, that blend ripened beyond mere sympathy into direct collaboration between

82 "Carta aos constituintes de 1987."

83 Bragança, *Por que?*, 13.

84 Bragança, *Psicose,* 89.

85 *Cartilha Monárquica*, 7.

far-right anticommunists in different countries.[86] Today, this is the rule rather than the exception—monarchists in Brazil, like their counterparts from other veins of conservatism, make no secret of their identification with foreign extremists, especially in the United States. These links are both personal and issue based. Luiz Philippe, for example, delights in the constitutional "originalism" of hard-right legal minds in the United States; denounces, across national and historical contexts, even minimally redistributive programs, from the Affordable Care Act to the New Deal; celebrates Brexit and defends it from charges of xenophobic racism; and, as of 2021, has served on the board of a corporation helping to finance Donald Trump's Truth Social media platform. His uncle Bertrand, meanwhile, could not be clearer about his affinities with ascendant Bolsonarism and like-minded phenomena abroad. His pet issues include shielding business against regulation by the "religion of environmentalism." He has also written extensively about how COVID-19 is a "Chinese business" designed to "destroy the fundaments of Christian civilization." In a spectacular turn, Bertrand recently took to fraternizing with partisans of another transnational right-wing issue—the arming of propertied white men. Bertrand proudly publicized his visits to the shooting range of the São Paulo–based *Clube de Tiro Redneck*—the Redneck Gun Club. The club's website offers as inspiration the confession "I'm kind of a closet redneck," attributed to Donald Trump, Jr.; the site goes on to explain that "redneck is the term used in the United States and Canada to refer to the stereotype of a man who lives in the interior of the country, is poor, of humble origins, and a traditionalist."[87]

Monarchists, then, do not *lead* Brazil's fractious and evolving right—if anyone can be said to lead it—but they are *part of* its leadership, not only in the sense of the close relationships they enjoyed with the Bolsonaro government, but in terms of ideas and sensibilities that united Bolsonaro supporters across ideological and denominational lines. Olavo de Carvalho, the YouTubing Rasputin of Brazil's far right, epitomized this nexus of monarchism, conservative power in Brazil, and transnational right-wing ascendancy. Monarchists and Catholic traditionalists claim Carvalho as one of their own. Indeed, royalist tributes to Carvalho can be found across social media, where he is revered as a pro-Bragança, anti-PT hero. Often his glamorized image accompanies vaguely attributed quotes like "If the royal house really wants to restore the monarchy, I will fight by their side" or "Our monarchy . . . was incomparably better than the republic."[88] Two of his apostles number among the avowed royalists who were appointed

86 Cowan, *Moral Majorities*.

87 The club's website is http://clubedetiroredneck.com.br/oclube/ (accessed May 4, 2023); Pró Monarquia (@ProMonarquia), Twitter, September 12, 2021, 10:50 a.m., https://twitter.com/promonarquia/status/1437081121502662656?lang=en; Pró Monarquia (@ProMonarquia), Twitter, July 7, 2021, 9:50 a.m., https://twitter.com/ProMonarquia/status/1545057577343414272?s=20&t=tf4xCo8FZ6fOOMMg-Qln2g.

88 Olavo de Carvalho (@OdeCarvalho), Twitter, September 19, 2016, 4:13 p.m., https://twitter.com/odecarvalho/status/777979022512971776?lang=en; Olavo de Carvalho, Facebook, March 14, 2015, https://www.facebook.com/carvalho.olavo/posts/estou-careca-de-saber-que-a-monarquia-parlamentar-seria-o-melhor-regime-para-o-b/462367680581978/.

to positions of power in the Bolsonaro administration.[89] Carvalho sought to extend his influence beyond Brazil. According to some sources, he maintained contact with Hungary's Victor Orbán and Italy's Matteo Salvini.[90] He resided in Virginia and hobnobbed with the likes of Steve Bannon (arguably an American approximation of Carvalho), who called him "one of the greatest conservative intellectuals in the world."[91] These kinships appear to have endeared him even further to monarchists and to the ex-royal family, with whom Carvalho shared what one journalist called "Bolsonaro's pro-gun, antiabortion, climate-change-skeptical . . . free-market" platform.[92] When Carvalho died in January 2022, Bertrand tweeted a message of sympathy and grief for the self-styled "philosopher and professor," noting that the latter "knew how to confront gallantly the 'politically correct' system."[93]

Bertrand models a monarchist (and wider conservative) penchant for adopting right-wing positioning and terminology from abroad, from opposing "political correctness" to "redneck" identity. When the US Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) came to Brazil in 2019, Pró Monarquia exulted in this summit of "expertise in defending liberty and family values" in "the two most important countries in America: Brazil and the United States." Bertrand and Luiz Philippe each spoke from the CPAC podium, lauding their "friends" in the Bolsonaro regime, promoting gun rights ("legitimate defense"), attacking environmental protections, and gloating that CPAC exhibited the "new Brazil that is coming back." Bertrand opened with a phrase that symbolizes right-wing unity across borders: "Quero meu Brasil de volta," literally "I want my Brazil back."[94] In part, this reflects the decades-old ultraright Brazilian strategy of seeing

89 "Doutrinado de Olavo de Carvalho, simpatizante da monarquia vai presidir a Fundação Biblioteca Nacional," *Forum*, November 29, 2019, https://revistaforum.com.br/politica/2019/11/29/doutrinado-de-olavo-de-carvalho-simpatizante-da-monarquia-vai-presidir-fundao-biblioteca-nacional-65130.html.

90 Andrea Ribeiro Hoffmann and Bettina de Souza Guilherme, "The Fall of a Giant: Greed, Corruption and Abuse of Power Undermining Democracy in Brazil," in *Financial Crisis Management and Democracy*, ed. Bettina de Souza Guilherme and Andrea Ribeiro Hoffmann (Cham, Switzerland: Springer, 2021), 201–11.

91 Jack Nicas, "Olavo de Carvalho, Bolsonaro's Far-Right Guru, Dies at 74," *New York Times,* January 26, 2022.

92 Andres Schipani, "Royalists Pine for Days of Empire in Bolsonaro's Brazil," *Los Angeles Times,* January 6, 2020.

93 Dom Bertrand de Orleans e Bragança (@SAIRDomBertrand), Twitter, January 25, 2022, 6:00 p.m., https://twitter.com/SAIRDomBertrand/status/1486126827391397888?s=20&t=qH6XqE-DbyjN-qmMFLascuw.

94 CPAC has also held events in Japan, Mexico, South Korea, Australia, and—notably—Viktor Orbán's Hungary, where a second conference took place in May 2023, with Orbán himself as invited keynote speaker. Bertrand's speech is available at "CPAC Brasil—Dom Bertrand," October 13, 2019, YouTube video, 29:06, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R6vCMw4GYWU. See also Pró Monarquia,

every threat to hegemony as part of a global conspiracy. When Bertrand and other monarchists rhapsodize that the 2020s are their moment, that a "new Brazil is coming back," they identify with rightists in the United States and elsewhere in presuming a common enemy animating right-wing struggles from Brazil to Hungary and Russia. A smaller monarchist group calling itself Movimento Brasil Monarquista takes to Twitter (and lately, to Telegram) to denounce left-wing governments across the region as part of a transnational conspiracy inherited from the Cold War—the capital-R "Revolution" of Oliveira's mid-century writings. To these monarchists, Chile's current president, Gabriel Boric, is "a friend of Lula and ultracommunist"; and the political fortunes of Argentina and Venezuela are linked with those of Brazil not by proximity but by their common battle against "the danger of communism." Tellingly, "communism" here has been updated to include new progressive bogeymen—such as the false claim that leftists in Latin America seek to echo US calls to disarm conventional police forces.[95] On this issue, too, Bertrand and the Plínio Corrêa de Oliveira Institute have joined hands rhetorically with their counterparts in the United States. The "prince" weighed in on the debate over historical monuments to atrocity perpetrators as a transnational issue. As the "racial reckoning" intensified in the United States in the summer of 2020, Bertrand took the side of conservatives in a YouTube video entitled "Brazilian Prince Comments on the Criminal Toppling of Statues—Brazil and the United States on High Alert." He specifically praised the American variant of the TFP for its defense of a statue of St. Louis, supporting counterprotests in that city that were organized by conspiracy theorist and Parkland (Florida) mass-shooting denier Jim Hoft.[96]

Conclusions and Contradictions

Eminent historian Darren Dochuk has observed the tendency to dismiss contemporary conservatisms as "a last-gasp attempt to recapture a mythical, pre-modern past."[97] The critical error, perhaps, lies in the idea of a *last* gasp. Risible as the pretensions of monarchists in Brazil may seem, their ideas had gained (or retained) enough appeal

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"A CPAC Brasil 2019," Facebook, September 30, 2019, https://www.facebook.com/promonarquia/posts/2569023306667577/.

95 Larissa Linder, "Monarquistas 2.0," *Tab*, June 27, 2022, https://tab.uol.com.br/edicao/monarquistas/; Movimento Brasil Monarquista (@_Monarquista), Twitter, October 28, 2019, 12:53 p.m., https://twitter.com/_Monarquista/status/1188876567944011777?s=20&t=AWVKjSx1cuvxoPtu6bL1CA.

96 Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira Institute, "Príncipe brasileiro comenta criminosa derrubada de estátuas—EUA e Brasil em alerta," July 10, 2020, YouTube video, 8:36, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KET_i3ZeBFQ; Jim Hoft, "Calling All Catholic and Christian Men and Their Allies," *Gateway Pundit*, June 24, 2020, https://www.thegatewaypundit.com/2020/06/calling-catholic-christian-men-allies-please-join-us-saturday-public-prayer-save-historic-st-louis-statue-forest-park/.

97 Darren Dochuk, "Revival on the Right," *History Compass* 4/5 (2006): 991n5.

by 2018 that they could credibly walk the halls of power and identify with the ruling regime. Their positions on the culture, history, socioeconomic structure, and governance not only of Brazil but of what they would call "Christendom" now resonate with a broad swath of Brazilians keenly attuned to social media accounts that exalt anticommunism, Christian chauvinism, white supremacy, patriarchal and other traditionalisms, and various ethnocentric romanticizations of a past that lies just beyond reach, and which can only be regained by making society and culture "great again." Last year in Brazil, monarchists once again showed themselves more than capable of synthesizing these motifs with the heedlessness of falsehood and contradiction that is the hallmark of today's revanchist right. In July 2022, Pró Monarquia posted an image of Luiz Gastão commemorating his decades-long attempt to rehabilitate his ancestors' role in the holocaust of Indigenous peoples. The image features the self-styled "prince" standing alongside Indigenous men in traditional dress, with a caption that recalls how Luiz magnanimously visited "Pataxó Indians, descendants of the tribe that received [Portuguese military commander] Pedro Álvares Cabral and his fleet when they arrived on our shores on April 22, 1500, bringing with them Catholic missionaries and Christian civilization's blessings and promises of spiritual, cultural, and material riches." Though this ethnic group, like so many others in Brazil and across the Americas, suffered expropriation and expulsion as late as the second half of the twentieth century, the Braganças and their supporters celebrate this history, consistent with their argument that medieval Catholicism, led by divinely ordained rulers, brought spiritual rectitude, cultural betterment, and "material riches" to Indigenous people "fortunate" enough to survive contact.[98] One month before, in June 2022, when local monarchists in the city of Caieiras, São Paulo, took aim at black activists who sought an accurate reckoning of the history misrepresented by the right, the monarchists blamed "a left that disseminates discord and upheaval, that promotes the destruction of the family, the end of private property and of free enterprise, and that maligns even the providential hour in which the ships with the Cross of Jesus Christ reached our shores, bringing with them the missionaries, the blessings, and promises of the spiritual and material riches of Christian civilization that would later gestate the Brazilian Monarchy."[99] This then, is the monarchist right of the 2020s, nearly indistinguishable from the empowered and (in their minds) embattled Bolsonarist right, focused on capitalism, family-based sexual and gender traditionalism, Eurocentrism and, Christian ethnocentrism.

Two recent moments typify how the monarchists provide a microcosmic lens for comprehending conservatism in Brazil and beyond in 2023. Last year, as Brazil celebrated its two hundredth year of independence, authorities within the Bolsonaro

98 The photo and commentary are available at Pró Monarquia, Facebook post, July 29, 2022, https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=193681173053163&set=pcb.193681413053139.

99 Pró Monarquia (@promonarquia), "Nota de repúdio a propósito do cancelamento do I Encontro Monárquico de Caieiras," Instagram, July 12, 2022, https://www.instagram.com/p/Cf6ZOhDOQ-G/.

regime arranged for the heart of the country's first emperor, Pedro I (1798–1834), to be brought from Portugal for a special ceremony. The event featured the attendance of living Braganças, including Luiz Phillippe, who used the moment to underscore the notion that the Bolsonaro government sought to restore the mythic past in which his royal family had guaranteed a desirable order: "Now, in the Brazilian context, all of that was unfortunately destroyed. We have lost a little bit of the sense of the founders of Brazil, what they represented, what they thought, what they craved for Brazil. And it is very important to be rescuing that. I imagine that today is the beginning of a beautiful and great redemption for the Brazilian population. . . . This was the demand of a portion of society that wishes to see this historical redemption."[100] The second moment, more spectacular still, followed upon the October 2022 presidential election and featured, as international media looked on, Bolsonaro supporters and election denialists storming and defacing the central governmental palaces in Brasília. Many in the crowd declared their intent to foment a coup—an antidemocratic sentiment perfectly in keeping with the narratives of Brazil's right in general and of monarchists in particular, who share a decades-long history of defending and rationalizing Brazil's brutal military dictatorship.[101] While some in the crowd wandered through the abandoned congressional, presidential, and judicial buildings draped in Brazil's current flag, a group of rioters hoisted the monarchical standard—the flag of the Brazilian Empire (1822–1889), which has for several years now made regular appearances at right-wing and anti-PT protests.[102] Such symbolic gestures are, of course, a far cry from the Reichsbürger plot foiled just one month earlier in Germany—yet the ability of contemporary monarchisms on both sides of the Atlantic (both focused on nineteenth-century hereditary regimes and incorporating Christian chauvinisms, conspiracy theories, and cultural traditionalism) to rally to their banners violent partisans offers, to say the least, a striking parallel with implications for the transnational study of the right.

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100 "Vinda de coração de Dom Pedro I ao Brasil não tem vínculo político, afirma descendente," *Jovem Pan*, updated August 22, 2022, https://jovempan.com.br/programas/jornal-da-manha/vinda-de-coracao-de-dom-pedro-i-ao-brasil-nao-tem-vinculo-politico-afirma-descendente.html.

101 Monarchists, by definition, call for an end to the republic. More specifically, like Bolsonaro and the most vocal of Brazil's conservatives, Bertrand has long aligned himself with Brazil's military dictatorship of 1964–1985—perhaps as an antidemocratic alternative to full monarchism. Where Bolsonaro and his partisans openly seek to resuscitate the historical memory of the brutal dictatorship, royalist Twitter posts affirm Bertrand's role as an "anticommunist student leader" during the regime, when he also established his enduring ties to the extremist group TFP. See Pró Monarquia (@ProMonarquia), Twitter, May 18, 2022, 9:50 a.m., https://twitter.com/ProMonarquia/status/1526938227294224384?s=20.

102 Jack Nicas and André Spigariol, "Bolsonaro Supporters Lay Siege to Brazil's Capital," *New York Times*, January 8, 2023, https://www.nytimes.com/live/2023/01/08/world/brazil-congress-protests-bolsonaro#309b8594-a2ff-5979-9d52-03f0dfa72734; Luiza Garonce, "Com bandeiras do Brasil Ímperio, grupo protesta no Congresso Nacional," *G1*, August 27, 2017, https://g1.globo.com/distrito-federal/noticia/com-bandeiras-do-brasil-imperio-grupo-protestou-em-frente-ao-congresso-nacional.ghtml.

Figure 4. Rioters hoist the flag of imperial Brazil in Brasília on January 8, 2023. Source: André Spigariol for the *New York Times*, January 8, 2023, https://www.nytimes.com/live/2023/01/08/world/brazil-congress-protests-bolsonaro/309b8594-a2ff-5979-9d52-03f0dfa72734?smid=url-share.

There is of course much more to be explored here—particularly when it comes to the paradoxes of monarchist and other elements of the right. In Brazil, as elsewhere, the marriage of populist social conservatism with elite economic liberalism remains a puzzling, contradictory, and unstable element—one that has troubled scholars for generations, myself included. The complex interactions of historical Catholic traditionalism, modern neoliberalism, and economic populism appear to have entered an even more inscrutable and unpredictable phase, with ongoing and new fractiousness between these perspectives.[103] This includes the seemingly paradoxical presence of social and racial minorities among monarchists. Like prominent black and brown Republicans in the United States, these Brazilian individuals likely do not represent a sizeable proportion of the royalist right—but they are visible and vocal. One young black monarchist in Brazil justifies his conservatism with the time-honored argument that black rights initiatives are not only wrong-headed but unpatriotic—that is, un-Brazilian.[104] Similarly, even as Bertrand dismissed "homosexuality as a defect," a smattering of self-styled "Brazilian LGBTT monarchists" published a letter arguing that

103 On the Catholic evolution from Thomism and sanctifying private property to something approximating neoliberalism, see Wink, *Brazil*. One example of this fractiousness is the difficult relationship between populists and neoliberals within the Bolsonaro camp.

104 Daniel Lisboa, "Evento de monarquistas tem erro no upload, briga e só 1 minuto de príncipe," *Tab*, February 22, 2021, https://tab.uol.com.br/noticias/redacao/2021/02/22/evento-de-monarquistas-tem-erro-no-upload-briga-e-so-1-minuto-de-principe.htm?cmpid=copiaecola.

Bertrand does not in fact represent monarchism in Brazil, which—they contended—proudly honored same-gender-loving monarchs from Europe's past.[105]

As I have noted, no plausible analysis predicts the monarchy's formal return to power in Brazil; even the conjecture continues to draw eyerolls. Indications, rather, are that monarchism has received a boost in visibility from its adaptation to social media. One journalist observes that "monarchist circles" on Telegram and other platforms unite hundreds of thousands of followers, while physical meetings languish with few attendees.[106] Yet there is reason to pay attention to restorationists, whose radical demands have become so consonant with those of today's ascendant authoritarian conservatives. Hendrik Kraay, researching popular monarchism among Afro-Brazilian brotherhoods in the nineteenth century, provides a useful framework for understanding this when he contends that although such monarchism was never "representative" of Brazilian society as a whole, it did provide "an ideological structure for articulating popular political demands," and as such shows us something about how visions of organicist autocracy might hold some broad appeal.[107] Within the shifting Venn diagrams of Brazilian and global right-wing populist ascendancy, monarchism may not represent the likeliest of futures—but both in terms of core issues and mobilization it highlights the ascendancy of ideas, people, and movements once considered fringe.

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105 "Monarquistas rebatem declarações homofóbicas do 'princípe' brasileiro," *JC*, May 3, 2017, https://jc.ne10.uol.com.br/canal/politica/pernambuco/noticia/2017/05/03/monarquistas-rebatem-declaracoes-homofobicas-do-principe-brasileiro-281439.php.

106 Linder, "Monarquistas 2.0."

107 Hendrik Kraay, "Black Kings, Cabanos, and the Guarda Negra Reflections on Popular Royalism in Nineteenth-Century Brazil," *Varia Historia* 35, no. 67 (2019): 145.

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ARTICLE

The Supreme Court in Modi's India

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Abstract: *Twenty-first-century elected right-wing regimes share many similarities apart from being led by "authoritarian populists" who centralize power in themselves and represent ethnic or religious majorities at the expense of other citizens. Since higher judiciaries are key to ensuring executive accountability and the separation of powers in a liberal democratic constitutional setup, they are on the front lines of authoritarian attempts at institutional capture. Unlike earlier dictatorships that suspended existing constitutional protections or imposed martial law, current authoritarian regimes maintain a semblance of legality and constitutionalism while in practice attempting to remake the judiciary in their own image. This phenomenon has been variously termed "autocratic legalism," "abusive constitutionalism," and "populist constitutionalism."*

In this article, I look at how the Indian Supreme Court (SC) has responded to executive incursions under the Narendra Modi regime since 2014. Even today, the court continues to deliver important democracy-enhancing judgments, breaking away from India's colonial inheritance in matters like criminalizing same-sex relationships and adultery. However, the last decade is strongly marked by two features: first, an unwillingness to hear major constitutional issues that might challenge the regime; and second, judgments that serve as an advertorial for the regime, reinforcing an antiminority ideological orientation, justifying the government's actions, and promoting Modi's personality cult. By outsourcing several political decisions to a seemingly disinterested and neutral judiciary, the Modi government has been far more successful than it would have been if it had imposed those decisions purely by legislative majority. In turn, by addressing a variety of political issues as purely procedural matters and not addressing them as constitutional questions, the courts have collaborated in the delegitimization of dissent and reinforced the claims of the Modi regime.

Keywords: authoritarianism, autocratic legalism, judiciary, rule of law, Indian Supreme Court, Narendra Modi, India

The Itineraries of Law in Twenty-First-Century India

> The prostitution of a judicial system for the accomplishment of criminal ends involves an element of evil to the State which is not found in frank atrocities which do not sully judicial robes.
>
> —*USA v. Altstoetter et al.*, or the Judges' Trial at Nuremberg (1947)

In the summer of 2022, the Supreme Court of India delivered two remarkable judgments on state violations of human rights, *Zakia Jafri* and *Himanshu Kumar*.[1] Not only did the judges uphold the state defense in its entirety, but they went on to accuse the petitioners of fabricating false cases and called for their arrest. In the *Zakia Jafri* judgment, the judges blamed eighty-three-year-old Zakia Jafri and her co-petitioner, human rights activist Teesta Setalvad, for having the "gumption" and "audacity" to "keep the pot boiling" for sixteen years while pursuing her legal struggle. Sixty-nine Muslims, including Zakia Jafri's husband, had been brutally killed in Gulberg Housing Society during the anti-Muslim Gujarat pogroms of 2002. The judgment was written primarily to exonerate the current prime minister, Narendra Modi (then chief minister of Gujarat), under whose watch the pogroms took place. Immediately afterwards, Setalvad and R. B. Sreekumar, a police officer who had exposed the role of the Gujarat government, were arrested. Sanjeev Bhatt, another Gujarat police officer who crossed swords with Modi when the latter was chief minister and was already in jail on another matter, was also charged along with Setalvad as being part of this supposed conspiracy to frame the prime minister.

In the *Himanshu Kumar* judgment, involving the massacre of sixteen Adivasis (indigenous people) in the state of Chhattisgarh in 2009 in the course of security operations against armed left-wing Maoist guerrillas, the judges endorsed the state's argument that by litigating against the security forces, human rights activists were conspiring to defame the government and security forces. This was in sharp contrast to a previous Supreme Court judgment that had indicted the state for sponsoring vigilantism and perpetrating human rights abuses (*Nandini Sundar and Others v. State of Chhattisgarh*, 2011).

These two cases overturn what has arguably been one of the most remarkable features of postcolonial Indian jurisprudence—the relaxation of *locus standi* in what is called public interest litigation (PIL), also known as social action litigation. This relaxation of standing rules has enabled the courts, lawyers, and citizens to collaborate in enhancing the meaning of democracy more widely (on PIL, see Divan 2016). Following *Zakia Jafri* and *Himanshu Kumar*, it is now, however, potentially dangerous to litigate on state violations. Cases filed by minorities, workers, and other disadvantaged groups are increasingly portrayed as a waste of judicial time (see Trivedi 2020). Increasingly, the PILs being filed are aimed at promoting majoritarian agendas, such as those by Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) lawyer Ashwini Upadhaya, who has filed PILs demanding, among other things, the renaming of historical places to erase traces of Muslims, enforcement of a two-child policy, a uniform divorce law across religious communities, and an end to the promise of "freebies" (the pejorative term used by the BJP for welfare schemes

1 The *Zakia Jafri* judgment of June 24, 2022, was delivered by Justices A. M. Khanwilkar, Dinesh Maheshwari, and C. T. Ravikumar, while the *Himanshu Kumar* judgment of July 14, 2022, was authored by Justice J. B. Pardiwala for himself and Justice A. M. Khanwilkar.

promoted by opposition parties) (Tripathi 2022; for an earlier critique of PILs, see Bhuwania 2017). Even if ultimately unsuccessful, filing such cases enables discussion of these agendas in the media. We also see a growing trend of SLAPP (strategic lawsuits against public participation) suits being filed by industrialists against the media and whistleblowers (Ghosh 2016).

In this article, I look at how the Indian judiciary has fared since 2014 under the right-wing regime of the Narendra Modi–led Bharatiya Janata Party, focusing in particular on the Supreme Court since it sits at the head of a vast and multilayered system (including state high courts and district courts), in which lower courts are bound to follow SC precedent.

Authoritarian Populism/Fascism

Twenty-first-century elected right-wing regimes share many similarities apart from being led by charismatic "authoritarian populists" who centralize power in themselves and draw on, as well as fuel, the prejudices of ethnic, political, or religious majorities against vulnerable minorities. In the process, these regimes' followers often become complicit in the destruction of their own freedom and well-being (on authoritarian populism, see Hall [1979] 2017; Brown, Gordon, and Pensky 2018).

Since higher judiciaries are key to ensuring executive accountability and separation of powers in a liberal democratic constitutional setup, they are on the front lines of authoritarian attempts at institutional capture. Benjamin Netanyahu's attempts at judicial reform (Sachs 2023) or Donald Trump's claims of victimhood at the hands of an allegedly biased legal system are both examples of majoritarian attempts to shock and awe independent judiciaries. In India, the law minister Kiren Rijiju has accused retired Supreme Court judges critical of the government of being part of an "anti-India gang" and threatened them with consequences (Wire Staff 2023b).

Unlike earlier dictatorships that suspended existing constitutional protections or imposed martial law, current authoritarian regimes maintain a semblance of legality and constitutionalism while in practice constantly attempting to remake the judiciary and reinterpret the constitution in their own image. They may be more or less successful, as the recent mass protests in Israel show.

Use of the existing laws and judiciary to subvert democratic principles has been termed in various ways: see, for instance, Moustafa (2014) on the judicialization of authoritarian politics; Landau (2013, 2020) on abusive constitutionalism and populist constitutionalism; Scheppele (2018) on autocratic legalism; Meierhenrich (2021) on constitutional dictatorships; De Sa e Silva (2022) on law and illiberalism; Hendly (2022) on legal dualism under authoritarianism; and the older concept of lawfare or using law as an instrument of conquest (see Comaroff 2001; Joly 2023).

Unlike other contemporary right-wing populists, for instance Trump or Jair Bolsanaro, Modi's populist authoritarianism does not stem from his personal style alone, though it is certainly central to his government. Before becoming chief minister

of Gujarat in 2002, Modi was a full-time propagandist for the cadre-based Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). Started in 1925 with the long-term aim of establishing a "Hindu nation," the RSS and the wider family of Hindu nationalists had links with both Italian Fascism and German Nazism (Casolari 2000). Golwalkar (1939, 35), one of the RSS's founding fathers, famously advocated the emulation of Hitler's final solution to deal with India's non-Hindu minorities, especially Muslims and Christians.

A draft constitution prepared by extreme right-wing Hindu groups in 2022 shows that in their *Hindu rashtra* (Hindu nation), non-Hindus would not be allowed to vote (Kumar 2022). Currently, however, the RSS is content to work within the existing constitution while hollowing it out from within. In practice, with some help from the judiciary, as this article shows, religious minorities are being turned into second-class citizens, even if their official status remains the same. Not surprisingly, the existing constitution has become a rallying point for all dissenting groups.

On its website (rss.org), the RSS describes its "vision and mission" as a "movement for the assertion of Bharat's national identity," which they equate with Hindu identity. Its main goal has been to "organize Hindus" and "to restore the Hindu psyche to its pristine form" after centuries of "alien rule" (RSS 2023). The RSS sees Muslims and Christians as "outsiders" who must be taught to accept their place in a Hindu nation; its members yearn for the recognition of the glories of ancient ("Hindu") India, and organize citizens on militaristic lines to achieve these goals. Although upper-caste Hindus have historically been the core constituency of the RSS, the organization has systematically reached out to lower-caste groups in order to unite all Hindus against Muslims. In the RSS ideal, any cracks caused by caste would be papered over through a harmonious acceptance of upper-caste superiority (on RSS ideology, see Anderson and Damle 2018; Noorani 2019). Now that it is in power, the RSS outsources its defense of upper-caste perpetrators of violence to the judiciary, though judicial exoneration of such violence is also a long-standing feature of India's unequal caste society.[2]

The RSS claims, as of May 2023, to have some 1.1. million members and some sixty thousand *shakhas*, or cells, which hold daily meetings (Jha 2022; RSS 2023). Apart from these core cells, the formerly secretive and now openly controlling Sangh (by which the RSS is also known) has proliferated into hundreds of fronts that work with

2 After decades of trying to eradicate caste in the official sphere and legal reasoning, in both criminal and personal law (see Derrett 1968) it is now increasingly acceptable to bring caste identity into judicial and quasi-judicial reasoning. For instance, eleven men were given early remission after being involved in acts of gang rape and mass murder in Gujarat 2002, and this was justified by a BJP legislator on the grounds that they were Brahmins or upper caste (Wire Staff 2022a). It is not as if the caste argument was not invoked in the past—for instance, the Rajasthan High Court acquitted upper-caste men of raping a dalit woman on the grounds that they would not have violated purity principles by raping an "untouchable" (Pandey 2017). However, such claims are now met with less outrage or shame than earlier. There is also a sort of societal reversion to *Manusmriti*, a Hindu jurisprudential text reviled as the epitome of upper-caste domination. In the *Manusmriti*, crime is assessed not just by the type of violation but also by one's caste (Derrett 1968, 213).

different sectors, such as students, soldiers, women, workers, peasants, lawyers, or ex-servicemen. The BJP is the political front. Currently most leading institutional figures are members of the RSS, including the president, prime minister, the governors of states, vice chancellors of universities, and the heads of various research institutions.

As I have noted (Sundar 2020b), while the jury on what counts as fascism is still out (see Jacoby 2016), the RSS exhibits certain features that bear a close family resemblance to fascist politics. Organizational forms include a mass-mobilizing party with a cult leader, support by the most powerful forms of capital, the role of organized propaganda in spreading misinformation, a cadre base with military training, and the combination of a state monopoly over the police and army with state-sponsored vigilantism (see Banaji 2017 on state support to stormtroopers as a key hallmark of fascism). Culturally, we see anti-intellectualism and restrictions on free speech, the creation of an internal enemy (Muslims, Christians, leftists, and all political opponents), the focus on a mythic past, resentment by the hitherto dominant group (upper-caste Hindus) transformed into claimed victimhood, and the continual shifting of focus in identifying plots against the nation and its leader (see Stanley 2018; Banaji 2017).[3]

Autocratic Legalism

In one of the most influential articulations of the argument that the use of law is critical to contemporary autocratic regimes, Kim Scheppele (2018, 548) defines "autocratic legalism" as a phenomenon whereby "electoral mandates plus constitutional and legal change are used in the service of an illiberal agenda." Drawing on Javier Corrales's description of autocratic legalism as involving the "use, abuse and non-use of law," she goes on to emphasize the "deliberate creation of new law as a way of consolidating political power" (548n9).

Among the commonly identified features of autocratic legalism are: a) attacking independent bodies that hold the regime to account (till such time as they fall in line and their legitimacy can be harnessed to bolster the regime); b) capturing institutions or the state by packing the courts and associated statutory bodies like human rights commissions or election commissions; c) making constitutional changes (whether incremental or sweeping) in order to consolidate the powers of the regime and weaken the opposition; d) enacting a battery of new legislation that speaks in the name of the majority; and e) setting up parallel legal systems and/or instituting forms of legal dualism (see Schepelle 2018; Landau 2020; Moustafa 2014; De Sa e Silva 2022).

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3 I argue (Sundar 2020b) that all regimes till 2014 in India would count as "illiberal democracies" (Zakaria 1997; Hansen 2019). The Emergency (1975–1977), when Prime Minister Indira Gandhi invoked emergency powers to suspend elections and civil liberties, ostensibly to battle internal disturbances, would qualify as a period of "authoritarian populism" (Hall [1979] 2017; Brown, Gordon, and Pensky 2018). The BJP under Modi (2014 onward) is well on the road to a form of fascism (see Ahmad 2017; Banaji 2017; Jacoby 2016; Stanley 2018).

All of these features are visible in India (see also Khaitan 2020; Narrain 2022; Acevedo 2022). The Modi regime is transforming the rules of the game in three essential respects: through changing court composition, through its legislative agenda involving fundamental assaults on existing constitutional principles, and through its weaponization of criminal law (all of these are discussed later). At the same time, it has been able to do this because of the existing weaknesses of the Indian legal system.

The judiciary is not unique: under the Modi regime, in almost all professions and institutions existing personnel are being replaced with those who are more ideologically committed, albeit at a pace mediated by the specific institutional framework. Even without direct replacement, many are falling in line (whether due to fear, opportunism, natural conservatism, or active belief in the virtues of the regime). Apart from the judiciary, new laws and rules make it easier to control the media, especially digital media, and universities. In a judiciary, however, unlike other institutions, the consequences of capture are far more serious since the state has a monopoly over key aspects of law, especially criminal and constitutional law, even if there is greater pluralism in other areas such as civil and personal law. The legitimacy provided by a judicial stamp is also of far greater consequence than in any other field, enabling majoritarian governments to claim the mantle of a universalist neutral rule of law.

Rule of Law as Artifice

The literature on autocratic legalism, while useful, is limited because it takes as its starting point liberal constitutionalism and explores the ways in which autocratic regimes use the legal framework while hollowing it out from within. The rule of law was never universalist or equitable, whether in the metropolitan centers of classic liberal democracies, which denied basic protections to their colonies (see Bhambra and Holmwood 2021), or in postcolonial states that inherited colonial structures of law. E. P. Thompson's (1975, 266) argument that the "rule of law" even in unequal societies is an "unqualified human good," reflecting struggles *about* law, is insightful in many respects. But it ignores how "rule of law" ideology (see also Hay 1975) has centralized and displaced plural legal systems that might be better at delivering "justice."[4]

As Michel Foucault (1977, 23) argues, the *form* of judicial autonomy and third-party neutrality as it arose in bourgeois Europe and was exported to the colonies was compromised, given the association of an autonomous system of justice with fiscal centralization, the concentration of force, and the criminalization of dissenting or superfluous populations. In other words, the ideological and judicial structures of

4 This is not to say that contemporary attempts at introducing alternative dispute resolution methods work very well (Krishnan and Thomas 2015); customary dispute resolution mechanisms like sharia courts are also shaped by the formal constitution (see Lemons 2019).

Western liberal democracies, including the separation of powers, have historically developed in complicity with empire or colonialism and capitalism.

When it comes to the postcolonies, the nature of constitutional legalism cannot be understood without reference to imposed colonial law (see Merry 1991; Mattei and Nader 2008). The constitution of republican India is seen to mark the transition, albeit to many eyes incomplete, from a colonial use of law as an instrument of rule (or rule *by* law) to a more substantive justice-focused rule *of* law (see Baxi 2002; Kannabiran 2003; Bhatia 2019; see also Ramana 2021 for a prevailing judicial view). But several laws that displaced and disinherited citizens, especially indigenous people, like the Forest Act and the Land Acquisition Act, were continued in their colonial form until the early twenty-first century, when they were challenged by various civil-society movements. India has also used colonial-era preventive detention, sedition, and emergency laws like the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) of 1958 on a consistent basis against its own people, especially in Kashmir and northeast India.[5] The constitutionality of the AFSPA was upheld by the Supreme Court in 1998 (*Naga People's Movement for Human Rights v. Union of India*), allowing the security forces to continue to shoot to kill on suspicion, and to arrest without warrant.

Victims of state-enabled and ruling-party-sponsored pogroms as well as counterinsurgency operations (such as those in Delhi in 1984, Gujarat in 2002, Kandhamals in 2008, and the operation in Chhattisgarh, ongoing since 2005) have rarely got justice. In many of these cases, it is not just political backing but the deployment of legal "procedure" that is used to ensure impunity for perpetrators. For instance, the influence that the first information report (FIR) wields on subsequent investigation enables the police to purposefully botch FIRs to weaken cases against powerful perpetrators (see Hoenig and Singh 2014; Farasat and Jha 2016; Sundar 2019a).

It is in procedure that the colonial inheritance is best displayed (see also Ghosh and Duschinski 2020; Meierhenrich 2021, 426; Baxi 1982, chap. 2). Nasser Hussain (2003, 32) describes colonial rule of law as "a form of sovereignty and governmentality: a rule that is lawful, as it lays claim to legitimacy through law, but also one that is literally full of law, full of rules that hierarchicalize, bureaucratize, mediate, and channel power." The use of law as an instrument of harassment to prolong disputes (Cohn 1990), from the lowest levels all the way up to the Supreme Court, is at least as common as the aspirational constitutional vision that motivates people to approach the Supreme Court for enforcement of their fundamental rights (De 2018). Even those who come to law with hope, expecting change, find their strength as litigants sapped by the judiciary through endless deferments, as adjournments are endemic (see Baxi 1982; Robinson 2016).

5 The British introduced the Armed Forces Special Powers Ordinance in 1942 to deal with the Quit India movement.

While public trust in the judiciary is high (Krishnaswamy and Swaminathan 2019), one might see a somewhat different picture using litigation per capita as a proxy for faith in the law and judiciary. Contrary to the myth of the litigious Indian, the rate of litigation is low in relative terms (Galanter 2009). Recourse to the law—as plaintiff rather than defendant—is often dependent on class, caste, religion, or proximity to the court (see Kulkarni et al. 2022). More cases in Delhi and surrounding states are on appeal in the Supreme Court than from states farther away, and public interest litigation (PIL), which gets so much flak for taking up the court's time, constitutes only 1.3% of the Supreme Court's total docket (Robinson 2013)

As elsewhere—for instance, blacks in the US, immigrants in France—equality before the law has always been a dubious claim for certain populations. In India, Muslims, Scheduled Castes (formerly "untouchables"), and Scheduled Tribes (indigenous people), who together constitute less than 40% of the population, make up 81% of the prison population and 60% of detainees or those taken into "preventive custody" for organizing against the state (FP Staff 2020).[6] Even prior to 2014, Muslims suffered disproportionately from antiterror laws (Sethi 2014; Singh 2007). Thus, judges (at all levels) predominantly get to deal with certain kinds of populations as criminals, influencing their attitudes.

The idea of the "unsullied judicial robe," especially but not only in a postcolonial context with inherited colonial law, is thus an "artifice" or convention in which plaintiff and defendant, judge and lawmaker, collude for a variety of different reasons to maintain the *appearance* of a rule of law.[7] In 1978, Nicolas Abercrombie and Bryan Turner wrote an important article titled "The Dominant Ideology Thesis" in which they argued that the point of the dominant ideology was to organize the dominant class, not to instill compliance among the dominated (Abercrombie and Turner 1978). Much the same could be said about the legal system in India today—that it exists to shore up, within the judicial system itself and among its supporting lawyers, belief in the judiciary and the possibility of a rule of law. A number of human rights lawyers are painfully aware of judicial infirmities and fight to make the rule of law meaningful, but they are in a minority. Under the Modi regime, such lawyers are also under threat, as in the Bhima Koregaon arrests (see below).

Among the dominated, it is neither "hegemony" nor "domination" that characterizes their relationship to the judicial system. This runs contra to Ranajit Guha's (1998)

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6 According to National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data for 2020, Muslims, at 14.2% of India's population, constitute 16.6% of convicts and 18.7% of undertrial prisoners; Dalits (Scheduled Castes), with 16.6% of the population, are 21.7% of the convicts and 21% of undertrial prisoners; and Adivasis (Scheduled Tribes), at 8.6%, constitute 13.6% of convicts and 10.5% of undertrial prisoners. Of the detainees, 35.8% are Muslims, 18.5% Dalits, and 5.68% Adivasis (FP Staff 2020).

7 I use the term artifice to refer to a socially constructed convention rather than an empirically identifiable concept (see Hume 2007 on artificial virtues).

argument that colonial rule represented dominance without hegemony. Instead, one might argue that, like prayer, subaltern ideas of justice are shaped by desperation and faith. It is indeed remarkable how it is the nonprivileged citizens who most faithfully uphold the Indian judicial artifice, whether in their ritual invocation proclaiming faith in the judiciary when arrested, or through their legal struggles, both in the courts and on the streets. For instance, the opposition to the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, which violated the fundamental principle of equality of citizenship, was predominantly led by ordinary Muslim women, especially grandmothers.

For the vast majority of ordinary citizens who do not engage directly with the law, it is instructive to turn to another field—that of advertising, and the way it transforms the public sphere. Advertising works when agencies are successful at reading culture, but more importantly, it works when they create new desires and new publics through this reading.

In Modi's India, every intervention in political life is a form of promotion, starting from expenditure on media advertising during elections to the advertising of government works as if they were a personal gift of the prime minister to the public (Scroll Staff 2019; Wire Staff 2019a). Even COVID-19 became an occasion to advertise, through the clapping of hands and lighting of lamps, a collectivity mediated by Modi's leadership. The Modi government works through an intricate network of digital media technologies creating new mediated populations (Mazarella 2019; Sundaram 2020). It is worth asking in what ways the judiciary is being mobilized, and what the judicial contribution to "rebranding" India consists of (on branding, see Kaur 2020).

Rule of Law as Advertorial

If the rule of law was earlier "artifice," it has also increasingly become an "advertorial" for the ruling regime. The *Oxford English Dictionary* (2017 edition) defines an advertorial as "a newspaper or magazine advertisement giving information about a product in the style of an editorial or objective journalistic article." There are several instances of judges, including Supreme Court judges, openly praising Modi and advertising their allegiance.[8] Despite this, and despite their own attacks on judicial independence, the regime resorts to the Supreme Court's supposed objectivity and neutrality when it suits them.

The "rule of law" appears to work here to reinforce what Jürgen Habermas has called the "plebscitary public sphere" (or acclamatory form of the public sphere) that characterizes dictatorships in highly industrialized democracies (Habermas, Lennox,

8 In 2021, Justice M. R. Shah described Prime Minister Modi as "a model and a hero" on one occasion and "our most popular, loved, vibrant and visionary leader" on another. Justice Arun Mishra praised him as an "internationally acclaimed visionary" (Krishnan 2021).

and Lennox 1974). Courts are essential to making symbolic statements, sending messages of the form that social order is taking or should take; as Antonio Gramsci put it, the courts play an educative function along with the repressive role of the law (Gramsci 1971). Before the BJP had consolidated its power, and in its early stages in power after 2014, Modi bypassed the interpretational translation of TV anchors to directly address his audiences both through his monthly televised monologue, *Mann ki Baat* (Ohm 2015), and on Twitter, where he currently has 87.6 million followers. Now, however, as institutions have capitulated, it is easier to harness those institutional voices so that the public can be addressed through the refracted prism and seeming disinterestedness of an "independent" media or "independent" judiciary. This reliance on the judiciary is especially useful for the RSS-BJP, since even as it forms the government and claims the mantle of defending the rule of law, the main perpetrators of vigilante violence belong to RSS fronts.

What distinguishes recent judgments and nonjudgments from earlier judicial performances concerning the government in power? One outstanding contrast is the role of omission or nonperformance, in particular the court's unwillingness to hear major constitutional issues that might challenge the regime. This has enabled the Modi government to change facts on the ground, such as in Kashmir, or to gain a lasting unfair financial advantage over other political parties through the sale of anonymous electoral bonds. Another contrast is in politically crucial cases that the SC has decided, coming down firmly on the government's side, brushing aside any evidence to the contrary. Some of these cases personally support Modi or exonerate him of wrongdoing, thus promoting a cult of Modi, while others magnify the RSS agenda more broadly by reinforcing an antiminority ideological orientation.

In order to explain this capitulation to the executive, it is necessary to turn to the structure and history of the Supreme Court before discussing contemporary cases.

The Supreme Court

The Indian Supreme Court came into existence with the republican constitution in 1950, and it has vast powers compared to other apex-level courts. Not only does it hear cases on appeal from state high courts or tribunals, but citizens can also directly petition the Supreme Court against violations of fundamental rights. Furthermore, judges may take up cases *suo motu*, that is, on their own accord. The case load of the Indian Supreme Court is also astounding, especially as compared to other federal or supreme courts. As of April 1, 2023, the SC had 68,847 pending matters, of which 428 were constitutional matters, involving benches of five, seven, and nine judges. Of these, 49,823 were fresh admissions (Supreme Court 2023). In comparison, the US Supreme Court gets some 7,000 requests and hears 100–150 matters per year (US Courts, n.d.).

As a number of scholars have shown, styles of judicial selection (the respective weights of executive/legislative/judicial parity in selecting judges), the length of judicial tenure, and styles of selection of cases for hearing all make a difference to the outcome

of a court's oeuvre (Mehta 2005; Robinson 2016). Unlike US judges who are appointed for life or South African judges who have a fixed tenure, Indian Supreme Court judges are appointed till they turn sixty-five, which means they spend varying lengths of time on the bench. The previous convention that retired judges did not accept jobs or prestigious constitutional positions from the executive has been overturned by the Modi government, which has appointed former Supreme Court judges to governorships and even to positions in the upper house of parliament (*Indian Express* 2022).[9]

Unlike the US or South African Supreme Courts, which sit as a single bench, the Indian Supreme Court is varied in its messaging, given that individual benches of two or three judges take different stands. As Robinson (2016, 376) notes:

> While Article 141 of the Constitution binds the rest of the judiciary to the Supreme Court's decisions, given its many benches speaking of *the* Indian Supreme Court is in many ways a misnomer. Instead, the many benches that make up the Court are perhaps better thought of as constituting a "polyvocal court" or "an assembly of empanelled judges."

Chief justices in their role as "masters of the roster" have the power to assign cases to these different benches. Once again, this is a feature that the Modi government has deployed quite effectively, working through particular chief justices. In one unprecedented press conference, four Supreme Court judges spoke out against the then chief justice for assigning all cases in which the Modi government had a stake to a particular judge. Ironically, one of the four, Ranjan Gogoi, went on to become chief justice and was then accused of behaving in the very same way (Bagriya 2019).

A considerable portion of what the courts decide depends on a wider political economy. As Dhavan (1986, 160) notes, while the judiciary is a part of the state and thus committed to state policies like equality, it is run through a private market economy of lawyers and litigants who determine its direction and use it for their own class interests. Given these factors—the vast number of cases, the conflicting voices and messages put out by different benches, and the dependence of the courts on cases that are brought before them—it is hard to speak of judicial styles over different periods, and to argue conclusively that there has indeed been a rightward turn.

At the same time, there is a widespread consensus that it is possible to discern distinct phases in the Supreme Court's history: from an early conservatism on land reform and bank nationalization, to complicity with the suspension of fundamental rights during the state of emergency (1975–1977), to an activist concern with citizens' welfare in the form of public interest litigation (Baxi 2016; Austin 2000). Even today, the

9 Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi, who presided over the Ayodhya and Rafale judgments, was rewarded by being made a member of parliament. Justice Abdul Nazeer, the only Muslim judge on the Ayodhya bench, was made governor of Andhra Pradesh post retirement, while Justice Ashok Bhushan, also on the Ayodhya bench, became chair of the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (Indian Express 2022).

court continues to deliver important democracy-enhancing judgments, breaking away from India's colonial inheritance in matters like criminalizing same-sex relationships and adultery. However, there are enough countervailing examples to suggest that a distinct new phase has begun. The battle over court composition has also never been as fraught as it is currently, barring a brief period during the 1975–1977 Emergency, when elections, press freedoms, and a range of other rights were formally suspended.

The Battle over Court Composition: The Return of a "Committed Judiciary"?

Unlike the US Supreme Court, where judges are nominated by the president and have to be confirmed by the Senate, the judges of the Indian Supreme Court select their own colleagues. Article 124 directs the president to appoint judges of the High Court and Supreme Court after consultation with the judges of the relevant court, especially the chief justice. Following the Emergency, when then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi transferred inconvenient High Court judges and violated existing principles of seniority in the promotion of judges to pack the Supreme Court with "committed judges" (Austin 2000), the Supreme Court arrogated the power of appointment to itself. In what are known as the Second and Third Judges Cases, the Supreme Court effectively rewrote Article 124 to mean that the process of selection would be initiated by the judges themselves, and that reference to the "Chief Justice" meant a "collegium" of the Chief Justice and four other senior-most judges (see Desai 2013; Austin 2000). High court justices are selected by the Supreme Court collegium in consultation with the chief justice and collegium of the relevant high court. However, the government plays an important role in processing the selections (see Lokur 2023).

Since the Modi government took power, judicial appointments once again reflect conditions resembling the Emergency of the mid-1970s. In 2015, the Supreme Court struck down a 2014 act setting up a National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC), which would have enabled the government to have greater say (*Supreme Court v. Union of India*). However, the principle of judicial independence is under prolonged attack with the government refusing to accept or act on collegium recommendations, and effectively pushing its own de facto nominees by speedily clearing the files of candidate judges it favors (Lokur 2023). As Jaffrelot (2021, 278–89) describes it, the period from 2015 to 2016 represented a "war of attrition," with the government attempting to wear down the judiciary and the judiciary struggling to fight back, while 2017–2020 represented "truce and surrender," when the collegium increasingly gave in.

Certain cases have become emblematic—such as the government's refusal to appoint Advocate Gopal Subramaniam and Justice Akil Kureshi to the Supreme Court. Both of them had been instrumental in legal proceedings against Amit Shah, Modi's right-hand man and now home minister (Vishwanath 2022; see also Lokur 2023). Inconvenient judges are transferred, such as Justice S. Muralidhar of the Delhi High Court, who was transferred overnight in 2020 to Punjab after he took up the case of hate speeches by Hindu supremacists. The government has made it very clear through its de facto veto

power that it does not forgive or forget anyone who has ever found against its senior leaders or gone against the party's interests. The unresolved death of Justice B. H. Loya, who had been hearing a case against Amit Shah, and Shah's acquittal by the judge who replaced Loya, are seen by many as a clear message—as is the fact that in 2018 the Supreme Court dismissed a plea to further investigate Loya's death (Bal 2018).

Those known to be close to the BJP have been fast-tracked as Supreme Court judges, like Justice A. K. Goel, a member of the RSS lawyers' front, Justice Arun Mishra, who always found in favor of the government and was subsequently appointed chair of the National Human Rights Commission (see Venkatesan 2020a), or Justice P. S. Narsimha, who represented the Hindu side in the Ayodhya Babri Masjid–Ramjanmabhoomi case (see Jaffrelot 2021, 290–98).

High Court (HC) positions are also being filled by pro-RSS persons. In 2019, Arun Mishra's nephew, Vishal Mishra, another BJP lawyer, was made a judge of the Madhya Pradesh HC despite being younger than the stipulated minimum age for appointment (Venkatesan 2020a). Most of the nine judges appointed to the Delhi HC in May 2022 had served as counsel for the central government under Modi. In March 2023, former BJP activist Victoria Gowri was appointed a Madras HC judge; despite lawyers petitioning the Supreme Court and pointing to hate speech by her, the court upheld the appointment and she was sworn in by the chief justice in record time (Bhatia 2023). On the other hand, a whole range of independent tribunals, like the National Green Tribunal, have not been staffed (*Hindu* 2022).

In the past, judicial selection of colleagues has led to a limited pool, though this is no more so today than was the case for previous executive selection (Chandra, Hubbard, and Kalantry 2018). The Modi government has used the absence of OBCs (other backward classes), a large middle-caste pool that is currently its pet constituency, to argue for the need to have greater executive say in appointments. The Union Law Ministry informed Parliament that 79 percent of all High Court judges appointed between 2018 and 2022 were from the upper castes (Wire Staff 2023). The Modi regime's idea of diversity does not, however, include women, religious minorities, or sexual minorities, with the government refusing to process a SC recommendation of a judge who is openly gay (Rajagopal 2023).

Despite the opacity in collegium recommendations, which enables the appointment of judges with known antiminority biases, and the lack of diversity, an overwhelming number of legal commentators still see it as a better system, given the fear that the Modi regime could pack the courts even more comprehensively.

Supreme Court Judgments

Capturing the full range of Supreme Court judgments between 2014 and 2023 would be an impossible task. However, in order to arrive at some sense of the overall direction, I collated lists of the most well-known and publicly discussed judgments from a variety of sources. These include coaching websites for the civil services (ClearIAS, Byju's),

listicles put out by legal websites (Bar and Bench, iPleaders, Manupatra), and a poll of practicing Supreme Court lawyers working across the fields of criminal, civil, and environmental law. The differences in choice of important cases are themselves revealing, with the coaching sites listing mainly the progressive judgments and avoiding judgments with political implications. Cases to do with land acquisition, labor, or environmental issues also capture less media attention, which is more focused on matters concerning the urban middle classes. Starting at a different point (i.e., before 2014) or covering a different period may lead to similar results in terms of the preponderance of judgments favoring the executive, especially in matters of national security. However, there is a widespread sense that something has changed since 2014.

Progressive Judgments

Many of the progressive judgments in the last decade are to do with gender/sexuality rights (see table 1). These include *National Legal Services Authority v. Union of India* (2014, upholding transgender rights); *Shayara Bano v. Union of India* (2016, striking down as unconstitutional triple talaq, or instant divorce, under Muslim personal law); *Independent Thought v. Union of India* (2017, raising the age of consent to sex within marriage to eighteen); *Navtej Singh Johar and Ors. v. Union of India* (2018, decriminalizing same-sex relations and upholding the fundamental rights of the LGBT community); *Joseph Shine v. Union of India* (2018, decriminalizing adultery); and *Indian Young Lawyers Association v. State of Kerala* (2020, upholding the right of women of all ages to enter the Sabarimala temple).

Year	**Case**	**Summary**	**Judges/Bench**
2014	*National Legal Services Authority v. Union of India (UOI)*	Recognized transgender people as third gender; enabled quotas (affirmative action)	Two-judge bench: Justices K. S. Radhakrishnan and A. K. Sikri

2016	*Shayara Bano v. UOI*	Struck down triple talaq as unconstitutional	Five-judge bench: Justices J. S. Kehar and S. A. Nazeer dissented, saying talaq protected under right to religion
2017	*Independent Thought v. UOI*	Struck down Exception 2 to Sec. 375 of Indian Penal Code (IPC); raised age of consent to sex to 18 years, within or outside marriage	Two-judge bench: Justices M. Lokur and D. Gupta
2018	*Navtej Singh Johar and Ors. v. UOI*	Struck down Sec. 377 of IPC as unconstitutional; upheld fundamental rights of LGBT community	Five-judge bench: Chief Justice D. Mishra; Justices R. F. Nariman, A. M. Khanwilkar, D. Y. Chandrachud, and I. Malhotra
2018	*Joseph Shine v. UOI*	Decriminalized adultery	Five-judge bench: Justices K. M. Joseph, A. Rastogi, A. Bose, S. Khanna, and C. T. Ravikumar

2018	*Indian Young Lawyers Association v. State of Kerala*	Allowed women of all ages entry into Sabarimala temple	Five-judge bench: Chief Justice D. Mishra; Justices A. M. Khanwilkar, R. F. Nariman, D. Y. Chandrachud, and I. Malhotra.

Table 1. Progressive judgments regarding gender and sexuality.

The Indian SC is clearly not right-wing on these social matters, unlike the Trump-era US Supreme Court. However, some of the gender-progressive judgments have fed into the larger majoritarian agenda of the RSS. Through both legislative and administrative changes, the BJP has sought to promote the idea that Muslims alone are backward and in need of reform, portraying itself as the savior of Muslim women. In doing so, it has taken the moral high ground of secularism, universalism, and formal equality (see Kapur 2019; Agnes 2016, 917). Some of the cases on Muslim personal law and Islam's essential beliefs before the Supreme Court include a law against triple talaq (instant divorce), which the court upheld, the right of Muslim women students to wear the hijab in colleges that have a prescribed uniform, on which the court was divided, and whether Muslim men can be polygamous, which is still under consideration. In all these cases, the questions of freedom of expression (clothing of one's choice), freedom of religion under Article 25, and who decides what constitutes essential religious practice are also at stake, but these concerns have been drowned out by the larger discourse of promoting the rights of Muslim women.

One of the most transformative judgments to have emerged during this period is the nine-judge bench judgment *Justice K. S. Puttuswamy and Another v. Union of India* (2017), in which the SC formulated the right to privacy under Article 21 (on the "right to life"). However, a year later, while addressing the specific concern that had motivated *Puttuswamy*—the sweeping surveillance enabled by India's identification Aadhaar project run by the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), in which every resident is given a number that is increasingly being linked to other forms of ID like voter cards or tax numbers—a five-judge bench upheld the constitutionality of the Aadhaar Act and its passage as a "money bill," thus circumventing parliamentary discussion (*Justice K. S. Puttuswamy and Another v. Union of India*, 2018).

Another judgment seen as a major blow for freedom of speech, *Shreya Singhal v. Union of India* (2015), took away the government's power to criminalize online speech

under Sec. 66A of the Information Technology Act (2000), while it simultaneously left intact Sections 69A and 79, which enable the government to block internet access or order takedowns of material (Ashraf 2022). This has left India with the dubious distinction of being "the internet shutdown capital of the world," especially in the former state of Jammu and Kashmir (Krishnan 2023). Another petition against this government power, *Anuradha Bhasin v. Union of India* (2020), in which the Supreme Court noted that any shutdown must satisfy the tests of necessity and proportionality, has never been implemented. Sweeping new rules framed under the Information Technology Act were introduced in 2020. While one portion of these rules, which impinge on the press freedom of digital media, has been stayed, the rest has not. This year, these provisions were used to block a BBC documentary showing then Chief Minister Modi's role in the Gujarat pogroms of 2002, and to criminalize students who attempted to show the documentary on campuses. The latest version of these rules—notified on April 6, 2023—empowers the government to order the deletion of any news story that its own agencies declare to be "fake" or "misleading" (Ministry 2023).

Year	**Case**	**Summary**	**Judges/Bench**
2015	*Shreya Singhal v. UOI*	Struck down Sec. 66A of IT Act, which criminalized online speech	Two-judge bench: Justices R. F. Nariman and J. Chelameswar
2017	*Justice K. S. Puttuswamy and Another v. UOI*	Introduced right to privacy	Nine-judge bench: Justices J. S. Kehar, J. Chelameswar, S. A. Bobde, R. K. Agarwal, R. F. Nariman, A. M. Sapre, D. Y. Chandrachud, S. K. Kaul, and S. A. Nazeer

2018	*Justice K. S. Puttuswamy and Another v. UOI*	Constitutionality of Aadhaar Act upheld, reversed gains of Puttuswamy (2017) in specific instances	Five-judge bench: Justices A. Sikri, A. Bhushan, A. M. Khanwilkar, and D. Mishra; D. Y. Chandrachud dissented.
2020	*Anuradha Bhasin v. UOI*	Internet shutdowns must satisfy necessity and proportionality—never implemented	Two-judge bench: Chief Justice N. V. Ramanna and Justice V. Ramasubramnian
2020	*Rambabu Singh Thakur v. Sunil Arora*	Electoral candidates must declare criminal history	Two-judge bench: Justice R. F. Nariman and Justice S. R. Bhat
2022	*S. G. Vombatkere v. UOI*	Stayed operation of sedition clause 134A of IPC; final decision on constitutionality of sedition pending	Three-judge bench: Chief Justice N. V. Ramanna; Justices S. Kant and H. Kohli
2023	*Anoop Baranwal v. UOI*	Ruled that the prime minister, chief justice, and leader of the opposition should appoint the election commissioner	Five-judge bench: Justices K. M. Joseph, A. Rastogi, A. Bose, H. Roy, and C. T. Ravikumar

Table 2. Progressive judgments, weakly implemented.

In short, several of the progressive judgments of the Supreme Court have either not been implemented by the government or have subsequently been challenged in review by the government (e.g., the *Indian Young Lawyers Association*, or Sabarimala, judgment). In many cases, the court itself has weakened their impact by subsequent judgments or by refusing to hear petitions pointing out the inaction by the government (contempt petitions).

Weaponizing Criminal Law

A remarkable feature of the Modi regime is the degree to which minorities or critics of the government are charged and arrested, without regard to the class or profession of those targeted,[10] while those on the Hindu right, even if involved in terror and heinous offenses, are simply not charged, or their bail is not opposed by the police.[11] The most glaring example is Sadhvi Pragya, released on bail for the Malegaon bomb blasts of 2006, who is now a BJP member of parliament (Apoorvanand 2019; Nileena 2022).

Vigilantism—ranging from state sponsored to state tolerated—has become increasingly common. The first Modi government (2014–2019) was marked by the rise of self-styled cow protection squads who lynched Muslim cattle traders with impunity; what is worse, it was the victims who were charged under stringent laws against cow slaughter (Baksi and Nagarajan 2017).[12] In addition, there continue to be a number of cases of Muslims and Christians being arbitrarily attacked by Hindu supremacist groups on such grounds as being engaged in forced conversion; "love jihad," or luring Hindu girls into romance; praying in public places; and spreading COVID-19 (see Jaffrelot 2021, chap. 6; *Quint* 2018). Inevitably, the perpetrators face no consequences from the police or judicial system.

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10 Teachers, students, lawyers, journalists, comedians, actors, cricketers—anyone and everyone is fair game. To give just a few examples: Disha Ravi, a twenty-one-year-old climate change activist, was arrested for circulating a protest tool kit and charged with sedition; a stand-up comic, Munnawar Faruqi, and his friends and relatives were arrested for a joke he never made; and a journalist, Siddique Kappan, was in jail for two and a half years, charged with "unlawful activities" even before he managed to reach the site of the rape he was to report on. India's position in the press freedom and academic freedom indexes has fallen sharply with physical attacks and arrests of journalists, students, and faculty, sometimes for reporting on or speaking at events, but also simply for Facebook posts or tweets against the government or politicians in power (CPJ 2022; Wire Staff 2019b; Sundar and Fazili 2020; RSF 2021). The media is virtually dead in Kashmir (HRW 2021).

11 In those rare cases where progovernment journalists have been charged, they have immediately been bailed out by the Supreme Court (Singh 2020).

12 For a detailed analysis on lynching, see Narrain 2022, chap. 4. In *Tehseen S. Poonawala v. Union of India* (2018), the Supreme Court issued a series of guidelines to check lynching, but these have not been implemented, and the court in turn has been unwilling to hear contempt petitions (Ramgopal and Singh 2020).

However, the two judgments that mark a major turn in criminal jurisprudence are the *Watali* and the PMLA judgments. In *NIA v. Zahoor Ahmad Shah Watali* (2020), the Supreme Court overturned a Delhi High Court order releasing Kashmiri businessman Ahmad Shah Watali on bail. The Supreme Court bench ruled that trial courts hearing offenses under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) could not go into the veracity of the documents produced by the prosecution while hearing bail appeals, since that was a matter for an actual trial. As Narrain (2022, chap. 3) shows, this impossible bar on bail has enabled the police to use the UAPA rather than the regular provisions of criminal law against minorities and anyone inconvenient to government.

Among the better-known cases in which *Watali* has been used by the prosecution to keep critics of the government in jail indefinitely are the Bhima Koregaon case and the Delhi riots cases. The Bhima Koregaon case involves sixteen human rights activists, lawyers, and others charged with being part of a Maoist network. The earliest arrests took place in 2018. Despite growing evidence that their laptops and phones had been infected with Pegasus and other malware, and despite the fact that several of them are elderly with serious illnesses, only three so far are out on bail. One of the accused, the Jesuit priest Father Stan Swamy, died in jail in 2021. In the Delhi riots cases of 2020, following the protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act, a large number of students, faculty, and activists who took part in the protests were questioned. However, it was predominantly the Muslim students who were arrested, accused of masterminding a vast jihadi-leftist network to create violence (see Narrain 2022). In one Delhi riots case, where the Delhi High Court granted bail to three students charged under the UAPA, the Supreme Court promptly declared that the high court's reasoning could not serve as a precedent for the other accused (Venkatesan 2021).

Apart from ordinary citizens, the government has also extensively targeted political opponents for alleged economic crimes through agencies like the Central Bureau of Investigation and the Enforcement Directorate (ED), which investigates money laundering and violations of foreign exchange. In 2022, in *Vijay Madanlal Choudhary and Ors. v. Union of India*, the SC upheld the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). A range of offenses have been brought within the ambit of the act: "fraud, forgery, cheating, kidnapping, copyright and trademark infringements, environmental offenses and even the immoral traffic of women" (Panchu 2022). Panchu points out that, as with the UAPA, invoking the PMLA gives the state wide arbitrary powers and sets up two parallel legal systems:

> [There are] two sets of enactments to deal with this wide range of offences, one under the standard Indian Penal Code (1860), the Indian Evidence Act (1872) and the Code of Criminal Procedure (1973), which contain the traditional long-standing safeguards against unreasonable action for investigation and seizure, balancing considerations for grant of bail which recognise the primordial right to liberty but also the need to enable proper investigation, and helming the powers of the police with judicial control.

> On the other hand is this PMLA, which obliterates these rights and leaves the accused persons at the mercy of an ED, which is *sans* procedure and oversight. Now the important point is this—it is left to the executive to pick and choose to which persons it would apply the harsh provisions of the PMLA. The executive is unguided and unfettered and by this, we mean not just the ED officers but also, importantly, the political executive who are the masters of these officers. (Panchu 2022)

In effect, India now has a triple legal system—one with normal criminal law, one with special laws like the UAPA and the PMLA, and one where there is total impunity.

Year	**Case**	**Summary**	**Judges/Bench**
2015	*Assam Mahasanghmilita and Ors. v. UOI and Ors.*	Directed publication of Assam NRC (National Register of Citizens); 2019 list rendered 1.9 million persons stateless	Two-judge bench: Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi and Justice R. F. Nariman—in 2014, in *Assam Mahasanghmilita* and *Ors. v. UOI and Ors.*, they referred the question to a five-judge bench, still pending, along with *Assam Public Works v. UOI*
2019	*NIA v. Zahoor Ahmad Shah Watali*	Made bail impossible under UAPA	Two-judge bench: Justices A. M. Khanwilkar and A. Rastogi

2020	*Indore Development Authority v. Manoharlal*	Struck down Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation, and Resettlement Act (LARR, 2013) to make it easier to acquire land	Five-judge bench: Justices A. Mishra, I. Banerjee, V. Saran, M. R. Shah, and S. R. Bhat
2021	*Kerala Union of Working Journalists v. UOI*	Affirmed that undertrial prisoners have right to medical treatment; reiterated only an existing right and did not take up plaintiff's clearly unjust imprisonment	Two-judge bench: Justices A. S. Bopanna and V. Ramasubramanian
2022	*Vijay Madanlal Choudhary and Ors. v. UOI*	Upheld PMLA	Three-judge bench: Justices A. M. Khanwilkar, D. Maheshwari, and C. T. Ravikumar (sections of the judgment are being reconsidered)
2022	*Noel Harper v. UOI*	Upheld 2020 amendments to the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA) making it hard for NGOs to get foreign money; advised NGOs to rely on domestic philanthropy	Three-judge bench: Justices A. M. Khanwilkar, D. Maheswari, and C. T. Ravikumar

2022	*Zakia Jafri v. State of Gujarat*	Exonerated Modi of complicity in Gujarat pogroms; criminalized human rights activists	Three-judge bench: Justices A. M. Khanwilkar, D. Maheswari, and C. T. Ravikumar
2022	*Himanshu Kumar v. State of Chhattisgarh*	Acquitted security forces; fined human rights activist Himanshu Kumar	Two-judge bench: Justices A. M. Khanwilkar and J. B. Pardiwala
2023	*Arup Bhuyan v. The State of Assam Home Department*	Making association with a banned organization a crime under UAPA; overturned 2011 SC judgment	Three-judge bench: Justices M. R. Shah, C. T. Ravikumar, and S. Karol

Table 3. Judgments criminalizing opponents and minorities.

Upending Procedure

Apart from overturning the fundamentals of criminal law—making guilt rather than innocence the presumption for certain cases—some Supreme Court judges have also upended regular procedure.

Perhaps most egregious was the brazen abuse of power displayed by former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Ranjan Gogoi. Gogoi presided over a bench set up on a Saturday, a non-workday, to respond to a sexual harassment charge against him by a former court staffer. The case was titled *In Re: Matter of Great Public Importance Touching upon the Independence of the Judiciary*. The bench described the allegation as a potential conspiracy to subvert the court and nation by preventing Gogoi from discharging his duties as chief justice. The victimhood style that authoritarian populists appear to thrive on seems to extend also to authoritarian judges (see Gogoi's autobiography, *Justice for the Judge*). An in-house bench of the Supreme Court exonerated Gogoi. Curiously, however, after his retirement, and after facing criminal charges and being removed from service, the staffer was reinstated in 2020 (Wire Staff 2020).

Justice Arun Mishra was also known for circumventing procedure, especially when it came to helping out corporations known to be close to the Modi government. On one occasion, *Indore Development Authority v. Manohar Lal* (2019 and 2020), he ignored precedent (stare decisis) set by a previous bench (even though both were three-judge benches) and then sat on a larger bench deciding between his own earlier judgment and that of the other bench. Not surprisingly, this overturned a progressive clause in the 2013 Land Acquisition Act that would have restored land to the owner if the compensation had not been received in five years' time (Venkatesan 2020b).

Cases Helping Modi

Several cases decided by the Supreme Court have personally helped Modi. The two most significant ones, which helped him to erase the stigma of his time as chief minister of Gujarat in 2002, were the Haren Pandya judgment in 2019 and the *Zakia Jafri* judgment in 2022 (mentioned at the beginning of this article). In *Central Bureau of Investigation v. Mohd. Parvez Abdul Kayuum* (2019), a Supreme Court bench of Justices Arun Mishra and Vineet Saran convicted twelve Muslim men who had earlier been acquitted by the Gujarat High Court of killing BJP leader Haren Pandya. Haren Pandya was a former confidante of Modi who revealed Modi's complicity in the pogrom to an independent investigative tribunal. As Jha (2020) explains in detail, while overturning convictions at the apex level is not unusual, overturing such a clearly reasoned acquittal is rare.

In 2018 (and again in a review petition in 2019), in *Manoharlal Sharma v. Narendra Damodardas Modi*, the SC refused to interfere with the purchase of thirty-six fighter jets from a French company (Wire Analysis 2019), despite the petitioners' pointing out that the government had misled the court on critical matters (Rajagopal 2018), as well as investigations in the French courts following exposés of kickbacks in the French media (Wire Staff 2022b). In clearing the Rafale fighter deal of corruption charges, the SC reinforced Modi's self-publicized image as incorruptible. Again in 2022, while showing some spine in setting up a committee to investigate the use of Israeli Pegasus malware on the phones of Indian journalists, opposition politicians, and human rights activists, among others, the SC declined to make the report public and read out mealymouthed portions of it that appeared to exonerate the government. And though the court noted that the government had flouted its direction to cooperate with the committee, it has done nothing about this.

Finally, in 2023, after six years of waiting in which the verdict became somewhat academic, the Supreme Court (in a 4-1 decision) in *Vivek Narayan Sharma v. Union of India* found no flaw in Modi's 2016 decision to "demonetize" by removing 87 percent of the country's legal tender in the form of 500- and 1,000-rupee notes. It is widely accepted that "demonetization" has had few beneficial consequences and instead caused widespread devastation, especially of small industries (see Kumar 2017); Modi himself no longer talks about it as a major achievement. Yet, it was crucial to maintaining his

image as an anticorruption strongman, and a verdict pointing out the absence of process while arriving at the decision to demonetize would have challenged this.

Year	Case	Summary	Judges/Bench
2018	*Manoharlal Sharma v. Narendra Damodardas Modi*	Court refused to go into Rafale procedure	Three-judge bench: Chief Justice R. Gogoi; Justices K. M. Joseph and S. K. Kaul
2019	*Central Bureau of Investigation v. Mohd. Parvez Abdul Kayuum*	Overturned HC acquittal of twelve Muslim men for killing Haren Pandya	Two-judge bench: Justices A. Mishra and V. Saran
2022	*Zakia Ahsan Jafri v. The State of Gujarat*	Absolved Modi; led to jailing of Teesta Setalvad and R. B. Sreekumar	Three-judge bench: Justices A. M. Khanwilkar, D. Maheshwari, and C. T. Ravikumar
2023	*Vivek Narayan Sharma v. Union of India*	Court upheld demonetization process	Five-judge bench: Justices S. A. Nazeer, B. R. Gavai, A. S. Bopanna, V. Ramasubramanian, and B. V. Nagarathna; dissent by Justice Nagarathna

Table 4. Cases that helped Modi personally.

Cases Helping the RSS

The Ayodhya Babri Masjid–Ramjanmabhoomi case, formally known as *M. Siddiq (D) Thr. Lrs. v. Mahant Suresh Das and Ors.* (2019), showed how close the SC was ideologically to the RSS worldview (Sundar 2019b), and not just to upholding the government side. Using convoluted reasoning to claim that Hindus had a longer tradition of worship there, a five-judge bench of the Supreme Court decided a long-standing "title dispute" for the Hindu side, allowing a temple for the Hindu god Ram to be built on the plot, after the RSS-BJP and its various other fronts had demolished a fifteenth-century mosque at the site. The court acknowledged the severity of the crime committed by those who demolished the Babri Masjid in December 1992 but ended up awarding the land in question to the same broad set of petitioners who were linked to that crime. Not surprisingly, the BJP-RSS leaders who had been involved at the time used this to escape any punishment, even though the vandalism had led to riots and bloodshed across India. Predictably, despite claims that settling this dispute would put an end to all such Hindu designs on Muslim places of worship, the judgment only whetted the appetite of the Hindu supremacists. It also reinforced the Modi government's attempt to consolidate Hindu votes.

In 2022, in *Janhit Abhiyan v. Union of India*, the Supreme Court upheld the Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-Fourth Amendment) Act of 2019 in what is popularly called the EWS (Economically Weaker Sections) quota case. In India's original constitution, only Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (and later OBCs) were considered categories deserving affirmative action. This was not, however, specifically on grounds of poverty but because they had historically been discriminated against, religiously and socially. Dalit converts to Islam and Christianity were not entitled to reserved places in educational institutions and jobs, despite continuing to be economically and socially deprived, because the disability was seen as specifically stemming from Hinduism. The 2019 amendment to Articles 15 and 16 of the constitution, however, distorted this entire history by including poverty among upper castes as a ground for reservation, creating a 10 percent quota for them. The amendment—and the court decision—helped the BJP to appease its upper-caste constituency, who have always resented "lower" castes and Scheduled Tribes benefitting from affirmative action. Coming three years after the amendment was challenged, this case also enabled a whole class of beneficiaries to be created and the amendment to be normalized.

Year	Case	Summary	Judges/Bench
2019	*M. Siddiq v. Mahant Suresh Das*	Ayodhya case; gave Babri Masjid site to Hindu Party	Five-judge bench: Chief Justice R. Gogoi; Justices S. A. Bobde, D. Y. Chandrachud, A. Bhushan, and S. A. Nazeer
2021	*Mohammad Salimullah and Ors. v. UOI*	SC allowed deportation of Rohingyas	Three-judge bench: Chief Justice S. A. Bobde; Justices A. S. Bopanna and V. Ramasubramanian
2022	*Janhit Abhiyan v. UOI*	Upheld 103rd Amendment; gave quotas to "Economically Weaker Sections" (i.e., relatively poor members of upper castes)	Five-judge bench (3-2 split): Former Chief Justice U. U. Lalit; Justices Dinesh Maheshwari, S. Ravindra Bhat, Bela M. Trivedi, and J. B. Pardiwala
2022	*Aishat Sifha v. State of Karnataka*	Split decision on whether hijab could be banned in government colleges	Two-judge bench (1-1 split): Justices H. Gupta and S. Dhulia

Table 5. Cases magnifying the RSS agenda.

Cases Not Heard

Perhaps the biggest favor by the Supreme Court, however, is in *not* hearing challenges to laws that rewrite fundamental principles of the constitution (*News18* 2022). In refusing to hear such cases, not only is the court enabling the changes to become accepted social fact, but it is also signaling that their unconstitutionality or constitutionality will be tested against election results, coproducing with the RSS a de facto rewriting of the constitution.

The two most significant political changes to the constitution both came in the second term of the Modi government: the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act and the Citizenship Amendment Act, both of 2019. The J & K Reorganisation Act struck down Article 370 and its provision for extensive autonomy, which was the condition of the state's accession to the Union of India in 1947. This was followed by the downgrading and division of the state into two union territories and by the arrest of almost all J & K's major political leaders, a year-long internet blackout, and a variety of other severely repressive measures (on Article 370, see Noorani 2011; on its abrogation, see Varadarajan 2019). As of April 2023, the Supreme Court has not even heard habeas corpus cases from J & K before it, let alone cases on the broader constitutionality of the abolition of Article 370, and extensive violations of human rights continue (Forum for Human Rights 2022).

The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) of 2019 for the first time introduced religion as a criterion for granting citizenship to refugees. Coupled with the National Register of Citizens (NRC)—which succeeded in disenfranchising 1.9 million people and was overseen by the Assamese nationalist Chief Justice Gogoi—the CAA sparked widespread protest across the country. Not only was the hearing regarding the constitutionality of the act initiated only in September 2022, three years later, but in the intervening period BJP governments or police controlled by them (as in Delhi) took vindictive action against those protesting, including arrests, physical attacks (e.g., on university students), and bulldozing of homes (in Uttar Pradesh). Worse, in *Amit Shani v. Commissioner of Police and Ors.*, a three-judge bench of the Supreme Court heard a frivolous complaint against the iconic anti-CAA protest in Shaheen Bagh, which occupied street space and was led primarily by local Muslim women. The court held that the rights of commuters must be respected and that people must protest only in officially designated spaces (Sundar 2020). A similar judgment against protests was later passed by the Karnataka High Court (Shivakumar 2022). Not only are such orders unenforceable but given that the SC order came *after* the protest had been disbanded due to COVID-19, it aimed primarily at sending a message that protest would not be tolerated.

A third major issue that is still pending is the electoral bonds scheme of 2018, which enabled anonymous donations to political parties through the sale of electoral bonds. The identity of the donor is known only to the government. Since the scheme came into existence, a total of over ten billion rupees worth of bonds have been sold (with the

lowest average purchase being ten million rupees), and 68 percent of this amount has gone to the BJP alone. The scheme is clearly a way of subverting the electoral process by cornering funds, denying funds to the opposition, and enabling unaccountable quid pro quo policies (Bhatnagar 2022; ADR 2022).

The Supreme Court has also been sitting on the constitutional validity of laws against religious conversion in BJP-ruled states, some of which also penalize interreligious marriages (Poddar 2022), as well as on the validity of laws against cow slaughter (see Narrain 2022, 210).

Conclusion

This article has charted the path from an unequal and inaccessible judiciary shaped by colonialism to one that has been weaponized against dissenters and used to sell the virtues of the Modi regime, or what I call the itinerary from rule of law as artifice to rule of law as advertorial. The artifice, of course, also enables the advertorial.

The judiciary has been one of the primary sites of engagement for the Modi regime—from changes in court composition and sweeping legislative agendas that include fundamental assaults on constitutional principles (setting up what amount to parallel legal systems for different categories of citizens) to criminalizing the political opposition.

The RSS has not needed to bring in a new constitution, at least not immediately, to achieve its goal of a Hindu supremacist nation. Instead, as Kapur (2019) has argued, it has weaponized existing constitutional principles like secularism and equality against minorities. This is especially stark when it comes to "saving Muslim women" from Muslim men in the name of gender equality. However, as in cases of interreligious marriage, conversion, and cow protection, as well as in the Ayodhya case (and all cases of recovering Hindu temples from mosques that were allegedly built over them), the Supreme Court's judgments reflect the Hindu supremacist view that Hindus have historically been victims of discrimination by minorities. Here, the principle that is invoked is the right of the Hindu majority to the public expression of their religion, a right that was seen to be kept in abeyance by a hitherto flawed definition of "secularism" that recognized the rights of minorities (so-called minority appeasement) and suppressed the rights of the majority. The scrapping of Article 370 in Kashmir was also carried out in the name of ending "minority appeasement."

By outsourcing several political decisions to an ostensibly disinterested and neutral judiciary, the Modi government has been far more successful than it would have been if it had imposed those decisions purely by legislative majority. The judiciary is also a useful prop when it comes to entangling dissenters and opponents in legal harassment, including jail, and ensuring impunity for one's own criminal elements. In turn, by addressing a variety of political issues as purely legal matters involving land titles, crime, or economic policy, and not addressing them as constitutional questions, the courts

have collaborated in the delegitimization of dissent and reinforced the claims of the Modi regime.

Several factors affect the way the SC operates—what cases are brought to it and by whom; the speed with which cases travel through the judicial system; the composition of the court, which is currently under negotiation between the court and the government; the assignment of particular benches to a case; executive flak for "encroaching" into its domain, coupled with general right-wing flak whenever the Supreme Court rules against the government; media coverage of particular judgments or issues (e.g., the overwhelming interest shown in "Muslim" cases like triple talaq and the hijab ban); and, of course, the government's unwillingness to implement any judgment with which it disagrees. In Shylashri Shankar's (2009) words, the Supreme Court has always been an "embedded negotiator"; perhaps its capacity and desire to negotiate has now been reduced given the changed terrain.

Scholarly opinion is divided on what influences judges who do not have clearly political backgrounds (see Potter 2011), and evidently different judges on the SC have different interests. The same judges may be part of benches producing some of the most progressive judgments (on gay rights and privacy) and some of the worst ones (e.g., Ayodhya). By choosing to be liberal on matters of personal rights (gender/sexuality) and avoiding difficult questions that might challenge the government (e.g., regarding Article 370 and electoral bonds), judges are perhaps trying both to preserve their reputation among liberal and international audiences, especially judicial peers, and to preserve themselves from a vindictive government.

The judiciary, especially the higher judiciary, remains the hope for many (see Acevedo 2022; Narrain 2022), but to expect judges to save democracy is to look in the wrong direction.

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The Other Japan: Back to Japan's Religious Roots for a New Japanese Nationalism?

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Abstract: *The purpose of this article is first to elucidate the nature and worldview of the ideology of pre–World War II Japan that inspired the Japanese elite to embark on global conquest and that mobilized the Japanese masses to fight to the death even after the dropping of the atomic bombs. Second, the aim is to examine how this ideology first emerged in the Meiji period and how it came to dominate Japanese politics until the end of the war. Third, it will illustrate not only what has survived of this form of ultranationalism in the postwar period, identifying the ideas of core thinkers and organizations, but it will also examine the emergence of different, or perhaps more moderate, forms of Japanese nationalism, pinpointing their key ideas and describing their visions for a future Japan. Finally, I will attempt to shed light on the historical forces and scenarios that might return Japanese ultranationalists to the center of political influence and power in the Japanese state and overturn Japan's postwar pacifist constitution and noninterventionist military foreign policy.*

Keywords: Douglas MacArthur, Constitution of the Empire of Japan, Hozumi Yatsuka, Uesugi Shinkichi, Japanese Shinto ultranationalism, Japanese nationalism, Nippon Kaigi

On August 15, 1945, after fifteen years of military expansion and fighting on the Asian mainland and in the Pacific, Japan was a defeated nation in ruins. After months of devastation by America's strategic bombing operations, including massive incendiary attacks on Japan's major metropolitan centers, culminating with the dropping of atomic bombs on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the announcement of the entrance of the USSR into the war against Japan, Emperor Hirohito finally intervened with the highest decision-making body ruling Japan, the Supreme Council for the Direction

of the War (最高戦争指導会議),[1] and enunciated Japan's acceptance of the terms of the Potsdam Proclamation, thus ending the Greater East Asian War. Many Japanese were shocked beyond disbelief by the emperor's broadcast, and a spate of suicides followed. On the same day, thousands of Japanese flocked to the imperial palace and to branch Shintō shrines around the country, prostrated themselves, and *apologized* to their emperor for losing the war. Two weeks later foreign troops arrived on Japanese soil to occupy the "Land of the Gods" for the first time in Japan's recorded history. General Douglas MacArthur,[2] Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP), landed at Atsugi Air Base on September 30, 1945, to begin the American occupation, followed by the arrival of a force of approximately 350,000 troops and US personnel to carry out the occupation, which would last until 1952.

MacArthur's mandate for the occupation of Japan originated with the Potsdam Proclamation. Section 6 stated that "[t]here must be eliminated for all time the authority and influence of those who have deceived and misled the people of Japan into embarking on world conquest, for we insist that a new order of peace, security and justice will be impossible until irresponsible militarism is driven from the world." Section 7 stated: "Until such a new order is established and until there is convincing proof that Japan's war-making power is destroyed, points in Japanese territory to be designated by the Allies shall be occupied to secure the achievement of the basic objectives we are here setting forth." And section 10 stated: "We do not intend that the Japanese shall be enslaved as a race, or destroyed as a nation, but stern justice shall be meted out to all war criminals, including those who have visited cruelties upon our prisoners. The Japanese Government shall remove all obstacles to the revival and strengthening of democratic tendencies among the Japanese people. Freedom of speech, of religion, and of thought, as well as respect for the fundamental human rights shall be established." Still more, section 12 reads: "The occupying forces of the Allies shall be withdrawn from Japan as soon as these objectives have been accomplished and there has been established in accordance with the freely expressed will of the Japanese people a peacefully inclined and responsible government."[3] Section 12 meant, of course, that with the new order

1 The Supreme Council for the Direction of the War consisted of the following six members: Prime Minister Admiral Suzuki Kantarō, Foreign Minister Tōgō Shigenori, War Minister General Anami Korechika, Navy Minister Yonai Mitsumasa, Army Chief of Staff General Umezu Yoshijirō, and Navy Chief of Staff Admiral Toyoda Soemu.

2 General MacArthur was a towering figure throughout the American occupation years. This cannot be overemphasized. As John Dower stated, MacArthur for the Japanese became the "new sovereign, the blue-eyed shogun, the paternalistic military dictator." See his *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company/New Press, 1999), 203. Dower further noted that "MacArthur was the indisputable overlord of occupied Japan, and his underlings functioned as petty viceroys" (205).

3 "Potsdam Proclamation [July 26, 1945]," Birth of the Constitution of Japan (website), National Diet Library, copyright 2003–2004, accessed May 10, 2023, https://www.ndl.go.jp/constitution/e/etc/c06.html.

sovereignty would reside in the people—popular sovereignty—and not with the emperor as stated in the Constitution of the Empire of Japan.

America's occupation policy was articulated in depth in the United States Initial Post-Surrender Policy Relating to Japan. In broad terms, the goal of the occupation was the demilitarization and democratization of Japan. Included in the US policy was constitutional revision, the breakup of the large Japanese corporate conglomerates called *zaibatsu*, and the separation of the Shintō religion from the state, as well as the destruction of Japan's physical war-making capabilities. Accordingly, the replacement of the Constitution of the Empire of Japan, the supreme law of the land, was a top priority. MacArthur moved swiftly to advance this. The recalcitrant Japanese leadership, unable to implement fundamental change to the Constitution of the Empire of Japan that would satisfy the Allies, compelled MacArthur to direct the Political Section of SCAP to write a new constitution for the Japanese. The preamble of the postwar Constitution of Japan opens with the following statement:

> We, the Japanese people, acting through our duly elected representatives in the National Diet, determined that we shall secure for ourselves and our posterity the fruits of peaceful cooperation with all nations and the blessings of liberty throughout this land, and resolved that never again shall we be visited with the horrors of war through the action of government, do proclaim that sovereign power resides with the people and do firmly establish this Constitution. Government is a sacred trust of the people, the authority for which is derived from the people, the powers of which are exercised by the representatives of the people, and the benefits of which are enjoyed by the people. This is a universal principle of mankind upon which this Constitution is founded. We reject and revoke all constitutions, laws, ordinances, and rescripts in conflict herewith.[4]

In the constitution's first chapter, Article 1 reads as follows: "The Emperor shall be the symbol of the State and of the unity of the people, deriving his position from the will of the people with whom resides sovereign power." Article 4 states: "The Emperor shall perform only such acts in matters of state as are provided for in this Constitution and he shall not have powers related to government." Another part of the Constitution of Japan relevant here is Chapter 2, Article 9, which reads:

> Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes.

4 "The Constitution of Japan," Birth of the Constitution of Japan (website), National Diet Library, copyright 2003–2004, accessed May 10, 2023, https://www.ndl.go.jp/constitution/e/etc/c01.html.

> In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.[5]

The Constitution of Japan went into effect on May 3, 1947.

The American occupation authorities went beyond democratization in the sense of establishing a democratic institutional framework in a new constitution based on fundamental democratic ideals. More fundamentally, they wanted to destroy the ideology that they believed inspired the Japanese elite to embark on war in Asia and the Pacific—the same ideology that mobilized the Japanese masses to fight to the death. Accordingly, occupation authorities ordered a series of directives designed to instill a new set of core beliefs and values in the next generation of Japanese people that would cripple Japan's war-making potential, thus fundamentally changing Japan's political culture and values. On December 15, 1945, MacArthur and the General Headquarters of the Allied Forces (GHQ) issued the Shintō Directive (SCAPIN 448), an official order titled "Abolition of Governmental Sponsorship, Perpetuation, Control, and Dissemination of State Shintō." This directive was issued because State Shintō was thought responsible for conditioning the Japanese people for authoritarian government and wars of aggression. As a result, they sought to turn the next generation of Japanese into pacificists as a guarantee to other nations in the region that Japan would never wage war on them again.

But what has happened to Shintō nationalism in the postwar period? Was it totally snuffed out by MacArthur's occupation policies? Has it resurfaced again? Or, has it reappeared again in different or disguised forms? This article has several purposes. First, it will elucidate the nature and worldview of a radical form of Shintō ultranationalism in the prewar period and examine how this ideology came to dominate Japanese politics until the end of the Second World War. Second, it will illustrate not only what has survived from the remnants of radical Shintō ultranationalism in the postwar period, identifying the ideas of core thinkers and organizations, but also examine the emergence of different, or perhaps more moderate, forms of Shintō nationalism, pinpointing their key ideas and describing their visions for a future Japan. Third, this article will hopefully shed light on the possible historical forces and scenarios that might return Japanese Shintō nationalists to the center of political influence and power in the Japanese state and overturn Japan's postwar pacifist mentality and noninterventionist military foreign policy.

Some clarification of terms may be needed for readers not familiar with Japan's religious and cultural traditions or with modern Japanese political thought. First, Shintō, which literally means the "Way of the *kami*," or the "Way of the Gods," is Japan's

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5 "The Constitution of Japan."

indigenous religion.[6] Second, State Shintō is the linkage of the Japanese state structure to the Shintō religion in the Constitution of the Empire of Japan.[7] Third, Shintō nationalism is the combining of the Shintō religion with nationalism, which Benedict Anderson, in *Imagined Communities*, defined as an "imagined political community."[8] Fourth, Shintō ultranationalism, as the words suggests, is an extreme form of Shintō nationalism. As the reader will discover, this article further differentiates between forms of Shintō ultranationalism, for example between Hozumi Yatsuka's "reactionary Shintō ultranationism" and Uesugi Shinkichi's "radical Shintō ultranationism"—the latter of which was a revolutionary, mass-based religion of ethnic nationalism.

Radical Shintō Ultranationalism in Prewar Japan

The occupation's reform policies were designed to fundamentally alter Japan's political culture. But what exactly was the ideology and culture of the prewar Japanese state that they sought to overturn? Simply put, MacArthur and the American occupation forces had a poor grasp of it. According to the propaganda documentary film *Prelude to War* (1942), which was part of *Why We Fight*, a series of documentary films produced by the War Department between 1942 and 1945 and directed by Frank Capra, America's ideological enemy in the case of Germany was said to be National Socialism, or Nazism for short; in the case of Italy, it was Fascism; however, when the documentary came to identify the ideology of Japan, it simply stated that "they had lots of names for it." In other words, the War Department did not know. Incredible as it may seem, three quarters of a century since the war ended, Americans still cannot identify the ideology of prewar Japan! Consequently, widely used textbooks in American colleges and universities, when discussing Japan's prewar ideology, refer to it with a multiplicity of terms such as "fascism," "emperor-system fascism," "Japanism," or simply "militarism," which, of course, tells you nothing about the ideology.

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6 As I explain in my book, *Japan's Holy War: The Ideology of Radical Shintō Ultranationalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009), the *kami* were the objects of worship of the Japanese people prior to the introduction of divinities derived from foreign religions originating on the Eurasian continent. At the center of this *kami* worship were the divine beings that created the universe and their descendants, the divine ancestors of the Japanese people. For the purposes of this article, religion may be defined simply as a belief in the supernatural.

7 Shintō religion was the defining characteristic of a distinctly Japanese civilization. In *Japan's Holy War*, I note that "Shintō was inherently political and linked to particular notions of state and society that gave the Japanese a Weltanschauung, a comprehensive philosophy of the world and human life" (2). The first book in English to extensively explore the link between Shintō religion and the Japanese state was Daniel Holtom, *The National Faith of Japan: A Study in Modern Shintō* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubnet, 1938).

8 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983), 6.

My 2009 book, *Japan's Holy War*, was the first major publication in the English language to deal systematically with the origins, development, diffusion, and triumph of the ideology of wartime Japan.[9] It explored the ideology that inspired the Japanese elite to embark on global conquest, and that mobilized the Japanese masses to fight to the death. The book refers to that ideology as "radical Shintō ultranationalism." What is the nature and what are the core values of radical Shintō ultranationalism? In the book, I describe radical Shintō ultranationalism as a

> revolutionary mass-based form of ethnic nationalism that has at the center of its ideology the Shintō creation story of the Japanese islands by Izanami and Izanagi, the divine origins of the imperial line, the divinity of the emperor, the ethnic divinity and superiority of the Japanese people, the belief in a divine world mission for the Japanese state, [and] global imperial rule under the emperor.[10]

To understand the birth, development, diffusion, and triumph of the ideology of radical Shintō ultranationism in the modern Japanese state, one must start with the promulgation of the Constitution of the Empire of Japan (大日本帝国憲法) on February 11, 1889.[11] The Constitution of the Empire of Japan, created by Itō Hirobumi and his colleagues,[12] contained the core Shintō doctrine in Chapter 1, Article 1 of the Constitution, which stated that "[t]he Empire of Japan shall be reigned over and governed by a line of Emperors unbroken for ages eternal." Article 3 proclaimed that "[t]he Emperor is sacred and inviolable."[13] And Article 4 stated that "[t]he Emperor is the head of the Empire, combining in Himself the rights of sovereignty, and exercises them, according to the provisions of the present Constitution." Despite these articles, which are characteristic of traditional absolute monarchies, the Constitution of the Empire of Japan also contained elements of democracy. For instance, Article 5 stated that "[t]he Emperor exercises the legislative power with the consent of the Imperial Diet." Chapter 2, containing fifteen articles, was titled "Rights and Duties of Subjects." Chapter 4, "The Ministers of State and the Privy Council," contained two articles. One of these, Article 55, stated: "The respective Ministers of State shall give their advice to

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9 See note 6. To my knowledge, there is only one other work on this topic in a European language. It is Klaus Antoni, *Shintô und die Konnzeption des japanischen Nationalwessens (kokutai)* (Lieden: Brill, 1998).

10 Skya, *Japan's Holy War*, 19.

11 To trace the constitution's ideological roots, one must go back to the Shintō revival movement in the Tokugawa period and to the debate over the type of constitution to adopt. But this is beyond the scope of this article.

12 It should be noted that Japanese names are given here in the Japanese order: family name first.

13 Very similar articles were contained in the Constitution of Prussia and the Constitution of the Kingdom of Italy.

the Emperor, and be responsible for it. All Laws, Imperial Ordinances, and Imperial Rescripts of whatever kind, that relate to the affairs of State, require the countersignature of a Minister of State."[14]

The *Guide to Japan*, a document prepared by the American government for US occupation forces, commented that the Constitution of the Empire of Japan, "with Prussian tyranny as its father, and British representative government as its mother, and attended at its birth by Sat-Cho [Satsuma and Chōshū] midwives, was a hermaphroditic creature."[15] In other words, the Constitution merged contradictory elements of both absolute monarchy and democracy in the same document. Flawed in theory, it proved to be unworkable in practice. Accordingly, it led to constant gridlock in government in the first decades of politics under the Constitution.[16]

Alarmed that the political system was starting to unravel and that Japan was rapidly heading toward a constitutional crisis, astute politicians and constitutional legal scholars sought to find a way out of the crisis of politics under the Constitution of the Empire of Japan. Two fundamentally opposing solutions were proposed: one was to place all power in the emperor, making the parliament a rubber-stamp parliament, thus reverting back to a traditional absolute monarchy. This position, a kind of reactionary Shintō ultranationalism, was advocated by Tokyo University constitutional legal scholar Hozumi Yatsuka. For Hozumi, the Japanese state was a "*Völkisch* family state." He further defined it as follows: "the state is a *völkisch* group (*minzoku dantai*) protected by the sovereign power." A *völkisch* or ethnic group consisted of "blood relatives of the same womb."[17] The "same womb" referred to here was the originator of the line of descent of the unbroken line of emperors, Amaterasu Ōmikami. The sovereign power, of course, was the emperor, who was the deity Amaterasu Ōmikami existing in physical form in the present.

The second essential characteristic of Hozumi's state was Japan's unique *kokutai*, or "form of state." Japan's *kokutai* posited that the Japanese state was inherently hierarchical because the originator deity of the unbroken line of emperors, Amaterasu Ōmikami, gave descendants the authority to rule over everyone who came after. The Shintō nationalists have adamantly maintained that what changed governmentally in Japan over the centuries was the *seitai*, or "form of government," not the "form of state." (It is important to point this out because US scholarship mistakenly claims that Kita Ikki was

14 "The Constitution of the Empire of Japan," Birth of the Constitution of Japan (website), National Diet Library, copyright 2003–2004, accessed May 10, 2023, https://www.ndl.go.jp/constitution/e/etc/c02.html.

15 Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 346.

16 There were eighteen prime ministers and cabinets between 1885 and 1918.

17 Skya, *Japan's Holy War*, 56.

the chief ideologue of the radical nationalists;[18] however, because Kita argued that the form of state changed as well as the form of government, this position fundamentally contradicted Shintō nationalism.) The final characteristic of Hozumi's state was that it was a "family-state." That is to say, Hozumi adhered to the patriarchal construction of society. In terms of comparative state theory, his was much like Sir Robert Filmer's theory of traditional absolute monarchy in England.[19]

The other solution to the problem of politics under the Constitution of the Empire of Japan was to place all power in the parliament and make the emperor a figurehead, thus allowing Japan's political system to evolve into a British-style constitutional monarchy. This solution was advocated by Tokyo University constitutional legal scholar Minobe Tatsukichi. These two diametrically opposed positions generated the greatest debate over state and sovereignty in modern Japanese history, widely known in Japan as the debate between Hozumi's "emperor-as-sovereign theory of state (天皇主権説)" and Minobe's "emperor-as-organ theory of the state (天皇機関説)." As real-life politics actually unfolded under the Constitution of the Empire of Japan, Japan started sliding into an English-style constitutional monarchy in the 1920s.

However, if one examines the trajectory of Japanese political thought into the 1930s, one finds that neither Hozumi's theory of absolute monarchy nor Minobe's theory of parliamentary government based on the emperor-as-organ theory of the state would survive the ideological contestation throughout the pre-1945 Shōwa period. The reason for this is simple: neither was a theory of state that the newly politicized Japanese masses could identify with. The Hibiya Riot of 1905 signaled the emergence of the Japanese masses on the political stage. The riots toppled the Terauchi cabinet, thus ending rule by the oligarchs who had created the modern Japanese state. And, with the expansion to universal male franchise in 1925, it became impossible to revert to Hozumi's traditional ideology of absolute monarchy, where the masses were politically children. Accordingly, the political application of Hozumi's theory of state was doomed.

On the other hand, neither could the masses identify with the German-derived organ theory of the state, a theory formulated in Germany specifically to avoid the adoption of popular sovereignty. That is to say, in Minobe's theory of the state, sovereignty resided in the state, not in the people, and this presented a very weak and unstable ideological underpinning for parliamentary democracy; nevertheless, for a period in the more

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18 I believe this notion started with the publication of *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, vol. 2, compiled by Ryūsaku Tsunoda, William Theodore de Bary, and Donald Keene (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958). In chapter 27, "The Rise of Revolutionary Nationalism," there is a section on Kita Ikki titled "Kita Ikki and the Reform Wing of Ultranationalism," and within that section a translation of a few pages of his 1919 work "Taikō Nihon Kaizō Hōan" ("An Outline Plan for the Reorganization of Japan"). However, in his major 1906 work *Kokutairon oyobi Junsei Shakaishugi* (On the kokutai and pure socialism), Kita launched a devastating attack on Hozumi Yatsuka's theory of the Shintō Japanese state. Kita was a leftist, not a rightist.

19 Skya, *Japan's Holy War*, 64.

liberal 1920s, Minobe's organ theory in support of parliamentary government did in fact emerge to become the dominant state theory following the end of World War I.

Hozumi's Shintō theory of absolute monarchy was superseded, however, by radical emperor-centered totalitarian Shintō ideologies in the 1910s and 1920s. This suggests that the creeping democracy and secularization of Japan's early twentieth-century political order were the principle causes of the radicalism and terrorism of the 1930s, which ultimately led to a holy war against Western civilization. What is truly remarkable about the interwar period is the amount of political violence and the number of acts of terrorism that plagued Japan. Three serving prime ministers (Hara Takashi, Hamaguchi Osachi, and Inukai Tsuyoshi) and two former prime ministers (Saitō Makoto and Takahashi Korekiyo) were assassinated between 1921 and 1936. And others, such as Prime Minister Okada Keisuke, narrowly escaped assassination.[20]

One of the leading theorists of radical Shintō ultranationalism was Uesugi Shinkichi. Written in 1921, Uesugi's book, whose title translates as "a new thesis on the state (*Kokka Shinron* 国家新論)," [21] set forth the framework of a theory of state that had profound influence on Shintō ultranationalist thought. The acts of terrorism to bring about a political revolution and usher in a worldwide war were justified and encouraged by Uesugi's radical Shintō thought. In other words, by the 1930s, widely accepted doctrinal developments in Shintō religious thought not only condoned but encouraged the wave of assassinations of prime ministers and cabinet members in an effort to overthrow the government. Thus, while Shintō ideology had been the religion and ideology of the Japanese state since the beginning of the Meiji period in 1868, it was not the radical mass-based Shintō ideology that would emerge in the 1920s. Rather, the radical Shintō backlash against the secularization and democratization of the Japanese state in the 1920s emerged with a vengeance to destroy Japan's nascent experiment with parliamentary government. Mark Juergensmeyer, a renowned scholar of religious terrorism who endorsed *Japan's Holy War*, noted that "State Shintō transformed from an ideology deeply supportive of entrenched authority to one profoundly and violently opposed to it."[22]

In his book providing "a new thesis on the state (国家新論)," Uesugi Shinkichi defined the Japanese state as "ultimate morality."[23] What did he mean by the state as ultimate morality? Uesugi's state theory was built on a moral philosophy that in turn rested on his theory of metaphysics. Thus, a prerequisite for the knowledge of ultimate morality was the possibility of knowledge of the ultimate nature of being. In his ontology, being in its totality could not be defined in terms of the self as a complete

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20 Skya, *Japan's Holy War*, 230.

21 Uesugi Shinkichi, 国家新論 (Tokyo: Keibunken, 1921).

22 This is Juergensmeyer's endorsement on the back cover of *Japan's Holy War*.

23 Skya, *Japan's Holy War*, 166.

entity in distinction or differentiation from other selves. The self was merely a part of a greater "being as a totality."[24]

Further, being did not simply denote what might be referred to as "static-given being." One's individual being, as a constituent element of "being as a totality," had movement. This movement of being related in a cause-and-effect relationship to the movements of other beings in a spatial environment—what Uesugi called a person's *sōkan* 相関. Being's movement, however, involved not only this spatial relationship. It involved this interrelationship with other beings in a spatial totality in time, which he called *renzoku* 連続. Each being, as part of "being as a totality," mutually and interdependently developed and perfected the self in relation to other selves in a definite spatial-temporal matrix. Uesugi called this 人の相関と連続, and it was what he defined as morality. This perfection, or the object of being's becoming, he called a person's "essential being (本性)." One's essential being constituted his or her real being, which inherently contained in it a moral nature that was to be perfected. The full realization of being's essential nature was the goal of one's becoming.

The final key component of Uesugi's state theory was "organizational will (体制意志)." Organizational will was the moral force, the source of state cohesion and national solidarity. Ultimately, the emperor was the source of organizational will. To obey the emperor's will was the highest realization of the self, one's essential being. To absorb the self into the emperor, to become a part of the emperor, was to accomplish this essential being. In other words, organizational will was the emperor, one's essential being, and ultimate morality.

Uesugi's amalgamation of German metaphysics and Shintō doctrine furnished the Japanese individual with a license to kill. It gave the true believer a mandate to assassinate the emperor's corrupt cabinet members, wicked members of the court entourage, other public officials, greedy business leaders, and for that matter anyone else they deemed harmful to the Japanese state. It also justified a holy war against the bankrupt global order dominated by secular liberal democratic nations and atheistic communist states because the emperor was rightfully the center and ruler of the world.

According to Uesugi's state theory, each Japanese individual knew instinctively the emperor's will since it was in their essential being. The purpose of the individual's life and activity was to be proactive and carry out the emperor's will. The terrorists felt that this gave them the moral authority to assassinate the ministers of state and members of the court entourage who they believed were not carrying out the emperor's will. In Uesugi's state theory, carrying out the emperor's will and dying for the emperor meant closing the gap between one's essential being and one's existential being; it meant

24 Skya, 166.

merging the self into the mystical body of the emperor. In a nutshell, this was Uesugi's theory of the state as ultimate morality.[25]

In his book on Japanese constitutional history, 日本国家思想史研究 (A study of the history of Japanese state thought), Tokyo University scholar Nagao Ryūichi stated that Uesugi's 1921 "new thesis on the state (国家新論)" was written in reaction to Hozumi's patriarchal, authoritarian theory of state: "The significance of enunciating that 'the state is ultimate morality' meant the exclusion of Hozumi's theory of an authoritarian view of the state."[26] This led to radicalization, that is, a process of conversion that leads to a fanatically driven person, which first started among the elites and then spread to the masses through massive propaganda campaigns.

According to the state theories and theologies of Uesugi Shinkichi and other Shintō ultranationalists such as Kakehi Katsuhiko, the fundamental purpose of life for the radical Shintō ultranationalist was to bring about a "Shōwa Restoration (*Shōwa Ishin*)" and to spread the divine emperor's rule throughout the world.[27] This ideology was spread rapidly throughout the military by Uesugi and other ideologues. For example, when the radical Shintō ultranationalist sublieutenant Itō Kamahiro was asked by the judge presiding in his trial for the killing of Prime Minister Inukai to explain his philosophy of "constructive destruction," he stated that his group was an "organization without organization. My life's desire will be fulfilled if a state is established on the principle that the Emperor and his subjects are one."[28] For Itō and many other likeminded military officers, the Japanese state was in trouble because the emperor was surrounded by corrupt cabinet members and members of his court entourage who were supposedly blocking the will of the emperor from being carried out, thus separating the people from the emperor. In brief, this was the ideological basis of radical Shintō ultranationalism.

Admiral Yonai Mitsumasa offers an extraordinary example of the alarming nature of prewar radical Shintō fanaticism. He was a member of Hirohito's decision-making ruling inner circle at the end of the war. Having realized that the ideology of radical

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25 For those interested in comparative radical ultranationalist thought, his theory of state is very close to that of German National Socialism. As scholar Richard Koenigsberg pointed out, the German people in Nazi thought were imagined not as an "imagined community" as in the work of Benedict Anderson, but as a people fused into one organic being, with each person as a cell of the German body politic. It was a single organism, which, of course, was a biological fantasy. See Richard A. Koenigsberg, *Nations Have the Right to Kill: Hitler, the Holocaust and War* (Elmhurst, NY: Library of Social Science, 2009). Also, quoting Adolf Hitler directly: "We, as Aryans, can conceive of the state only as the living organism of a nationality which not only assures the preservation of this nationality, but by the development of its spiritual and ideal abilities leads it to the highest freedom." *Mein Kampf* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1943), 394. In Uesugi's thought, of course, every individual was fused into the mystical body of the emperor.

26 Nagao Ryūichi, 日本国家思想史研究 (Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1982), 36.

27 Takahashi, Masae, *Ni-Nijūroku Jiken: Shōwa Ishin no Shisō to Kōdō* (Tokyo: Chō Kōron Sha, 1965), 163–67.

28 Hugh Byas, *Government by Assassination* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1942), 46.

Shintō ultanationalism had driven the Japanese empire to the brink of mass national suicide, he confided to Rear Admiral Takagi before the surrender that the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki to end the madness were "gifts from the [Shintō] Gods (天佑)."[29] This stunning statement speaks volumes about the mindset of Japan's wartime leadership.

Survival of Radical Shintō Ultranationalist Thought in the Postwar Period

Despite MacArthur's attempt to thoroughly eradicate the ideology of radical Shintō ultranationalism from Japanese society, remnants of it survived and resurfaced at various points in the postwar period. Not only that, MacArthur's own occupation policies contributed to its revival. For instance, he ordered the release of Japanese communists from prison and made legal the Japanese Communist Party (JCP). Within a short time, the JCP started to focus on winning mass support, which was quite successful. As one historian noted, "Official membership rose from a mere 8,000 in 1946 to 37,000 in 1948 and 100,000 in 1949. By 1948 it is estimated that about half of organized labor was under varying degrees of communist control, many of the important unions, including those of transport, communications, electric power, and government-enterprise workers, being largely directed by the JCP."[30] The significance of this fact here is that it led to a backlash and to the rebirth of antileftist nationalist Shintō movements.

Still more, it was during the latter part of the occupation, with the so-called "reverse course" policy, that we find a proliferation of nationalists and nationalist groups in Japan. The change in the course of the occupation policy from demilitarization to remilitarization, which according to some sources began in 1947, was accelerated by the intensification of the Cold War in Asia. In his book *Nationalism and the Right Wing in Japan*, the late Ivan Morris noted, "The steady intensification of the cold war, and in particular the Communist victory in China [1949], encouraged by the new policy of rehabilitation in Japan; and the outbreak of war in Korea [1950] added a new urgency to the objective of building Japan up as a partner in the anti-Communist camp."[31] This triggered the rise of new Shintō groups. One such group, for instance, was the fiercely anti-communist Japan Revolutionary Chrysanthemum Flag Association (日本革命菊旗同志会), led by former Imperial Army Air Corps fighter pilot Tagata Takeo 田形竹尾

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29 I mention this in my chapter "The Great European War and the Rise of Radical Shintō Ultranationalism in Japan," in The New Nationalism and the First World War, ed. Lawrence Rosenthal and Vesna Rodic (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 177. I originally found this in Takagi Sōkichi, Takagi Kaigun Shōshō Oboegaki 高木海軍少将覚え書き [Remembrances of Navy Rear-Admiral Sōkichi Takagi] (Tokyo: Mainichi Shinbunsha, 1979), 351.

30 Ivan Morris, *Nationalism and the Right Wing in Japan* (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), 60.

31 Morris, 107. Morris's book is the most comprehensive work on postwar nationalist movements in Japan, although it only documents this through around 1958.

(1916–2008). In 1951, the so-called red purge in Japan was carried out by the Japanese government and business circles under the guidance of the US occupation forces. According to Ivan Morris, "It was aimed primarily at Communists who had managed to infiltrate themselves into the civil service, trade unions, newspapers, universities, and elsewhere, but in many cases, it extended in practice to non-Communists of left-wing persuasion known to be opposed to the Government or the management."[32]

Shintō nationalism in the postwar period is a huge topic. Morris noted that "the number of rightest organizations in existence appears, if anything, to have been rather larger in post-war days than before the war."[33] He noted that "Professor Kinoshita [Hanji] lists 350 right-wing groups for the pre-war period."[34] Morris goes on to state that "of these some 210 were dissolved during the Occupation Period. With the re-emergence of rightist movements during the latter part of the Occupation, however, the total number of groups in 1951, including both old and new, grew to as many as 540."[35] In other words, ironically, we find the revival of Shintō nationalism in the context of policies initiated by the occupation forces under MacArthur.

Obviously, this article cannot cover even a small fraction of these groups. Accordingly, I would like to take a look at some examples. One of them is that of Japanese radical Shintō ultranationalist Akao Bin 赤尾敏, who represents a continuity between the prewar and postwar periods. Akao was a close associate of Tokyo University scholar and activist Uesugi Shinkichi, whose radical theory of the Japanese state was discussed above. Akao had founded the radical Shintō ultranationalist organization the National Foundation Society(建国会) in 1928 along with Uesugi and Motoyuki Takabatake. As with many other radical Shintō ultranationalists, Akao was purged after the war by MacArthur's GHQ as a wartime leader. However, he was released from prison in 1951 because of a change in US occupation policy—the "reverse course" whereby the United States began to urge Japan to rearm—and he became the first president of the Greater Japan Patriotic Party (*Dai Nippon Aikoku Tō* 大日本愛国党). He advocated a staunchly pro-American and anti-communist stance, believing the real threat to Japan at the time was the Soviet Union. Originally a socialist, he "converted" to radical Shintō ultranationalism in 1926. When the Japan Socialist Party staged massive protests against the renewal of the US-Japan Security Treaty in 1960, Akao came to the conclusion that Japan was on the verge of a communist revolution. Accordingly, he mobilized his small, close-knit group of radicalized followers to oppose the leftist movement of Marxists and anarchists. On October 12, 1960, Yamaguchi Otoya, one of his followers in the Greater Japan Patriotic Party, assassinated Asanuma Inejirō, chairman of the Japan Socialist Party. In the now

32 Morris, 110.

33 Morris, 200.

34 Morris, 200.

35 Morris, 200–201. However, many of these groups were actually branches of parent groups.

infamous incident, at a nationally televised election debate held in Hibiya Public Hall in Hibiya Park, Yamaguchi leapt onto the stage where Asanuma was speaking, and with a samurai short sword (*wakizashi*) thrust it into Asanuma's body.[36] Asanuma died from massive bleeding moments later. Yamaguchi later committed suicide.

Another of Akao Bin's followers was Komori Kazutaka. He and other radical Shintō ultranationalists were angered over a Fukazawa Shichirō short story, "Furyū mutan" (The tale of an elegant dream), describing a sequence of dreams in which the emperor, empress, the crown prince, and the crown princess are beheaded with a guillotine by a mob of left-wing protestors. Komori and Shintō ultranationalists broke into the home of *Chūō Kōron* journal president Shimanaka Hōji with the aim of assassinating him. Shimanaka was not at home and Komori murdered Shimanaka's maid and wounded his wife. Akao died at the ripe old age of ninety-one in February 1990.[37]

Moving on to the 1970s, Yukio Mishima, unquestionably one of Japan's greatest postwar writers, was a Shintō ultranationalist. On November 25, 1970, accompanied by four members of his Shield Society, he visited the commander of the Japanese Self-Defense Forces stationed in Roppongi, Tokyo. The group held the commander at sword point and demanded that the 32nd Regiment there be assembled in the courtyard to attend a speech that he was going to give from the balcony of the building. In his speech to the soldiers, he "exhorted the soldiers to rise up with him against a postwar democracy that had deprived Japan of her army and her soul."[38] After speaking only seven minutes to the eight hundred soldiers, he then "withdrew to the commandant's office and committed *seppuku* (hara-kiri). When he had driven the blade into his left side and drawn it across his abdomen, he grunted a signal to the cadet standing behind him; the cadet beheaded him with a long sword, completing the ritual."[39] Mishima's favorite book was *Hagakure* (In the shadow of the leaves), the classic on Bushido, the code of the *bushi* (samurai). In prewar Japan, almost everyone knew the opening lines of *Hagakure*: "The way of the warrior is to seek death."[40] Of course, in wartime Japan, the purpose of the individual was not to die for his feudal lord but for the emperor.

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36 Photographer Nagao Yasushi's picture of Yamaguchi withdrawing the sword from Asanuma's body won the 1961 Pulitzer Prize.

37 For several decades Akao went almost daily to the Ginza district of Tokyo and preached through a loudspeaker from the top of the Greater Japan Patriotic Party truck to the thousands of Japanese passing by. I personally frequently used to go listen to Akao speaking while I was a graduate research student at the University of Tokyo in the late 1970s and early 1980s. While he spoke, a couple members of his group would usually be at a table next to the truck with literature on it.

38 John Nathan, *Mishima: A Biography* (Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1974), ix.

39 Nathan, ix.

40 See Walter Skya, "Bushido: Hagakure no Kanten kara mita Shiseikan to Shuju Kankei" 武士道：葉隠の観点から見た死生観と主従関係 [The code of the warrior: outlook on death and lord-vassal relationship from the viewpoint of *Hagakure*], *Gunji Shigaku* 軍事史学 [The journal of military history], The

The Reemergence of Shintō Organizations at the Center of Japanese Politics and a New Japanese Nationalism

More important for the purpose of this article than the remnants of prewar radical Shintō ultranationalists such as Akao Bin and his Greater Japan Patriotic Party, or individuals such as writer Mishima Yukio and his Shield Society, has been the reemergence at the center of Japanese political life of large political Shintō nationalist organizations, which are the driving forces behind Japan's new nationalist agenda.[41]

One such organization is the Parliamentarians' Association of the Shintō Political Group (*Shintō Seiji Renmei Kokkai Giin Kondankai* 神道政治連盟国会議員懇談会). This political Shintō organization was established on May 11, 1970, and although at the time of its formation its rules stipulated that it was organized with the members of the Diet who agreed with the purpose of the Shintō Political Group, apparently members were not asked about religion when joining. Nevertheless, this Shintō political group is the political wing of the *Jinja Honchō*, the Association of Shintō Shrines, the religious organization that was formed in 1946 to oversee the some eighty thousand Shintō Shrines spread throughout the Japanese archipelago. The *Jinja Honchō* emerged from the abolition of the prewar Home Ministry's *Jingiin* (Institute of Divinities).[42]

As of December 22, 2020, there were a total of 300 members of the Parliamentarians' Association of the Shintō Political Group in the Diet. Breaking this down further, there were 222 members in the House of Representatives, and 78 members in the House of Councilors. All the members of the Parliamentarians' Association of the Shintō Political Group are Liberal Democratic Party politicians. The chairman was former Prime Minister Abe Shinzō. During the second Abe government (December 2012–December 2014) most cabinet members belonged to this Shintō political organization.

Some political events involving members of this organization are worth noting. In May 2000, on the thirtieth anniversary of the organization's founding, then Prime Minister Mori Yoshirō (April 2000–April 2001) provoked controversary when he declared that Japan "was the land of the Gods, with the emperor at its center."[43] Another way to translate this is: "Japan is a divine land with the emperor at its center."

Military History Society of Japan, Spring 1982.

41 It should be noted here that while these organizations are Shintō-based nationalist organizations, it might not be best to categorize them as radical Shintō ultranationalist as in prewar Japan discussed above. Indeed, some members may not personally consider themselves Shintōists.

42 In her book *Shintō and the State, 1868–1988* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), Helen Hardacre noted that "[l]eaders of the major prewar Shintō organizations banded together and in January 1946 formed the Association of Shintō Shrines (*Jinja Honchō*), which continues to direct shrine affairs for the greater majority of shines today" (137).

43 See Jonathan Watts, "Japan Divine, Claims PM," *Guardian*, May 16, 2000, https://www.theguardian.

Another large political Shintō organization is the *Nippon Kaigi* 日本会議 and its various affiliated organizations such as the Parliamentarians' Association of the Nippon Kaigi (*Nippon Kaigi Kokkai Giin Kondankai* 日本会議国会議員懇談会).[44] This organization was formed on May 29, 1997, by Obuchi Keizō 小渕恵三, who would be prime minister from July 1998 to April 2000, Mori Yoshirō 森喜朗, prime minister from April 2000 to April 2001, and Ōzawa Tatsuo 小沢辰男, who served as minister of health and welfare, minister of construction, and director of the Environmental Agency.

The purpose of this Shintō parliamentary organization is to support the goals of the *Nippon Kaigi* 日本会議, the largest Shintō nationalist organization in Japan. When launched in 1997, it had registered 189 members of parliament. Its membership grew steadily in its first decade, and then rapidly in the second decade of the twenty-first century. By 2013, the organization boasted 252 members, and by the following year, 2014, it had expanded to include 289 members. As of 2015, 281 members of parliament were associated with the organization.

Many people regard this parliamentary organization as an ultranationalist or extremist group, and it was viewed as a source of spiritual inspiration for Abe Shinzō. Whatever the case, it has had tremendous influence on several Liberal Democratic administrations. In 2016, there were approximately 38,000 members in the *Nippon Kaigi*, coming from all 47 prefectures throughout Japan, including large metropolitan areas as well as 241 smaller cities, towns, and villages.

The *Nippon Kaigi* (literally "Japan Conference") was formed through the amalgamation of two earlier Shintō groups: the Society for the Protection of Japan 日本を守る会 (founded 1974) and the National Conference for the Protection of Japan 日本を守る国民会議 (founded 1981), which originally consisted of "rightist cultural luminaries, business leaders and Japanese imperial army veterans."[45] Many of the original members were said to have been influenced by the thought of Taniguchi Masaharu, founder of *Seicho no ie* (literally "House of Growth"). However, the major religious/ideological influence on the *Nippon Kaigi* is the *Jinja Honchō,* publisher of a monthly journal called "the breath of Japan" (日本の息吹), which emphasizes the need for "building a proud nation" and setting the basis for a new future for Japan from a new perspective.[46]

According to the *Nippon Kaigi's* website, the organization describes six organizational objectives:

Fostering the beautiful tradition of the Japanese national character

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com/world/2000/may/17/jonathanwatts.

44 It should be noted that not all the members of this organization may be categorized or counted as Shintōists.

45 Sachie Mizohata, "Nippon Kaigi: Empire, Contradiction, and Japan's Future," *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 14, issue 21, no. 4 (November 1, 2016): 1–20, https://apjjf.org/-Sachie-Mizohata/4975/article.pdf.

46 Quote is from the Nippon Kaigi's website: www.nipponkaigi.org/publication/details?id=224.

(美しい伝統の国柄を明日の日へ)

Moving toward a new constitution suitable for the new era (新しい時代にふさわしい新憲法を)

Advancing politics that protect Japan's reputation and the lives of its people (国の名誉と国民の命を守る政治を)

Creating an education [system] that fosters Japanese sensitivity (日本の感性をはぐくむ教育の創造を)

Contributing to world peace by enhancing national security (国の安全を高め世界への平和貢献を)

Working toward a world linked together on a spirit of [peaceful] coexistence and coprosperity (共生共栄の心でむすぶ世界との有効を).[47]

Nippon Kaigi rejects the basic principles upon which the present Constitution of Japan is based. First, it seeks to "[p]romote worship of the imperial household at the heart of our state and people, whose imperial lineage can be traced over 125 generations of unbroken descent (back to origins of the sun goddess)." Worshipping the emperor as a divine ruler goes against the ideal of popular sovereignty, the idea that sovereignty resides in the people. Second, *Nippon Kaigi* rejects "the universality of human rights" as well as popular sovereignty. Third, *Nippon Kaigi* asserts that the Constitution of Japan, the "occupiers-drafted constitution," creates "problems that inhibit the independent will of the state to protect its security and [result in] turning national defense over to a foreign power."[48]

Nippon Kaigi has taken a stand on a number of foreign policy issues. For example, members of the Parliamentarians' Association of the Nippon Kaigi visited Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga Yoshihide and issued a statement in July 2020 demanding the canceling of China's President Xi Jinping's state visit to Japan, which was postponed. It emphasized that "[p]romoting a state visit to Japan today is contrary to Japan's national interest and the interests of the world."[49] Members of the Parliamentarians' Association urged the government to make solving the issues between Japan and China a top

47 These six points were listed in Mizohata, "Nippon Kaigi," 4. For the original, see: https://www.nipponkaigi.org/about/mokuteki.

48 Mizohata, 4–5, 14.

49 "Statement Calling for the Cancellation of President Xi Jinping's Visit to Japan as a State Guest," *Nippon Kaigi* website, July 7, 2020, https://www.nipponkaigi.org/opinion/archives/12748.

priority. These issues included a guarantee of the autonomous status of Hong Kong, China's formal recognition of the Senkaku Islands as Japanese sovereign territory, and challenging the refusal of the Chinese government to take responsibility for the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic.

Japan Institute for National Fundamentals

Another political Shintō organization that was formed more recently is the Japan Institute for National Fundamentals (JINF) (国家基本問題研究所).[50] Founded in 2007 by Sakurai Yoshiko 櫻井よしこ,[51] who has had an illustrious and successful career as a journalist, TV presenter, and writer, JINF is a think tank established as a public interest foundation. Sakurai is president and chair of the board of directors (理事長). JINF publishes its own in-house journal called *kokkikenkiyō* 国基研紀要.[52] Organizationally, it has three vice presidents, twenty-one directors, twenty-two council members, and seventeen planning committee members. Those who fill these positions in the organization are mainly lawyers, journalists, career military people, and academics. JINF also sponsors dozens of guest researchers.

In a short statement (令和時代の課題と展望), President Sakurai wrote that the main mission and purpose of her establishing the Japan Institute for National Fundamentals was to contribute to the revision of the Constitution of Japan so that Japan will no longer be a "nation that cannot be a nation" if "the right of belligerency of the Japanese state is not recognized." She laments the fact that according to Article 9 of the current constitution, Japan does not allow for the "maintenance of a land, sea, and air force war-making capacity."[53] She wonders why Japan cannot strengthen itself by legitimizing war-making as the inherent right to defend itself, and engage militarily on its own or in concert or cooperation with the United States. I personally interviewed her for forty-five minutes in a Zoom meeting on April 1, 2021 (April 2 Japan time). She mentioned that revisions other than Article 9 must be made in the constitution, including in the preamble. It was significant, I thought, that she added that Japan cannot merely return to the Constitution of the Empire of Japan of the Meiji period.

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50 The home page of the Japan Institute for National Fundamentals is https://jinf.jp. Some people may question whether this organization is a Shintō organization, but when I talked to Sakurai Yoshiko personally, she had no objection to my characterization of it as a Shintō organization. This is not to say that all members are Shintōists. Actually, some members and those who publish in JINF's journal are foreigners.

51 Interestingly, she graduated with a degree in history from the University of Hawaii at Manoa.

52 This title is difficult to translate literally, but it is the "journal of the Japan institute for national fundamentals."

53 Sakurai Yoshiko, "Reiwa Jidai no Kadai to Tenbō," November 4, 2020, https://jinf.jp/news/archives/32884.

The vice president of the Japan Institute for National Fundamentals is Takubo Tadae 田久保忠衛. He also weighed in on the need for revision of the Constitution of Japan. In a newsletter titled "Amending the Constitution is the Only Way to Cope with Great Transition," he stated: "Autocratic regimes are not limited to China, Russia, and North Korea. They can be seen in Iran, Turkey, Poland, and Hungary. Given such autocratic regimes and the growing populist movements in Europe, the international community is experiencing a sea change." In light of this global transitional trend, he forcefully argued that "[w]hile the Japan-US alliance that depends heavily on US military power remains unchanged, Japan should urgently respond to changes of the times. Japan's top national security priority should be the development of the Self-Defense Forces into true national armed forces. To accomplish this, Japan could not survive without attaining constitutional amendments that would pave the way for the development."[54]

In a subsequent article arguing that the "Senkaku affair highlights limitations of Japan's constitution," Takubo states that he has had concerns about "China's gradual enhancement of moves toward effective control of Japan's Senkaku Islands over a half century and the Japanese government's empty opposition to such moves." He finds it increasingly disturbing that China put into effect on February 1, 2021, its new Coast Guard law, which authorizes the Chinese Coast Guard to use military force to "control illegal acts in waters under its jurisdiction." Of course, this development heightens tensions over the Senkaku Islands, which China has unilaterally claimed as its territory. He laments the fact that the Japanese government had only asked the new Biden administration to confirm that the islands were covered by the US-Japan Security Treaty, but that Japan had not taken any effective measures to secure its control of the Senkaku Islands, specifically mentioning that Japan had taken the position that it will not build a lighthouse on the islands. He sees this as an ineffective and weak stance by the Japanese government. Takubo regards China's incremental encroachment policy toward the Senkaku Islands and the territories of other countries around the world as a "salami-slicing strategy."[55] These salami-slicing tactics, and now more recently China's "swarming tactics," were noted in a piece by Joseph Bosco. Bosco stated: "From salami-slice aggression to invasion by swarm, China continues its successful gray-zone expansionism in the South China Sea, East China Sea and Taiwan Strait."[56]

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54 Takubo Tadae, "Amending Constitution is the Only Way to Cope with Great Transition," December 24, 2019, https://en.jinf.jp/weekly/archives/6703. Takubo is vice president of the Japan Institute for National Fundamentals and a professor emeritus at Kyōrin University.

55 Takubo Tadae, "Senkaku Affair Highlights Limitations of Japan's Constitution," February 1, 2021, https://en.jinf.jp/weekly/archives/8045.

56 Joseph Bosco, "With Salami-Slicing and Swarming Tactics, China's Aggression Continues," *The Hill*, April 6, 2021, https://thehill.com/opinion/international/546560-with-salami-slicing-and-swarming-tactics-chinas-aggression-continues/.

The Japan Institute for National Fundamentals issued an "Appeal to Political and Business Leaders in Japan (日本の政財界指導者たちへ)" and placed this appeal in three of Japan's top national newspapers on August 14, 2020: the *Nikkei*, the world's largest financial newspaper; the *Sankei*, which is short for the *Sangyō Keizai Shimbun*, the industrial and economic newspaper that has the sixth largest circulation in Japan; and the *Yomiuri Shimbun*. In this appeal, President Sakurai and Vice President Takubo, endorsed by some forty-five other members of JINF, addressed Japan's political and business leaders, pointing out to them what they had been saying for a very long time, that "Japan needs to rely on the United States for its security, while it has to rely on China for its economic well-being."[57] In other words, JINF is telling Japanese politicians and business leaders that they cannot have it both ways. Japan, like America's NATO allies, can no longer avoid making hard choices, and can no longer rely entirely on the United States for its national security as it has since the end of the Second World War. In this appeal JINF further chided Japanese politicians and business leaders, stating: "What kind of Japan do you want to leave for your children and grandchildren?"

On August 15, 1985, exactly forty years after the end of the Second World War, Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro paid an "official visit" to Yasukuni Shrine, where Japanese war dead are enshrined. Sakurai applauded the fact the Nakasone visited Yasukuni Shrine but lamented that he made a decision never to return to visit the shrine again in his official capacity as prime minister because the Chinese Communist Party condemned his visit, thus apparently caving to Chinese pressure.[58]

Prewar Radical Shintō Ultranationalism and Japan's New Postwar Shintō Nationalism

The above mentioned Shintō nationalist individuals and organizations I believe are representative of the new postwar Japanese Shintō nationalism and what it stands for. However, there are fundamental questions that are difficult to assess about the reemergence of postwar Shintō nationalism. Can there be a Shintō basis for a postwar Japanese nationalism that a vast majority of the Japanese people will accept? Would a takeover of the Japanese government by Shintō nationalists, accompanied by a change in the Constitution of Japan, launch the Japanese nation on a trajectory of radicalization as in the prewar period? For those who are still traumatized by prewar Japan, can there be a new Shintō nationalism that will not lead to fanaticism and another destructive war?

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57 Sakurai Yoshiko, "Appeal to Political and Business Leaders in Japan," *Japan Institute for National Fundamentals*, August 14, 2020, https://en.jinf.jp/suggestion/archives/7643.

58 Nakasone was prime minister of Japan and president of the Liberal Democratic Party from 1982 to 1987. Nakasone died in 2012 at the age of 101.

Japanese Marxists and socialists, many ordinary Japanese citizens, and foreign observers of Japanese politics have been wary of any possibility of a resurrection of Shintō nationalism. In this regard, the mere mention of amending the Constitution of Japan evokes heavy denunciation and condemnation. Others have severely criticized the *Nippon Kaigi* for believing that Japan liberated much of East Asia during World War II; that the Tokyo war crimes trials were illegitimate; that the rape of Nanjing was exaggerated or fabricated; that the forced prostitution of Korean "comfort women" never happened; and that the Japanese should return to worshipping the emperor. The well-known late Japanese political scientist Maruyama Masao argued:

> If the progressive camp is bewitched for an instant by fragmentary forms of the old nationalism, either misjudging them as the buds of future national consciousness or knowingly mobilizing them under the temptation of securing immediate political goals, the effect will be disastrous. The "new nationalism" will inevitably turn harshly towards reaction and probably revert to its former nature.[59]

But much of Maruyama Masao's criticism must be taken with a grain of salt. Postwar Japanese nationalism must be seen not only in light of our analysis of prewar Shintō ultanationalism, but also within the dangerous current international environment in which Japan now finds itself. First, the Constitution of Japan is not fundamentally flawed structurally as was the Constitution of the Empire of Japan, and it is impossible to envision an exact rebirth of the prewar constitution as it was, with the emperor seen as sacred and inviolable—a constitution that did not even mention a prime minister or a cabinet responsible to the emperor or the Japanese parliament. In the Constitution of the Empire of Japan, the prime minister had no control over the military. One must not forget that Japan's Asia war, starting from the Japanese army's independent takeover of Manchuria in 1931, was justified by the military leaders on constitutional grounds, and carried out without the support of the prime minister and the civilian government.

Second, the international environment confronting Japan today is completely different from the prewar period. Dangers to Japan's national security are real, especially from North Korea and the People's Republic of China. It is inconceivable that Japan could militarily attack or invade anywhere in East Asia on its own as in the prewar period. China is not divided and weak as in the 1930s; just the opposite, it is emerging as one of the largest and most powerful authoritarian states the world has ever seen. Third, Japanese politicians are not being assassinated (Asanuma in 1960 and Abe in 2022 are exceptions) as we saw in the prewar period. Politically, Japan is not a premature, unstable democracy. Finally, postwar Japanese nationalists are strongly allied with the

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59 Maruyama Masao, "Nationalism in Japan: Its Theoretical Background and Prospects," trans. David Titus, in *Thought and Behavior in Modern Japanese Politics*, ed. Ivan Morris (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), 152.

United States against China and North Korea. If anything, they are very pro-American, at least in terms of Japanese foreign policy.

Impact of a Renewed Shintō Nationalism on Japanese Policymaking

Contemporary political Shintō organizations—including the Parliamentarians' Association of the Shintō Political Group, the political lobbying arm of the *Jinja Honchō*, which oversees the tens of thousands of Shintō shrines and its worshippers throughout Japan; the *Nippon Kaigi*, the largest Shintō nationalist/ultranationaist organization in Japan, and its parliamentary lobbyist group, the Parliamentarians' Association of the Nippon Kaigi; and the Japan Institute for National Fundamentals—have all been trying to push the Japanese government to revise or amend the Constitution of Japan and to break with the pacifist foreign policy that has been in place since the end of World War II. These nationalist organizations have gradually been gaining strength. Their popularity has been due to anxieties about domestic social issues in Japanese society as well as foreign policy issues, although foreign concerns are more of a factor.

Nevertheless, according to a survey published in May 2020 by the *Asahi Shimbun*, one of Japan's five largest national newspapers, 72 percent of the Japanese population did not believe it urgent to revise the Constitution of Japan; only 22 percent did. The annual survey was conducted before May 3, which is Constitution Day, a national holiday. The survey also asked respondents to choose one of three responses concerning a Liberal Democratic Party proposal for new emergency orders, including a measure to temporarily restrict people's rights to deal with natural disasters. Fifty-seven percent chose the response that the government should handle such emergencies without amending the Constitution of Japan, which was up from 55 percent in the previous poll.[60] Japan's present constitution, which went into effect on May 3, 1947, has never been amended. For historical reference, the prewar Constitution of the Empire of Japan was also never amended. As no constitution has ever been amended since the formation of the modern Japanese state 132 years ago, it may be more practical politically to leave the Constitution of Japan as it is, and instead concentrate on reinterpreting it to meet emergency situations.

In a more recent survey in May 2022 by the Kyōdō News Agency, only half the respondents believed Japan needs to amend Article 9, the war-renouncing article, to clarify the legal status of the Japanese Self-Defense Forces. This is not a significant change in public opinion, despite the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Interestingly,

60 Questionnaires were mailed to 3,000 voters nationwide from early March to mid-April. Valid responses were received from 2,053 individuals, 68 percent of the total. "Asahi Survey: 72% Say No Rush for Diet to Revise Constitution," *Asahi Shimbun*, May 3, 2020, https://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/13347656.

however, 76 percent of the respondents supported an amendment to the constitution so the government can better respond to the coronavirus and other types of disasters. Any proposed revision of the constitution needs to be approved by a two-thirds majority in both the upper and lower houses of the Japanese parliament and then be put to a national referendum.[61]

In terms of foreign policy, the above political Shintō organizations seem to be successful in changing the attitudes of Japanese politicians and the general population. The expansionist sentiments and actions of the People's Republic of China are without question a major concern to Japanese Shintō nationalists, and this concern resonates well with the Japanese public. As historians of East Asian history know, there has been an intense rivalry between the Japanese and the Chinese in the modern period, and Japanese nationalists are terribly concerned about the possibility of a historic shift in power in the region toward China. They are fully aware that hundreds of smaller societies have been absorbed or exterminated by the Chinese over the last two thousand years, and that this is currently happening to the Tibetans, Uyghurs, and other ethnic groups within the Chinese state, which is also coercing and threatening other states on its periphery. Accordingly, holding the line against an expansionist China is the top priority of the Shintō nationalists' foreign policy. Sheila Smith, senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, seems to concur with this assessment. She noted that "Japanese perceptions of the alliance with the United States changed fundamentally when China's military began to exert pressure directly on Japan. Tokyo saw Beijing's challenge to its administrative control over the Senkaku Islands as a grave risk to Japan's security."[62]

Organizations such as the Japan Institute for National Fundamentals and the *Nippon Kaigi* are pushing politicians and state bureaucrats to stand up to China, and Japanese politicians and bureaucrats as well as the general public seem receptive to this message. For instance, state minister of defense (防衛副大臣) Nakayama Yasuhide 中山泰秀, who is affiliated with *Nippon Kaigi* and is the second person in command in the Japanese Defense Ministry, is concerned that China will expand its aggressive stance into areas other than Hong Kong, notably Taiwan. Nakayama asserted that "[t]here's a red line in Asia—China and Taiwan."[63] This is a bold statement coming from the

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61 The Kyōdō News Agency (共同通信社) distributes news to almost all newspapers and radio and television networks in Japan. The newspapers using its news have about 50 million subscribers, a very large percentage of Japan's total population of around 123 million people. The survey was taken from March 1 to April 11, 2022. "Japan Still Divided on Revising War-Renouncing Constitution: Survey," *Kyodo News*, May 2, 2022, https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2022/05/a8faf66fd209-japan-still-divided-on-revising-war-renouncing-constitution-survey.html?phrase=constitution%20survey&words=survey,Constitutional,Constitution,surveying,constitute,surveys.

62 Sheila A. Smith, *Japan Rearmed: The Politics of Military Power* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019), 215.

63 Ju-min Park, "Japan Official, Calling Taiwan Safety a 'Red Line,' Urges Biden to 'Be Strong,'"

Japanese Defense Ministry, something not seen previously. He reiterated this statement and the importance of Taiwan to Japan when he spoke more recently to the Hudson Institute think tank, questioning whether the decision since the 1970s of many countries, including Japan and the United States, to follow the "one-China" policy, which asserts the People's Republic of China's claim to Taiwan, would stand the test of time.[64]

Much must still be worked out with respect to a joint US-Japan response to Chinese aggression in East Asia and a possible Chinese attack on Taiwan. In this regard, Sheila Smith noted that

> dealing with the heightened threats that Japan faces today will require more than assurances of the United States' commitment. It will necessitate contingency planning that involves both militaries, so as to anticipate when and how each military might initiate the use of force and to what end. If a conflict were to break out on the Korean Peninsula, U.S., Japanese, and South Korean forces would all be involved in a response. Yet there is no integrated command for all three allied militaries, nor is there a common understanding of how a conflict could be fought now that Japan is vulnerable to North Korean missiles.[65]

Prime Minister Suga Yoshihide's administration (September 2020–October 2021) also indicated that Japan is prepared to intervene militarily in case China tries to invade Taiwan. Japan's stance has hardened under the current Kishida Fumio administration (October 2021–) as well. Sakurai Yoshiko of the Japan Institute for National Fundamentals did not support Kishida's election as prime minister. Instead, she supported the more far-right candidate Takaichi Sanae, who has been serving as minister of state for economic security since August 2022. It is noteworthy that Japan has reinterpreted its Coast Guard laws, which now allow its Coast Guard to shoot at foreign vessels. Further military agreements between the US and Japan are underway.

Conclusion

Since the end of the Second World War, the Japanese have been haunted by the ghost of prewar Japan, so that many Japanese fear that anything beyond incremental change will lead again to extremism. In other words, an extreme pacificist sentiment remains strong in their psyche. Some people would argue that this dogged pacificism prevents

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Newsmax, December 25, 2020, https://www.newsmax.com/newsfront/biden-taiwan-japan-china/2020/12/25/id/1003131/.

64 David Brunnstrom, "Japan Minister Says Necessary to 'Wake Up' to Protect Taiwan," *Reuters*, June 24, 2021, https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/japan-minister-says-necessary-wake-up-protect-taiwan-2021-06-28/.

65 Smith, *Japan Rearmed,* 217.

a rational approach to foreign policy issues and national defense possibilities. But there is one thing that is jogging the Japanese out of this mindset: the growing awareness of the threat of the People's Republic of China as well as North Korea to Japan's national security.

The Japanese have been incrementally expanding their military capacities and their use of military power. Japan is now said to have one of the most sophisticated militaries in the world, but it is still a fact that they have never fought in a military conflict in the postwar period. And many questions remain. As outlined in this article, the prewar Japanese were gladly willing to die for the emperor since radical Shintō ultranationalism was at the center of the state ideology. It is now inconceivable that postwar Japanese would be willing to die for the emperor. But would they be willing to put their lives on the line for a democratic Japan or for the Japanese national community?

Historically speaking, religions were at the core of all civilizations. The Shintō religion has, without a doubt, been at the core of a distinct Japanese civilization. Even a casual observer who visits Japan today will notice that Shintō shrines are conspicuous everywhere. It has been estimated that around 70 percent of Japanese adhere to the Shintō religion. While Buddhism and Confucianism entered Japan from the Asian continent in Japan's early history, these universal religions and systems of thought never totally replaced the indigenous Shintō ethnic religion (a situation quite unlike Christianity's takeover of Europe). This might be difficult for Westerners, especially in English-speaking countries, to comprehend since the cultural history of the European world is so vastly different. To make an analogy that Westerners might understand: the rise of Shintō nationalism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was as though the religion of the gods of the Greeks and the Romans had resurfaced in the modern period, pushed out Christianity, and become the state religion of European countries.[66] But this is exactly what happened in Japan.

This article has taken a hard look at Shintō nationalism and addressed some difficult questions. Would a new Shintō nationalist Japanese state necessarily drive Japan into overseas expansion and war once again? Can Shintō nationalists and a revived political Shintō Japanese state coexist peacefully with the rest of the democracies and the postwar rules-based world established by the United States at the end of World War II? These issues have never been seriously and openly discussed, but they need to be candidly addressed if the Japanese are to reemerge as a "normal" nation and amend the pacificist Constitution of Japan.

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66 Walter Skya, "Culture of Death: Japanese Nationalism and the Second World War," *Library of Social Science* guest newsletter, May 3, 2019, https://www.libraryofsocialscience.com/newsletter/posts/2017/2017-06-09-skya.html.

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ESSAY

Right-Wing Politics in Europe

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Introduction: From the Margins to the Mainstream

In my first book, *Voting Radical Right in Western Europe*, I argued that radical right parties were more likely to be successful when voters felt they had a chance to win seats in parliament. But often mainstream parties coordinated to ensure that far-right candidates would be unable to win seats. Voters are more likely to vote for candidates and parties that will have an opportunity to govern. Voters may also be encouraged to vote strategically for a candidate that goes against their preferences, seen most clearly when left voters in France ensured that the conservative Jacque Chirac was elected president over Jean-Marie Le Pen in 2002.

One of the more disturbing trends I have seen since I began studying the radical right in the mid-1990s has been that ideas that were seen as "radical" back then have become mainstream. As Cas Mudde has noted,

> in the last two decades, socio-cultural issues have come to dominate the political agenda. In most European countries, as well as in Australia and the US, the political debate is dominated by socio-cultural issues and so-called "identity politics," including a more or less explicit defense of white supremacy in the face of the increasing politicization of ethnic and religious minorities. Consequently, socio-cultural issues are no longer niche as mainstream parties now also prioritize them over socio-economic issues, at least in their electoral campaigns. (Mudde 2019, 89)

This shift has multiple explanations, but it is clear that since my book was published in 2005, what was once considered radical has become mainstream, particularly in terms of anti-immigrant sentiment and Islamophobia.

In the 1980s and 1990s there existed an elite consensus to fight the far right at the ballot box by maintaining a cordon sanitaire that kept right politicians from cooperating with far-right candidates while encouraging left voters to support mainstream candidates. This consensus collapsed as conservative governments came into power across Europe after 9/11 and terrorism shifted the focus around immigration from labor policy to security issues (Givens, Freeman, and Leal 2009). The Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ)

became part of the Austrian government in 2000 partly because they were seen as the only alternative to a grand coalition government. Being part of government seemed to moderate at least the leaders of the party at the time, but it has shifted back to a more strident anti-immigrant tone in recent years. This lack of moderation has continued as more far-right parties have been formed and had electoral success.

The participation of the Austrian Freedom Party, the Danish People's Party, and various other far-right parties in coalition governments in the early 2000s opened the door to greater success for these parties. Support for far-right parties in Europe surged in the 2014 European parliament election, foreshadowing the successful Brexit vote in the UK in the summer of 2016. That support would increase in 2019, with the far-right National Rally party (Rassemblement National) of Marine Le Pen narrowly beating President Emmanuel Macron's party coalition with 23 percent of the vote. The Rassemblement, which maintains most of the positions of its former incarnation, the Front National (FN), has become a regular fixture in the European Parliament and the French Assembly.

What does it mean to be a right-wing party in the 2020s? Party politics in Europe have seen a tremendous rightward shift since I began doing research on political parties in the mid-1990s. We have seen a decline in support for left-wing social democratic and communist parties, particularly in France. It is important to keep in mind the broader context of change as we have seen an evolution of the radical right from being on the fringes of party politics to the mainstream.

Nearly every election in Europe since the early 2000s has seen a radical right party increase its support, join a government, or even take over a government. Across the region, perhaps most notably in Hungary, France, Germany, Italy, and Sweden, radical right parties have clearly become part of mainstream politics. Geert Wilders is a far-right politician who has developed a following by opposing immigration to the Netherlands and has been put on trial for inciting hatred against Muslims. Wilders has called for banning immigration from Muslim countries. Wilders's party received a substantial share of the vote in the spring 2017 election, but not enough to win a majority in parliament over the conservative party. In September 2022, the Sweden Democrats became the second largest party in the *Riksdag* with 73 seats, while in Italy, the coalition headed by the Brothers of Italy and the "postfascist" populist Giorgia Meloni won 125 seats in the Italian Parliament, enough to form a government.

Although Germany's Alternative für Deutschland (Alternative for Germany, AfD) party, founded in 2013, dropped from 12.6 percent to 10.3 percent of the vote in the 2022 election, its entrance into the Bundestag as the main opposition in 2017 sent shockwaves across Europe. In Italy at least two of Meloni's far-right coalition partners saw a decline in their percentage of the vote in the September 2022 election, but as noted by Paul Kirby of the BBC, "Their big advantage, however, was that where they were able to put up one unified candidate in a constituency, their opponents in the left and centre could not agree a common position and stood separately" (Kirby 2022).

How did we get here? It is interesting to note that my academic career has spanned an era that has seen a dramatic increase in support for the radical right. April 1986 was

an important time in both my personal and professional history. I was an undergraduate student heading off to my first trip abroad—the Stanford in Tours program would be my first time visiting France. I could not have known that the events in French politics that month would have an impact on my research trajectory when I would become a graduate student at the University of California, Los Angeles, seven years later. Jean-Marie Le Pen's Front National would break into headlines across Europe as it scored an impressive showing in a French Assembly election. A switch to proportional representation led to the party winning thirty-five seats, equal to the Communist Party. Although the Front National would not be this successful after the electoral system reverted to the regular two-vote, first-past-the-post system, it was a harbinger of things to come. The election was the beginning of the rise of right-wing politics that would ultimately see the tactics and discourses of the radical right become part of the mainstream.

It does not seem that long ago that far-right or radical right parties were not taken seriously, but their role has gone from being the perpetual opposition to serious contenders for political power. This essay is based mainly on my own research and observations of European politics over the last thirty-five years. I have written on the radical right, immigration policy, and antidiscrimination policy, all during a time that these issues were crucial components of politics at the European Union (EU) level and in national elections across Europe. What I have seen during this time seems like an inexorable shift from an acceptance of "multiculturalism" to a rise in xenophobic politics and parties, which have become a growing component of mainstream politics.

Norms around issues of race and the politics of immigration have clearly shifted since I began studying the radical right in the mid-1990s. In 1999, when Jörg Haider's Freedom Party came in second place in the Austrian legislative election, the other fourteen EU countries at the time considered his positions on immigration and the EU to be beyond the pale. Although other EU members could not change the outcome of the vote, they took measures to indicate their stand on these issues, including passing the Racial Equality Directive (RED) in 2000, as a show of support for antidiscrimination policy (Givens and Evans Case 2014). At the time, I was surprised that this type of legislation would be passed given the resistance in many EU countries to even use the term "race." Radical right parties in Europe tend to use a populist appeal, arguing that they are for the "common man" and against the elite. They often lean authoritarian in their call for security to protect against outsiders and in their blind loyalty to the party or its leaders. Another component is the racism and fear of minorities and immigrants that is being used by politicians in Europe to mobilize voters who fear a loss of privilege and, ultimately, political dominance.

I believe that there are three key areas where the study of the radical right has evolved since I began studying it in the late 1990s. The first is our understanding of the impact of economic change versus the perceived cultural threat presented by immigration. I begin by examining the ongoing debate over the influence of economic factors, such as the decline in manufacturing jobs, and over demographic change as a motivator for voting radical right. In the following section, I examine the shift of working-class

voters from left-wing parties to the radical right and the subsequent decline of social democratic parties in Europe. I then discuss the impact of the radical right on policy developments, including more restrictive immigration policies as well as the response to immigrant integration via antidiscrimination policy.

Economics versus Cultural Threat

Demographic change in Europe was fueled by the recruitment of foreign labor after World War II. Labor recruitment into Europe slowed in the 1970s after the oil crisis and global economic downturn, but then immigration began to increase into the 1980s, as courts ruled in favor of immigrant family reunification. Settled communities developed, and immigrants began to create group identities, although it would not be until the late 1990s that Muslim immigrants across Europe began to see themselves as a group beyond their national identities. As European birth rates declined in the late 1990s and early 2000s, many politicians, economists, and social scientists argued that for Europe to maintain its generous welfare system, particularly its pay-as-you-go pensions, Europe would have to open its doors to more young immigrants. This emerging consensus came just as anti-immigrant far-right parties were gaining traction in countries like Austria and Denmark (Givens 2005). Despite the need for immigrant labor, the people who began to see more immigrants in their neighborhoods and cities were not so sure that these new neighbors were desirable.

Since I began following the development of the radical right in the mid-1980s, a consensus has developed that these parties have created their own niche in the political landscape, focusing on immigration and the perceived threat to social and cultural norms that are represented by immigrants, racial and ethnic minorities, and Muslims. Although the economic impact of immigration is not trivial, it has not been shown to be as strong a factor in support for the radical right as xenophobia (Arzheimer 2018). As Arzheimer notes, "Starting with Billiet and Witte's (1995) study of Vlaams Blok support in the 1991 general election in Belgium, a host of single-country and comparative studies have demonstrated time and again that anti-immigrant sentiment is the single most important driver of the radical right vote" (147).

In his chapter in the *Oxford Handbook of the Radical Right,* Tamir Bar-On demonstrates that "a general consensus exists in the literature that ethnic nationalism is the master concept for the radical right" (2018, 20). In my own work on the radical right, I argued that a comparison of the party positions of radical right parties on immigration, the EU, and the economy indicates that "most of the positions of the radical right are derived from nationalism," as seen in slogans such as "Austria First" (FPÖ), "France for the French" (FN), or "Our program is Germany" (the Republikaner party in 1990) (Givens 2005, 35). Another component of this ethnic nationalism is the emphasis on religion. "Note that ethnic nationalism implicitly posits a politically dominant religious group," Bar-On writes, "while minority religions are conceived as threats to the nation. Muslims or Jews are viewed as 'enemies' of the 'true nation'

because they undermine nation-state homogeneity. Radical right positions on the EU, economy, liberal democracy, minorities, immigration, multiculturalism, and capitalist globalization are informed by the master concept, namely, ethnic nationalism" (2018, 28).

Despite these studies, some researchers argue that economic factors play a role. For example, one study finds that "it is the risk of automation among those who are just economically coping, but likely to be fearful of falling and losing what they have, which may motivate the vote for radical right parties" (Im et al. 2019, 6). However, as support for these parties grows, it is perhaps better to take a "yes, and" approach. This ongoing debate over the role of economics versus cultural threat as a motivation for voting for radical right parties is perhaps masking a more complex story. As Ausserladscheider points out,

> On the supply-side of political strategy, cultural and economic factors are closely intertwined rendering the methodological separation into disparate variables impossible. Simultaneously, this impossibility is reflexive of political and economic realities; socio-economic status comes with cultural subjectivities and cultural values such as nationalism inform economic policy articulations. How these subjectivities are informed, reconstructed, and reproduced by political discourse is essential to understand current political developments. (2018, 10)

An analysis that can incorporate the interaction of economic and cultural threats may be a more fruitful approach to understanding the success of many of these parties, and the reasons for shifts in the discourses of right parties more generally.

When I was researching the factors leading to support of the radical right in the late 1990s one of the issues being highlighted at the time was the shift away from manufacturing in Western economies, which was leading to the loss of jobs for men while women were gaining more jobs in services. I clearly remember a cover for the *Economist* magazine in the late 1990s that called the coming decade one of a shift toward an economy that would favor work done by women. The argument was that men were the "modernization losers"—this was seen in new technologies that reduced the need for manufacturing workers or in globalization that was sending manufacturing jobs to the Global South. These trends were seen as destabilizing and likely to lead blue-collar workers to vote for the radical right in greater numbers than women, as I will discuss below.

Economic precarity has indeed grown for working-class voters in particular, and there has been a renewed focus on issues like the impact of income inequality with the publication, for example, of Thomas Piketty's book *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* (2017). Since the 1970s, inequality has increased dramatically, and this has had an impact on both voters and parties. In his analysis of the impact of inequality on the vote for the radical right, Han concludes:

> Given the current trend of rising income inequality in Western European countries, RRPs [radical right parties] will increasingly depend on the native poor for votes. This "proletarianization" of the social basis of RRPs (Betz,

> 1994) has been observed since the 1980s. Yet, traditionally, this structural change in the social basis of RRP constituencies has been attributed to the radicalization of RRP ideologies (Givens, 2005). Here, the findings suggest that rising income inequality also contributes to such a structural change in the demographic basis of RRPs, because it strengthens the party support of manual workers and routine nonmanual workers while it weakens that of more educated, nonmanual workers. (Han 2016, 63)

Han's analysis is interesting because it finds clear connections between inequality and increasing support from blue-collar workers, but I would argue that it also has implications for the gendered basis of support for radical right parties.

> When economists consider drivers of inequality, they mainly focus on processes of technical change, globalization, diverging returns to different skills, structures of property rights and inheritance, and the ability of the rich to capture economic policy making and shape it to serve their interests. On the whole, they do not situate economic inequality between people in the context of intersecting inequalities of gender, race/ethnicity, and location that shape the access that different people have to income and wealth. (Elson 2018, 8)

As Elson goes on to explain in her article, "Structures of gender inequality intersect with income inequality, shaping inequality outcomes, with implications for men as well as for women" (9).

There is a tendency to see the supporters of the radical right in binary terms, for example, as male versus female, white versus ethnic or racial minority, low versus high education levels, and so on. I admit that this was my own framework in my 2005 book—my main finding on supporters for the radical right was that they were disproportionately male, un- or underemployed, and with low education levels. This shows up in regression analyses as we try to determine the impact of each of these factors while holding the others constant. I propose that perhaps what we are seeing on the demand side is something I would call "economic intersectionality." Many authors who examine supporters of the right clearly see that the dimensions that impact that support are complicated, and as research continues it will be important to factor in economic and cultural shifts as well as the impact of policy, which I discuss below. Next, I examine the impact of party realignment.

The Decline of the Left: From "Frozen" Party Systems to Realignment

Since the early 2000s, researchers have noted that far-right candidates have seen increasing support from working-class voters. In France this has become known as *gaucho-lepenisme*. As noted by Gougou and Mayer, "The French National Front was one of the first of the new European extreme rights to develop a significant constituency, as

early as 1984, and it is still considered as a model for many others. Its attraction among blue collars and the emergence of a 'gaucho-lepénisme' or Lepenism of the Left, started to be discussed in the 1990s" (Gougou and Mayer 2012, 156). In their study of anti-immigrant sentiment, Bornschier and Kriesi (2012) conclude that within the working class, the perception of a cultural threat posed by immigrants, more than the perception of an economic threat, is relevant to understand why they vote for radical right parties. In a more recent study, Simon Bornschier argues that "the rise of the radical right is intimately related to the transformation of the traditional West European political space as a result of the educational revolution that took off in the 1960s, to the processes of economic and cultural modernization, as well as to the issue of national sovereignty posed by globalization" (2018, 229). In untangling the factors that are leading to support for the radical right as well as mainstream right parties, it is important to understand the contextual societal shifts that are at play, as well as the ways that parties are changing their tactics to attract voters.

European party politics helped to define our understanding of the "frozen" party systems of the 1960s as defined by Lipset and Rokkan, who wrote that "[t]he party systems of the 1960s reflect, with few but significant exceptions, the cleavage structures of the 1920s" (1967, 50). There was a sense of certainty that the left would always be driven by the communists and socialists, and the conservative parties and Christian democratic parties would define the moderate right. The European party landscape has shifted dramatically in the last twenty years. When I began studying the radical right, the party systems had basically been frozen since the late 1960s. Today, many parties that were reliable vote getters, like the Parti Communiste in France, have virtually disappeared. Overall, France's party system was ruptured in the first decade of the twenty-first century, with new parties taking over the mantle of the old. What would lead us to a situation where the radical right would be nearly indistinguishable from the mainstream right and the left would be struggling to survive?

One of the more important components of the shift in votes has been among working-class voters. Traditionally stalwarts for social democratic parties, working-class voters, particularly men, have been attracted to the radical right as they have been impacted by globalization and cultural change as immigrant communities have grown. It is important to note that in many countries these immigrant workers are still needed in many industries. Low birth rates across most of Europe have meant a need for labor, particularly in industries where native workers are difficult to recruit, such as construction and low-skilled manufacturing jobs.

In a 2017 article, I examined how immigration helped to create a context for party realignment (Givens 2017). After World War II, an increasing number of immigrants came to the UK, Germany, and France. At the time, few understood the cultural impact that these immigrants would have, and the ways they would change the face of their new homes. As countries recovered from war, they needed more manpower to rebuild and maintain their economic growth, and so temporary immigration filled a need for

low-skilled workers—but many of these workers from Italy, Greece, and Turkey stayed permanently (Givens, Navarre, and Mohanty 2020).

An important development in the mid- to late 1990s was the success of center-left politicians like US president Bill Clinton, UK prime minister Tony Blair, and German chancellor Gerhard Schroeder. These leaders embraced a neoliberal approach to economic policy that supported a more individualistic approach to governance. These policies contributed to economic growth as a whole, but they did little to improve wages or benefits for the working class and widened wealth inequality. If the center-left's economic policies had improved the standard of living of working-class voters, it is likely that they would not have been as open to the messages of the radical right. Instead, wages remained stagnant, and union membership has declined along with manufacturing jobs.

In France, many observers were surprised in the late 1990s that former Communist Party strongholds became fertile ground for the National Front when they won control of four municipalities. However, it is important to keep in mind that populist parties tend to characterize themselves as the parties of "the people" against "the establishment." For those who are against the status quo, the far right offers an alternative, particularly for those who are concerned about the cultural shifts that are occurring in countries where immigration has grown. An example of these shifts is the increase in grocery stores in France run by Muslims that only sell halal foods that are permitted under Islamic law. In the town of Calais, where residents were concerned about a nearby migrant camp, an August 2016 poll found that the former communist stronghold, once led by a popular communist mayor, had seen a 20 percent increase in support for the Rassemblement (McGuinness 2016).

Many authors have noted that the main impact of the rise of the radical right has been on the fortunes of mainstream left-wing parties. For example, Kai Arzheimer finds that, "[a]fter World War II, parties and movements of the extreme right were most closely associated with the petty bourgeoisie. Over the last three decades, however, the propensity of workers to vote for the extreme right has risen significantly. This 'proletarisation' is the result of the interplay between a long-term dealignment process and increasing worries among the European working classes about the immigration of cheap labour" (Arzheimer 2012, 89).

In the same volume as Arzheimer, Gougou and Mayer note, "As in other democracies, the class cleavage has lost its grip, manual workers having turned away from the left and given a growing support to the radical right represented by the Front National. . . . Economically, workers still lean toward the left. But cross-cutting cultural issues (immigration, identity, Islam), rooted in educational differences, have become more important, so that ethnocentric cultural values are prevailing over redistributive economic values" (2012, 167).

Across Europe mainstream left parties have been in retreat over the last twenty years. Far-right populism has been quietly ascendant since the 1990s, but since the 2016 Brexit vote, the election of Donald Trump in the US, and the candidacy of

Marine Le Pen for the French presidency, populism has dominated the media spotlight. Some have faulted the left for not focusing on the white working-class voters who have been attracted to these anti-immigrant, anti-globalization parties and candidates. But others have argued that ignoring or deriding diversity is not the answer; countries are multiracial and multiethnic, and parties need to—and ought to—attract a broad spectrum of voters to win elections and govern responsibly.

The accommodation of far-right discourses by center-right parties potentially leaves an opening for mainstream left parties. Pursuing policies like a guaranteed minimum income and regulating corporations to avoid the sharp disparities between workers and high-level managers would deal with some aspects of the growing inequality issue. In addition, strengthening unions would give workers more leverage to negotiate for better wages and benefits. This would mean putting a stop to policies that undermine unions and discourage employees from starting or joining unions. It will take some work for politicians and union leaders to get past the barriers that have led to the decline in union membership, but there is potential support for organizing low-wage workers, even in the US. Commonsense immigration policies, like increasing the number of visas available for needed workers rather than relying on undocumented workers, would go a long way to improving the situation for both immigrant and native low-wage workers. Countries need to reaffirm their commitment to refugees but also acknowledge potential impacts and mitigate them with appropriate support, such as language and job training, to ease the transition into a new society.

Social democratic parties have been losing white working-class voters, who see declining prospects for themselves and their children, to right-wing populists. Populist politicians scapegoat migrants and ethnic minorities as the cause of the decline, rather than the decline in manufacturing and other industries. In contrast, ethnic minority working-class voters have not responded positively to these populist appeals. According to John Judis, "Rightwing populists champion the people against an elite that they accuse of favoring a third group, which can consist, for instance, of immigrants, Islamists, or African American militants. Rightwing populism is triadic: It looks upward, but also down upon an out group" (Judis 2016, 10).

Support for populist politicians is not inherent to having a large immigrant population. The Dutch political scientist Cas Mudde has noted that "[r]ising numbers of immigrants do not automatically translate into increasing extremism in a country; immigration has to be translated into a political issue, which has not happened everywhere" (2012, 31). In general, right-wing politicians cast immigrants as foreign objects within the body politic and blame them for a litany of social ills, including high rates of crime and unemployment. One can argue that the popularity of the radical right, along with an increase in terror attacks, also led many countries to abandon more multicultural approaches to immigrant and ethnic minority communities. However, multiculturalism and immigrant integration can be approached in many ways. Perhaps one of the more important factors in integration is an acknowledgement of discrimination and measures to address access to the workforce, fair housing, and equal

opportunities more generally. Certainly, the activists who pursued the passage of the European Union's Racial Equality Directive in the 1990s felt that this was an important step in the development of equal rights.

From Restricting Immigration to Antidiscrimination Policy

In general, the literature on radical right parties has tended to focus on their electoral successes, but these parties have also had an impact on policy. With the rise of anti-immigrant parties and increases in popular anti-immigrant sentiment, government leaders increased their emphasis on immigration control. Whether that led to decreases in immigration is debated, but certainly the salience of the issues increased (Givens and Luedtke 2004), which led to more restrictive policies. However, the rise of the radical right is not only linked to restrictive immigration control policies but also to measures that were designed to improve the situation for immigrants and ethnic minorities who had already settled in European countries. A clear example of this is the EU's Racial Equality Directive (RED), which required European countries to enact laws that prohibit racial discrimination comparable to what is commonly known in the United States as "civil rights" legislation.

Immigrant integration is seen as a very important issue in Europe. Already in the mid-1960s, Erik Bleich suggests, British political elites sought to "defuse" the race issue, stoked by Conservative MP Enoch Powell among others, "by pursuing Parliamentary consensus over an antidiscrimination law" (2003, 49). Since the early 2000s, most European countries have examined how they have integrated immigrants in the past, and how they might change their policies to avoid some of the problems exhibited in immigrant and minority communities that often lead to disaffection. Immigrants, particularly noncitizens, tend to face higher levels of unemployment than the general population, as well as exclusion from many aspects of society. Discrimination and issues of racism, including the rise of anti-immigrant radical right parties, have become critical issues. The EU's RED was largely driven by calls for greater "social cohesion and solidarity," in addition to being a political response to the far-right Austrian Freedom Party's entry into government in 2000. Racial discrimination is addressed by RED in the areas of social protection, housing, education, and associations, as well as in employment (Givens and Evans Case 2014). More recently, immigrants have formed new organizations in the social and political spheres to advocate for themselves, with the support of government and EU institutions.

Due to the focus on immigration control and a perceived lack of immigrant integration, the implementation of RED has been uneven at best. All EU member states have transposed RED into national law and created the equality bodies that were required by the legislation. However, the impact of the 2008 fiscal crisis and the dominance of conversative governments have led to a lack of support for these bodies. In a 2008 survey by the EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA), the agency found that 57 percent of immigrants and ethnic minorities were unaware of the existence

of antidiscrimination legislation and 82 percent of those who were discriminated against did not report it (FRA 2010). Despite the passage of RED, Europe still needs to develop an environment where ethnic minorities are more aware of the resources available to them to deal with discrimination. The 2020 Black Lives Matter protests across Europe after the murder of George Floyd in the US were an indicator of the level of frustration that remains in terms of racism and immigrant integration in Europe. Growing immigrant communities will eventually play a greater role in the politics of these countries, but in the near term, it is likely that protests will have limited impact.

Immigration has had a high degree of salience since the fiscal crisis of 2008–2009, and that, combined with a series of terror attacks in Europe, has fueled anti-Islam sentiment. In general, the EU experiences a flow of 1–2 million legal immigrants per year, which is similar to the flows of legal migrants into the US. More recently, war and unrest in Africa and the Middle East have led to a very significant increase of refugee flows. For example, from 2014 to 2015 over a million refugees entered Germany alone. However, the overall number of foreign-born residents in Germany has been consistent at around eleven million people since 2005; France has seven million and the UK has gone from around six million in 2006 to nearly nine million in 2015, many of whom are also refugees.

In Germany, the media reported that 3,500 far-right attacks on refugees and refugee homes were carried out in 2016, leaving hundreds injured. As Mudde has noted, "Both verbal and physical violence have exploded in the wake of the 'refugee crisis,' leading to insults and violence against both 'aliens' and 'natives' who are considered supportive of them" (2019, 20.) In the wake of these attacks, Alternative for Germany (AfD), won 13 percent of the vote in the 2017 German parliamentary elections. The party went from being Euroskeptic, calling for a return to Germany's national currency, the deutsche mark, to an anti-immigrant party, calling for the detention and deportation of immigrants. They have capitalized on growing anxiety that immigrants—especially Muslim immigrants—could fundamentally change German society. The refugee flows from Syria and other parts of the Middle East and Africa have been a challenge for Europe, as have the growing populations of ethnic minorities.

Mainstream right politicians have not been supportive of antidiscrimination policy and have rather tried to use the failure of integration as a way to appeal to anti-immigrant voters. In October 2010, German chancellor Angela Merkel declared that "multiculturalism had failed utterly" in Germany, blaming social unrest on immigrants who were unable to assimilate into German society. Of course, it was not clear what she meant by multiculturalism in this context, given that Germany had few policies one could consider "multicultural." In a seemingly coordinated effort by conservative politicians, both Nicolas Sarkozy and David Cameron would also declare multiculturalism a failure in 2010. Many in France were confused by Sarkozy's declaration, since France had never really pursued a policy of multiculturalism. These politicians were concerned about the increasing appeal of the radical right and hoped to undermine their support by taking

tough positions on immigrant integration and appealing to voters who were beginning to sour on the broader project of European integration.

The aftermath of terror attacks in 2007 led to new challenges around the idea of multiculturalism in Britain. Also, as one study points out, Britain's history of empire is another hurdle to developing a coherent approach to multiculturalism.

> [H]ere lies the bitter irony of British multiculturalism: all of the civic, assimilative signifiers upon which a multicultural British or for that matter English national identity could potentially draw from the existing historical-cultural matrix of myths and symbols are deeply implicated in the project of empire—a political project that is not only past but conceptually discredited; associated, and not unjustly either, with hierarchy and racism. (Asari, Halikiopoulou, and Mock 2008)

As we now know, the lead-up to Brexit included a push for more immigration control and the claim that voters were no longer motivated by support for multiculturalism. Electoral competition played a key role in a rightward shift across Europe.

As another example, Chancellor Merkel had to take a harder line on immigration and refugees due to the positions taken by her coalition partner, the Bavarian Christian Social Union (CSU), and eventually the success of the AfD party in 2017. The September 2022 Italian election sent a strong message on immigration. The new right-wing government under Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, whose political career started in the Italian Social Movement, a direct descendant of Benito Mussolini's Fascist Party, implemented new policies to block humanitarian rescue vessels from docking at Italian ports. As noted in a postelection article in the *Washington Post,* "immigration still strikes a chord with many right-leaning voters in Italy, who feel their country has received scant help from Europe in handling the burden of accommodating and integrating new arrivals. A surge of asylum seekers and refugees in 2015 and 2016 turned migration for several years into a political touchstone and helped spark a nationalist movement across Europe" (Harlan and Pitrelli 2022).

Governments that once condemned the radical right discourses of the Austrian Freedom Party have now seen those discourses move into the mainstream. But it is not only the discourses that matter, it is changing norms that have had a negative impact on the acceptance of people from different cultures and religions. It will be difficult to find support for the kinds of antidiscrimination policy that would help with the process of integration, ensuring that racial and ethnic minorities have access to jobs, housing, and educational opportunities. These approaches will need to find support if there is hope for the equality that is expected in a modern democracy. Calling for more immigration control continues to be a winning electoral strategy, and there seems to be less appetite for focusing on integration, but the need for labor and social cohesion will continue to test the strategies of more pragmatic politicians.

Conclusion

Herbert Kitschelt writes, "Like peasant, Christian, and social democratic parties before them, radical right parties may eventually face the transformation or disappearance of their core electoral constituencies. The strategic maneuvering of skilled partisan leaders with new programmatic appeals and favorable strategic configurations in the system of party competition created by the moves of their competitors may postpone the decline of radical right parties at that point" (Kitschelt 2018, 189). As the radical right has merged into mainstream right-wing politics, we have not yet seen leaders who are willing to push their parties in a less divisive direction.

One could argue that the pandering to intolerance by mainstream right parties is poisoning community relations in exchange for short-term political gains. The conservative politician and former UK prime minister Theresa May thought that the solution to the challenges facing her country was to turn inward, proposing new restrictions on immigration in the Brexit process, while over 3 million EU migrants had only recently won a court case allowing them to stay in the country (Geiger 2023). This has left a toxic legacy that is still being defined under the UK's Conservative governments of the last few years. Meanwhile, in France, President Macron, in advance of the 2022 presidential election, enflamed the culture wars by claiming that higher education in France is succumbing to the American fashion of identity politics (Onishi 2021).

Politics is an ever-evolving landscape, and it is easy to be pessimistic about the prospects for democracy as illiberal politicians continue to make gains, not only in Europe but in the US. One can hope that right-wing politicians will maintain a connection to democracy, and that voters will support parties that clearly are in alignment with democratic norms. Only time will tell if the discourses revert to supporting democratic norms and if those norms will be supported by voters. In the meantime, researchers need to continue their quantitative and qualitative analyses as we try to understand and explain the political, economic, and social impacts that are driving voter behavior and the appeals made by political parties.

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ESSAY

Trumpism's Paleoconservative Roots and Dealignment

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The 2016 and 2020 presidential elections did more than simply usher Donald Trump into and out of the presidency. The election results signaled political dealignment. Long in the making, 2016 catalyzed, and the 2018/2022 midterms and 2020 election confirmed, startling alterations in the two major party's electoral coalitions. Under Trump's leadership, an amalgam of right-wing populist style and paleoconservative policy triumphed as the GOP's brand. Likewise, Hillary Clinton's and Joe Biden's campaigns signaled the enduring weaknesses of the McGovern-cum-Obama coalition. The age of Reagan might be done, but dealignment means neither party can coalesce an enduring majority.

In dealignment, wide swaths of the electorate divorce themselves from previous partisan affiliations and remain "unaffiliated." Indeed, Gallup polls reveal that the percentage of Americans identifying themselves as political independents, 43 percent, has reached an all-time high.[1] In an environment of dealignment, no party can establish an enduring majority, which prompts political gridlock that only further alienates an already disaffected electorate. The road to dealignment began in the GOP's and Democrat's intraparty squabbles and shifting coalitions. Donald Trump's surprising success in the 2016 GOP primaries signaled the return of the Eisenhower-Taft feud within conservatism. In 1952, Dwight Eisenhower defeated Robert Taft for the Republican nomination. In so doing, moderates defeated the Old Right and defined the GOP through the mid-1970s. Thereafter, the New Right defeated the moderates and defined Reagan-era conservativism until Trump. But this brand of Reagan conservatism antagonized a significant element of the Old Right and its intellectual progeny, the self-dubbed paleoconservatives. Starting in the mid-1980s, paleoconservatives revolted and pushed for a return to "first principles." Shoved to the margins in the 1990s, paleocon

1 Jeffrey Jones, "Democratic, Republican Identification Near Historical Lows," *Gallup*, January 11, 2016, https://news.gallup.com/poll/188096/democratic-republican-identification-near-historical-lows.aspx; "Party Affiliation," *Gallup*, accessed July 26, 2022, https://news.gallup.com/poll/15370/party-affiliation.aspx.

issues—noninterventionism, immigration, and free trade—were made relevant again in the 2000s by the Iraq War, the Great Recession, and shifting demographics.

Out of dumb luck, political brilliance, or, more likely, a combination of both, Donald Trump sensed the paleoconservative revival. In his 2016 campaign, he took up their banner on foreign policy, immigration, and trade. Upsetting decades of conservative orthodoxy, the turnabout produced significant churn in the GOP coalition. Cementing the Republicans as the party of big business, working-class whites, religious conservatives, and libertarians, the ex-president has pushed college-educated women, well-to-do suburbanites, and well-educated millennials to the Democrats. When Trump is on the ballot, working-class whites vote GOP and educated suburbanites flock to Democrats. Both factions have broken from their traditional partisan loyalties without attaching themselves to a new coalition. The topsy-turvey results of recent elections demonstrate the roiling nature of dealignment.

Unlike the Republicans, the Democratic Party's coalition has been evolving in plain view. Spawned by the party's civil war of the 1960s, the so-called McGovern coalition emerged in the early 1970s. Consisting of women, young voters, racial minorities, the poor, a smattering of economically populist white workers, and white middle-class liberals, the coalition was supposed to create an enduring liberal majority. In a forty-year stretch, from 1972 to 2004, this coalition, however, failed to muster 50 percent for a Democratic presidential candidate. Even worse, four times, in 1972, 1980, 1984, and 1992, the Democratic standard-bearer failed to garner even 45 percent of the vote. By 2008, demographic change, the Iraq catastrophe, and an economic cataclysm enabled an unusually gifted candidate, Barack Obama, to win 53 percent of the vote. Dubbed the Obama coalition, the mature, erstwhile McGovern coalition, observers surmised, would dominate American politics for years to come. But the 2010 and 2014 midterms along with the performance of the Clinton and Biden campaigns in 2016 and 2020 revealed the McGovern-cum-Obama coalition's fault lines and structural weaknesses.

Paleoconservativism

Donald Trump is not sui generis. Though the ex-president's bombast and comb-over pompadour are singular, his current policies, if not his politics, have definite roots. The ex-president's personal beliefs are unknowable. The ultimate political opportunist, the one-time Democrat seems to have few fixed political principles. But the set of conservative policies and bromides he rode to the GOP nomination and presidency possess a clear paleoconservative lineage.

Contemporary paleoconservativism is a direct descendant of the traditionalist Old Right with a "countercultural" twist.[2] Antimodern at their core, Old Right

2 Joseph Scotchie, *Revolt from the Heartland: The Struggle for an Authentic American Conservatism* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 14; Chris Woltermann, "What is Paleo-Conservatism?," *Telos* 97 (1993): 13.

traditionalists looked to a feudal past for cultural inspiration and revival. To them, free societies depended upon a virtuous citizenry that could only be maintained by an "organic" social order governed by "institutional authority" with a ballast of "historical continuity."[3] Since the 1930s, traditionalists have warned against the corrupting forces of the New Deal state, cosmopolitanism, and corporate economies. Nearly a century hence, paleocons see these heresies as so institutionalized that they seek a radical break with the present.[4] Instead of "conserving" the present, paleocon thought leaders seek to destroy it and return to an idealized past.

A twice-divorced casino kingpin is America's most unlikely paleocon. Ideologically, the former president is a blank slate. But Trump's fetish for brawny mass industry, contempt for cosmopolitan ideals, and search-and-destroy mentality result in paleo-friendly immigration, trade, and foreign policies. Beyond policy, Mar-a-Lago is no Bedford Falls, but Trump's constellation of grudges and prejudices fits the paleoconservative tear-it-all-down temper.

The former president and paleoconservative thinkers seek to eradicate the institutions and norms of the present. The roots of Trump's personal nihilism are either unknowable or best left to psychologists. But in smashing the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), abandoning the Paris Climate Accord and the Iranian nuclear deal, and spawning an insurrection, we see a "creative-destructive" trend. The paleoconservatives are transparent about their creative-destructive goals. Sam Francis, a godfather of the movement, declared their aim is to demolish the "major foundations, the media, the schools, the universities, big business, and most of the system of organized culture."[5] Upon these ashes, they seek to rebuild a very different world. In this ideological framework, the ex-president's actions make logical sense.

The Old Right and Eisenhower's Middle Way

Birthed by reaction against the Progressive Movement, the Old Right was cemented by opposition to Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal. In America's "French Revolution," from which all later apostasies flowed, the Old Right saw Progressivism, and especially the New Deal, as a betrayal of the liberal traditions of Western civilization.[6] The Old Right viewed FDR's and Harry Truman's wartime and postwar policies as heresy. Noninterventionists throughout the 1930s, conservatives backed the

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3 Scotchie, *Revolt from the Heartland*, 19–20; Jean-Francois Drolet and Michael C. Williams, "America First: Paleo-Conservatism and the Ideological Struggle for the American Right," *Journal of Political Ideologies* 25, no. 1 (2019): 5.

4 Scotchie, *Revolt from the Heartland*, 14.

5 Drolet and Williams, "America First," 7.

6 Gordon Lloyd and David Davenport, *The New Deal & Modern American Conservatism: A Defining Rivalry* (Palo Alto, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2014), 2–3, 11.

war effort following Pearl Harbor, but many Old Rightists saw the postwar treaties, collective security arrangements, and free trade pacts as abominations. The war, however, changed some conservatives who split with their Old Right brethren on foreign policy. Symbolized by Michigan Senator Arthur Vandenberg, the war transformed many noninterventionists into internationalists. The Old Right, symbolized by Mr. Republican, Robert Taft, maintained a prewar, noninterventionist worldview. Unfortunately for Taft, the political tides were moving against him.

Seen as cranks, reactionaries, and elitists, the Old Right was adrift and politically immaterial throughout the Roosevelt and early post–World War II era.[7] During the early postwar era, conservatism's "traditionalist wing" slowly coalesced.[8] In the meantime, it was Dwight Eisenhower who rescued the GOP from the Old Right and total irrelevance. During his presidency, he pushed the Old Right to the party's margins.[9] A champion of balanced budgets, Ike nevertheless proffered a restrained form of federal activism that built infrastructure and provided tangible economic benefits to "the little fellow."[10] His "middle way" between the Old Right and New/Fair Deal liberals meant the GOP endorsed an internationalist foreign policy and a safety net achieved within strategic and fiscal discipline.[11]

The Old Right's eclipse was a temporary byproduct of Eisenhower's unprecedented personal popularity. In ten consecutive Gallup polls, from 1951 to 1960, Americans named Ike their most "admired man." Across the globe, he earned the same honor from 1951 to 1955.[12] Through his enormous appeal, he attempted to cast the GOP in the middle-way image. But middle-way Republicanism never went beyond the White House. Despite his personal popularity, Republicans lost sixty-eight House and seventeen Senate seats during his presidency. Never close to Vice President Richard Nixon, Eisenhower failed to groom a successor, or a cadre of middle-way up-and-comers.[13]

Once Eisenhower left office, conservatives battled moderate Republicans for control over the GOP. Despite Goldwater's landslide defeat in 1964, conservatives slowly gained power. To be sure, Richard Nixon largely governed as a moderate Republican. But Watergate and the Jimmy Carter presidency boosted conservatives into ascendance

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7 Michael Bowen, *The Roots of Modern Conservatism: Dewey, Taft, and the Battle for Soul of the Republican Party* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 7.

8 George Nash, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America* (New York: Basic Books, 1976), 36.

9 William Hitchcock, *The Age of Eisenhower: America and the World in the 1950s* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2018), 259.

10 Hitchcock, 259.

11 Bowen, *Roots of Modern Conservatism*, 199.

12 Hitchcock, *Age of Eisenhower*, 244

13 Bowen, *Roots of Modern Conservatism*, 198–201.

within the GOP. By the mid-1970s, conservative versus liberal defined American politics. Despite Ike's and Nixon's best efforts, the Republican Party was fated to become the organizational vehicle for anti–New Deal conservatism.

The New Right, Neoconservatism, and a Conservative Majority

The Old Right's eclipse allowed for the postwar conservativism movement's birth. During the 1980s, Ronald Reagan enabled this new breed of conservative activists to control the GOP and conservatism to become the nation's majority creed. But the conservative movement always contained schisms. The three-legged intellectual stool upon which it stood was symbolized by a trio of urtexts. Friederick Hayek's *Road to Serfdom* (1944), Whittaker Chambers's *Witness* (1952), and Russell Kirk's *The Conservative Mind* (1953) represented the libertarian, anticommunist, and traditionalist wings of the movement.[14]

The specter of Soviet advance and internal subversion caused conservatives to embrace the interventionist bugaboos of the Cold War. Wary of modernity's large-scale capitalism, traditionalists had looked to an agrarian past in which economies were local and the world less urbane. But the libertarian's argument that free markets promoted traditionalist virtue brought the latter's proponents into an accord on big business and free trade.[15] Under the aegis of William F. Buckley and the *National Review,* the separate strands were welded into a "broad conservative movement that would uphold the principles of minimal government and the worth of the individual while recognizing the moral order and the authority of God and truth."[16] Before Reagan and the 1980s, a united conservative movement nevertheless encountered the New Deal order, in which they were a distinct minority. In 1964, their chosen candidate, Barry Goldwater, was steamrolled by Lyndon Johnson.[17] Vietnam and domestic unrest, however, punctured the New Deal coalition and gave conservatives an opportunity.[18]

The mid-1970s were the turning point for conservatives. Civil rights, Vietnam, and controversial social issues had spawned a backlash that gave conservatives the electoral heft to seize the GOP and White House. Led by activists Paul Weyrich, Richard Viguerie, and others, they used social issues like homosexuality, school prayer, the Equal Rights Amendment, and (especially) abortion to recruit millions into the so-called New

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14 Susanna Klingenstein, "It's Splendid When the Town Whore Gets Religion and Joins the Church: The Rise of Jewish Neoconservatives as Observed by Paleoconservatives in the 1980s," *Shofar* 21, no. 3 (Spring 2003): 90.

15 Julian Zelizer, "Rethinking the History of American Conservatism," *Reviews in American History* 38, no. 2 (June 2010): 368.

16 Donald Critchlow, *The Conservative Ascendancy: How the Republican Right Rose to Prominence in Modern America*, (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2011), 22–23.

17 Critchlow, 68.

18 Critchlow, 103.

Right.[19] The resulting political battles, or culture wars, convinced millions of evangelicals and Catholics, in the words of David Farber, that "they were conservatives."[20]

Like the New Right, neoconservatism was also born during the 1970s. Antagonized by the Democratic Party's leftward shift on culture and the welfare state, and its allegedly dovish foreign policy, a faction of once liberal intellectuals formed the neoconservative movement. They battled the New Left who had moved the Democratic Party away from the blue-collar working class and toward issues of concern to women, minorities, and college-educated voters.[21] After losing this political brawl, many moved right as neoconservatives and eventually joined the GOP.

In 1980, Ronald Reagan brought traditionalists, libertarians, anticommunists, the New Right, and neoconservatives into an enduring coalition.[22] A master communicator, Reagan infused sunny optimism into the Old Right's antistatism and the New Right's culture wars. He catalyzed an electoral realignment, killed the New Deal order, and transformed the GOP into the majority party. But it was during the Reagan presidency that paleoconservatives slowly became aware of their alienation from the newfangled conservativism.

The Neoconservative-Paleoconservative War

Alienated from postwar America's cultural and economic life, traditionalists recoil from market capitalism and mass democracy. Seeking a return to an agrarian society in which an "aristocracy rule[d] over a traditional culture," they seek an elite-led, hierarchical, even neo-feudal world.[23] For mainstream conservatives, culture wars could move the political needle, build New Right majorities, and sometimes bring policy change. But to traditionalists, culture wars transcended transactional politics. To traditionalists, culture wars amounted to an existential battle for civilizational survival. As one faction of the conservative minority during the New Deal order, traditionalists' deviance from mainstream conservative norms loomed small. Once conservatives seized power, these contrasts were sharpened and eventually metastasized.

Reagan's election gave traditionalists an uncustomary dose of optimism. They looked to it as their long-awaited opportunity to finally wield power. Reality dashed these expectations, generated the paleoconservative rift, and spawned Trumpism's contemporary roots. In sum, paleoconservatism emerged from the traditionalists who

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19 Thomas Fleming and Paul Gottfried, *The Conservative Movement* (Woodbridge, CT: Twayne Publishers, 1988), 79–82.

20 David Farber, *The Rise and Fall of American Conservatism: A Short History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 156; Fleming and Gottfried, *Conservative Movement*, 84.

21 Critchlow, *Conservative Ascendancy*, 113–16.

22 Critchlow, 184.

23 Klingenstein, "It's Splendid," 90.

blamed neoconservatives for Reagan's apostasies. The Old Right provided Reagan an antistatist, anti-immigrant, and anticommunist philosophy. The New Right's foot soldiers helped boost him to office. But it was the neoconservatives who gave Reagan, and by extension the conservative movement, intellectual panache. Daniel Bell, Midge Decter, James Q. Wilson, Seymour Lipset, Nathan Glazer, Jeanne Kirkpatrick, and Ben Wattenberg, among others, employed data and empirical arguments to move old conservative shibboleths toward mainstream acceptance.[24]

As the neoconservative star rose, traditionalists quickly learned their place was not in mainstream conservatism. Eager for the spoils of Reagan's 1980 victory, they pushed for one of their own to head the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). In early 1981, their choice, M. E. Bradford, was seemingly on a glide path to head the institution.[25] Using their media savvy and influential journals, neocons scuttled Bradford's nomination by using his scathing critiques of Abraham Lincoln, opposition to the 1964 Civil Rights Act, and support for George Wallace's presidential campaigns against him.[26] Facing conflicts over the budget and foreign policy, Reagan smartly avoided a bruising fight over a relatively measly federal post. Given an opening, the neocons pushed for one of their own, William Bennett, to fill the post. Neocons would perform this act repeatedly in the Reagan era.

Locked out of prominent White House positions, traditionalists watched helplessly as neocons inserted themselves into the decision-making loop and made their worldview synonymous with Reaganism. Zealous antagonism toward the USSR was their primary point of agreement. Due to political exigencies, Reagan and neocons found additional areas of convergence on social welfare spending. A pragmatic ideologue, Reagan encountered an entrenched bias for the welfare state in the mass media and electorate. In addition to Democratic control of the House, GOP Senate moderates feared cuts to social welfare spending could cause political pain. Rather than slashing the welfare state, the president changed the national discourse vis-à-vis "big government." Voters agreed with Reagan's view that big government loomed as a nefarious threat. Nevertheless, they objected to cuts to big-ticket social welfare programs and grew to accept the dissonance of rhetorical small-government conservatism and real-life federal spending. Neoconservatives within and outside the administration urged Reagan to accept voter restraints on his vision. Conceding to the political reality that Americans had become "ideologically conservative but operationally liberal," Reagan inveighed

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24 Fleming and Gottfried, *Conservative Movement*, 64–65.

25 Carla Hall, "The Amazing Endowment Scramble," *Washington Post*, December 13, 1981, https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/lifestyle/style/1981/12/13/the-amazing-endowment-scramble/b16738d2-5d6b-4260-aeda-a7e435c455e9/.

26 Klingenstein, "It's Splendid," 88.

against liberal programs even as he signed legislation funding them.[27] Politically potent but intellectually inconsistent, this element became the central domestic achievement of the Reagan Revolution.[28] Traditionalists blamed the neocons for this treacherous subversion.

The combination of political realities and neoconservative political acumen meant a restrained welfare state was the de facto definition of Reagan's domestic conservativism.[29] Rhetorically, Reagan castigated the welfare state. But substantively, Reaganism meant, in the words of Bill Kristol, a "promise to get trim government and lower taxes," not a repeal of the New Deal or prosecution of culture wars.[30] With regards to the traditionalists' cherished culture wars, Reagan, as he did with social welfare spending, offered rhetorical support but largely avoided political battles over school prayer and abortion.[31] In addition to the welfare state and culture wars were immigration and foreign policy. The neoconservative embrace of mass immigration and an interventionist, democracy-promoting foreign policy fundamentally jibed with Reagan's ebullient sense of the American mission.[32]

To traditionalists, a conservative White House should have meant a smaller welfare state, vigorously prosecuted culture wars, and a restrained foreign policy. Instead, Reagan offered rhetoric on culture and statism and an interventionist foreign policy modeled after Truman more than Taft. Feeling betrayed and blaming the neocons for the turnabout, Clyde Wilson, a key traditionalists thinker, inveighed, "Our estate has been taken over by an imposter, just as we were about to inherit."[33] Newcomers to the political right, neocons, in the traditionalist's eyes, were ignorant of conservatism's timeless theological and philosophical traditions. Terming them "modernists" who affirmed humanity's ability to shape and improve their world, traditionalists charged neocons with conservative heresy. To one paleocon thinker, George Panichas, the theology of conservatism was being "sacrificed to the new god and the new morality of modernity."[34] Traditionalists came to see that a conservative majority had come at the cost of the conservative soul.

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27 Elizabeth Popp and Thomas J. Rudolph, "A Tale of Two Ideologies: Explaining Public Support for Economic Interventions," *The Journal of Politics* 73, no. 3 (July 2011): 810.

28 Scotchie, *Revolt from the Heartland*, 43.

29 Fleming and Gottfried, *Conservative Movement*, 64–67.

30 Fleming and Gottfried, 67.

31 Scotchie, *Revolt from the Heartland*, 43.

32 Klingenstein, "It's Splendid," 87.

33 Klingenstein, 92; Scotchie, *Revolt from the Heartland*, 43.

34 Hans Vorlander, "Liberalism," in *A Companion to 20th-Century America*, ed. Stephen Whitfield (New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 2007), 475.

Paleoconservativism Is Born

Thomas Fleming and Paul Gottfried are credited with coining the term *paleoconservative* in the mid-1980s.[35] Venting their ire at neocons, they launched a concerted attack to reclaim the conservative mainstream. One of their initial public broadsides occurred at the Philadelphia Society's 1986 conference. Chaired by the almost–NEH head, M. E. Bradford, and structured around the "neoconservative" theme, the conference was little more than a paleocon quinceañera. University of Michigan historian Stephen Tonsor, a leading paleoconservative thinker, best expressed the conference's stance on their rival. He said of the leftists-cum-conservative thought leaders: "It is splendid when the town whore gets religion and joins the church. Now and then she made a good choir director but when she begins to tell the minister what he ought to say in his Sunday sermons, matters have been carried too far."[36] Neoconservatives might be part of the Reagan coalition, but for paleocons, these newly minted conservatives remained junior coalition partners. And with that an intellectual war within the right was launched.

In conjunction with the Philadelphia Society conference was *The Intercollegiate Review's* 1986 spring issue. Dedicated to the "State of Conservatism," this issue from the flagship publication of the Intercollegiate Studies Institute (the nation's oldest conservative student organization) termed neocons "interlopers" who were unconcerned with big ideas, "first principles," and "permanent things."[37] To traditionalists, a "policy intellectual" was little more than a political hack. Traditionalist icon Russell Kirk best expressed the movement's regard for policy intellectuals by styling "politics . . . the preoccupation of the quarter educated."[38] Two years hence, Kirk expressed his views in more barbed words. Speaking at the Heritage Foundation on the issue of the "Old Right and Neoconservativism," Kirk decried the "horde of dissenters . . . of Jewish stock," who lacked a deep conservative appreciation for the "human condition" and "civilization."[39] For those who merely sensed antisemitism in this body of thought, Tonsor left no doubt. He proclaimed conservatism's "worldview was Roman or Anglo-Catholic" in its core.[40] Apparently, neither Judaism nor Jews had a place or role in the canon of Western conservatism.

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35 Drolet and Williams, "America First," 3. As I note below, decades later, during the Obama presidency, Paul Gottfried coinvented the term "alt-right" with Richard Spencer.

36 John Judis, "Conservative Wars," *The New Republic,* August 11 and 18, 1986, 16.

37 David Hoeveler, "Conservative Intellectuals and the Reagan Ascendancy," *The History Teacher* 23, no. 3 (May 1990): 307.

38 Hoeveler, 307.

39 Klingenstein, "It's Splendid," 93.

40 Judis, "Conservative Wars," 16.

In journals and on television, neoconservatives returned the ideological fire. The brouhaha resulted in a public feud that played itself out on the streets of Manhattan. In early May 1989, a leading neocon thinker, Father Richard John Neuhaus, and his five-member staff arrived to work only to find they had been summarily fired and tossed from their New York offices. For several years, the Rockford Institute, a paleoconservative think tank, had sponsored Neuhaus's Center for Religion and Society. Neoconservative in their orientation, Neuhaus and the center clashed with the institute and its flagship journal, *Chronicles,* over the publication's "tilt toward a white European tradition."[41] In the *Chronicles* March 1989 lead editorial, the editor had termed third world immigration a threat to America's "European character." Unsettled by blood-and-soil nationalism, Neuhaus attempted to negotiate an "amicable separation" of the two entities. In the midst of talks, the Rockford Institute's board abruptly ordered the New York offices closed and its inhabitants and contents dumped into the streets.[42] The paleocon-neocon war was no longer a private affair relegated to the pages of little-read right-wing periodicals. Mainstream newspapers sniffed the juicy story and reported it.

The New Republic and *New York Times* might have covered an intellectual spat that landed Neuhaus officeless, but they avoided deeper dives into its seamier elements. Soaked in antisemitism, the paleoconservative charge against the neocons was ugly but ignored during the late 1980s. Mainstream observers probably deemed writings and speeches for obscure conferences and journals by mysterious thinkers scarcely worthy of more attention. Moreover, paleocons were dismissed as a "dying breed" and therefore disregarded by mainstream observers.[43] But paleoconservatives would not go gently into the good night. Their strident barks and sharp ideological yawps forced mainstream conservatives to act.

National Review's Joseph Sobran and media pundit Patrick Buchanan spawned a media storm that prompted paleoconservatism's banishment from mainstream conservatism. Throughout the 1980s, Sobran's *National Review* and syndicated newspaper columns had veritably dripped with antisemitic and racist venom. The paleoconservative writer termed the *New York Times* "Holocaust Update," questioned American-Jewish loyalties, and excused the history of Christian antisemitism by writing, "If Christians were sometimes hostile to Jews, that worked two ways."[44] He followed up his praise of the ferociously racist and antisemitic magazine *Instauration* by pronouncing America a "minority-ridden country" in which whites lived in constant fear of blacks.[45] The resulting controversy caused Buckley and *National Review* editors

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41 Richard Bernstein, "Magazine Dispute Reflects Rift on U.S. Right," *New York Times*, May 16, 1989.

42 Bernstein.

43 Klingenstein, "It's Splendid," 96.

44 Judis, "Conservative Wars," 16.

45 Joseph Sobran, "The Undisclosed Truth: Racism and Reality," *Victoria (TX) Advocate*, May 19, 1986, https://news.google.com/newspapers?id=U41dAAAAIBAJ&sjid=a1wNAAAAIBAJ&pg=3349%

to ban Sobran from writing about Israel and to officially dissociate themselves from his "obstinate tendentiousness."[46]

Not to be outdone, Buchanan joined the fray.[47] In his syndicated columns and from his perch on *CNN* and *PBS*, he issued a slew of antisemitic statements. In a March 1990 article, Buchanan defended a Ukrainian-American citizen accused of working at the Treblinka death camp, Ivan Demjanjuk, by employing a classic Holocaust denial canard: exaggerated death tolls.[48] One year later, he sneered about the first Gulf War: "There are only two groups that are beating the drums for war in the Middle East, the Israeli Defense Ministry and its amen corner in the United States."[49] On another program he termed Congress "Israeli-occupied territory." And in yet another venue he ignored easily identifiable prowar gentile figures, preferring to castigate four Jewish men as the secret cabal pushing for war.[50]

Sobran and Buchanan's resulting media storm finally forced the towering figure of postwar conservative thought, William Buckley, to choose a side. In 1990, he convened a "What Now?" summit to chart a post–Cold War trajectory for conservativism; conspicuously absent from the gathering were any paleoconservatives. Realizing Buckley's snub, Paul Weyrich cracked, "I suspect these people weren't there because they have made a career out of attacking too many people who were there."[51] One year later, Buckley took an even bigger step. In a remarkable forty-two-page *National Review* essay, "In Search of Anti-Semitism," he pronounced Buchanan, Sobran, and other conservative figures unfit for the post–Cold War right.[52] Soon after, Buckley ejected Sobran from the *National Review*'s editorial board. Read out of the conservative movement by Buckley, paleocons, along with communists, were seemingly relegated to the dustbin of history.

Buckley and his neoconservative allies had tried to purge the paleocons from mainstream conservatism. Unfortunately for them, the nagging issues of trade, immigration, and foreign interventionism remained salient with many conservative voters. Sensing this, Buchanan announced a quixotic primary challenge to President

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46 Judis, "Conservative Wars," 18.

47 Buchanan dubbed Sobran "perhaps the finest journalist of our generation." See "Joseph Sobran," *Crisis*, February 16, 2022, https://www.crisismagazine.com/author/jsobran.

48 Patrick Buchanan, "'Ivan the Terrible'—More Doubts," *New York Post*, March 17, 1990, https://phdn.org/archives/holocaust-history.org/~jamie/buchanan/column.shtml.

49 Klingenstein, "It's Splendid," 97.

50 Klingenstein, 97. The figures he accused were A. M. Rosenthal, Richard Perle, Charles Krauthammer, and Henry Kissinger.

51 Scotchie, *Revolt from the Heartland*, 49.

52 Klingenstein, "It's Splendid," 98.

George H. W. Bush. Fresh from the 1991 Gulf War, Bush temporarily enjoyed 90 percent approval ratings. But a lingering recession, 7 percent unemployment, and a reversal on his "no new taxes" pledge rendered the incumbent vulnerable on his right flank. Bush also encountered larger structural problems. Quite simply, he lacked Reagan's conservative bona fides and charisma and was left to pay the bill for a decade's worth of paleoconservative alienation.

Buchanan's standard stump speech castigating foreign alliances, free trade, and immigration touched a nerve on the right. Of Bush's post–Cold War foreign policy, Buchanan remarked, "We must not trade in our sovereignty for a cushioned seat at the head table of anyone's new world order."[53] Ruing trade deals and foreign aid, he promised that "[o]ur resolve is to put America First, to make America First again, and to keep America First."[54] When it came to immigration, he sounded a paleo theme, declaring that "our Western heritage is going to be handed down to future generations, not dumped onto some landfill called multiculturalism."[55]

Foreshadowing Trump's dalliances with white nationalists, Buchanan played coy with David Duke. The former Ku Klux Klan grand wizard turned Louisiana state representative had also jumped into the presidential race. Refusing to alienate Duke's supporters in the primaries, Buchanan referred to him as "that gentlemen" throughout his campaigns in the South. When asked his opinion on the former Klansman's agenda, Buchanan said, "What his [Duke's] views are, I really don't care. I have my own views and I argue from my own vantage point."[56] When it came to race, however, Duke and Buchanan sang from similar hymnals. A self-described spokesman for "Euro-Americans," Buchanan warned that liberal immigration policies were pushing America toward becoming a "third world nation."[57] As a result, many on the far right expressed support for the "two Dukes." The race-baiting rag *Instauration* proclaimed Buchanan "a clean Duke."[58]

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53 Jeff Greenfield, "Trump is Pat Buchanan with Better Timing," *Politico*, September/October 2016, https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/09/donald-trump-pat-buchanan-republican-america-first-nativist-214221.

54 "Pat Buchanan for President 1992 Campaign Brochure," 4President, accessed February 16, 2022, http://www.4president.org/brochures/1992/patbuchanan1992brochure.htm.

55 Greenfield, "Trump is Pat Buchanan."

56 E. J. Dionne, "Is Buchanan Courting Bias?," *Washington Post*, February 29, 1992, https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1992/02/29/is-buchanan-courting-bias/4753a57f-183b-4033-be38-4e2360e6aa00/; Peter Applebome, "The 1992 Campaign: Far Right; Duke's Followers to Lean Buchanan," *New York Times*, March 8, 1992, https://www.nytimes.com/1992/03/08/us/the-1992-campaign-far-right-duke-s-followers-lean-to-buchanan.html.

57 Dionne, "Is Buchanan Courting Bias?"

58 Applebome, "1992 Campaign."

Facing an incumbent president and without a scintilla of electoral experience himself, Buchanan nevertheless demonstrated surprising strength. In New Hampshire, he embarrassed Bush by taking 37 percent of the GOP primary vote.[59] The combination of recession and deindustrialization made the Granite State particularly fertile territory. When the campaign shifted to the economically robust Sunbelt, Buchanan maintained startling vigor. Taking one-third of the vote in Florida and Georgia, he captured a quarter of GOP ballots in Bush's home state of Texas. From California and Michigan to Connecticut and Colorado, he consistently took one-quarter to one-third of the Republican vote.[60] Revealing Bush's weakness and conservative schisms, Buchanan helped inspire Ross Perot's spirited third-party bid, a campaign that featured one paleoconservative bromide: opposition to NAFTA. In 1996, Buchanan ran another energetic race for the GOP nomination. In so doing, he demonstrated that paleoconservatives remained a vital, if minority, voice in the conservative ranks.

For paleoconservatives, George W. Bush's 2000 campaign and presidency marked a nadir. Running as a "compassionate conservative," Bush attempted a Clintonian triangulation on big government. Promising a muted welfare state might have played well with "soccer moms," but it remained anathema to paleocons. The post-9/11 Bush Doctrine offended them even more. Democracy promotion as an antidote to terrorism augured global interventionism on a scale that transcended Cold War levels. In many ways, Bush's domestic and foreign policies reflected the continued power of the neoconservatives within mainstream conservatism. Symbolized by Bill Kristol's *The Weekly Standard*, neocons and their intellectual progeny had effectively replaced Buckleyites and *The National Review* as the source of intellectual power on the right.

Adding insult to injury, Karl Rove, Bush's primary political adviser, devised an electoral strategy supporting mass immigration. Looking to William McKinley's 1896 election for inspiration, Rove sought the inclusion of Hispanic voters into the GOP coalition to create an enduring majority coalition. For paleoconservatives this was betrayal of the first order. To them, America represented an extension of Western civilization and was by definition a European creation. As such, Bush's policy of large-scale, non-Western immigration represented an existential threat. In a very real sense, immigration was to paleocons what anticommunism represented to the Buckleyites. It is the central organizing thesis of the creed.[61]

Looking to a neo-feudal future, paleocons seek to replicate the conditions in which the "Judeo-Christian tradition flourished."[62] To them, Christian belief is the anchor of morality. In an earlier era of weak governments and strong religious institutions,

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59 Greenfield, "Trump is Pat Buchanan."

60 Robin Toner, "Clinton Takes Florida Easily," *New York Times*, March 11, 1992.

61 Scotchie, *Revolt from the Heartland*, 63.

62 Woltermann, "What is Paleoconservatism?," 15.

the Christian virtue that eventually made democracy possible reigned. In their mind, homogeneous societies led by a natural aristocracy schooled in the Western canon inculcated the societal virtue in which "custom and comity," not government, provided order. Mass immigration was an invitation to instability and big government authoritarianism.[63] In addition to blaming the neocons for immigration apostasy, paleoconservatives also castigate libertarians for so greedily coveting cheap immigrant labor that they endorsed the policy.[64]

The return to an idealized "organic" past free from the necessity of big government is the first principle from which all paleoconservative policies flow. Opposed to the spiritually demeaning nature of crass materialism, paleoconservatives broke with libertarians and their support for uninhibited free market capitalism. To paleocons, free trade is not only an expression of neoliberalism run amok but it spawns disorder through deindustrialization and the rampant exchange of ideas and people. Finally, they ardently oppose a global foreign policy that seeks to export democracy and the American model. To them, American democracy is not replicable. It was made possible only by the "concrete particularity of American values, institutions, and ethnic-racial composition."[65] Democratic crusades demonstrate an ignorance of this reality.

Without intervening events, Bush and Rove might have very well built an enduring Republican majority. Indeed, in 2006, Bush proposed comprehensive immigration reform legislation. Intending to give illegal immigrants a path to citizenship and woo Hispanic voters, the president invoked Reagan's legacy and celebration of the immigration experience as central to the American ideal.[66] The Iraq War and Hurricane Katrina undermined Bush's political standing and a divided Republican Party killed the legislation. In 2008, the financial crash and Great Recession gave paleoconservatives the political opening they had long sought.

In the midst of the financial collapse, Bush's support for the $700 billion Troubled Assets Relief Program made many conservatives apoplectic. With approval ratings that bottomed out at 25 percent, Bush and establishment GOP foreign and domestic policies were in disrepute across the political right.[67] Indeed, the Tea Party aimed its venom at both Obama and "big government" conservatives. Adding to this was a changed media landscape. During the 1980s, neoconservative journals and Reagan's popularity kept paleocon dissent in check. The rise of talk radio in the 1990s, the internet in the early

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63 Woltermann, 19.

64 Scotchie, *Revolt from the Heartland*, 73–74.

65 Drolet and Williams, "America First," 9.

66 "Bush's Speech on Immigration," *New York Times*, May 15, 2006, https://www.nytimes.com/2006/05/15/washington/15text-bush.html.

67 "Presidential Approval Ratings George W. Bush," *Gallup,* February 16, 2022, https://news.gallup.com/poll/116500/presidential-approval-ratings-george-bush.aspx.

2000s, and social media during the Obama era created a fractured media environment that enabled new paleocon voices to emerge.

In 2002, a trio of paleocons—Buchanan, Taki Theodoracopulos, and Scott McConnell—launched *The American Conservative*. A response to Bush's "Freedom Agenda" and looming Iraq War, the magazine nevertheless had bigger aims than criticizing GOP foreign policy.[68] In addition to criticizing foreign adventurism, the magazine pushed a dogma of "self-containment" that opposed liberal immigration policies and globalized free trade. Taking direct aim at neoconservatives, whom Buchanan termed "right-wing impersonators," they sought to return conservatism to its paleo roots.[69]

In conjunction with additional opportunities to communicate ideas were the issues. In the 1990s, Pat Buchanan's warnings about global interventionism, immigration, and free trade garnered a quarter of primary votes in targeted states. By 2016, those topics had matured and gained greater saliency. The Iraq War and the seemingly endless nature of Bush's War on Terror had softened American support for an interventionist foreign policy. Though 42 percent of 2016 Republicans identified foreign policy as the nation's primary concern, the nature of their internationalism had evolved.[70] The paleocon indictment of global governance and the postwar liberal internationalist framework had gained traction. When 72 percent of 2016 Republicans expressed support for the use of "overwhelming force," they were implicitly rejecting limited wars, collective security treaties, and multilateral commitments of past decades.[71] In this way, "overwhelming force" entailed "get in, and get out," not democracy promotion and nation building. Trump's full-throated denunciations of the GOP establishment's foreign policy captured the mood of these grassroots conservatives. Rejecting global governance and hazy international commitments, Trump's "America-first" foreign policy was a return to the Old Right of the 1930s.

Trump's stance on illegal immigration was similarly an echo of Old Right roots and paleocon orthodoxy. The neoconservatives' heft and Reagan's embrace of the immigrant experience had muted conservative criticism of immigration policy. But circumstances had changed. By 2016, the number of illegal immigrants and foreign born in America made Buchanan's 1992 canard into a substantive policy concern. When Reagan's 1986

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68 Murray Polner, "Buchanan's Take-Off," *Columbia Journalism Review* 41, no. 5 (January–February 2003): 9.

69 T. A. Frank, "Welcome to the Golden Age of Conservative Magazines," *The Washington Post*, January 25, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/style/wp/2018/01/25/feature/why-conservative-magazines-are-more-important-than-ever/?noredirect=on.

70 Carroll Doherty and Samantha Smith, "5 Facts about Republicans and National Security," *Pew Research Center*, December 15, 2015, https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/12/15/5-facts-about-republicans-and-national-security.

71 Doherty and Smith.

Immigration Reform and Control Act offered illegal immigrants a path to citizenship, only 6 percent of Americans were foreign born and four million illegal immigrants resided in the United State.[72] Thirty years later, the number of illegal immigrants had tripled to twelve million and the percentage of foreign-born Americans had skyrocketed to almost 14 percent of the total population.[73] In this context, historic conservative skepticism toward mass immigration returned to the mainstream. With Jeb Bush, Marco Rubio, and Ted Cruz largely supporting immigration, Trump's condemnations gave him sole ownership of an ascendant issue.

Free trade was the final piece of the Trump-paleocon policy troika. In raw numbers, manufacturing jobs had peaked at nineteen million in 1979. But starting in the late 1970s, Rust Belt industry began shuttering plants at rates that pushed unemployment into double digits and the entire industrial Midwest into a sustained "regional depression."[74] By the 1990s vigorous economic growth temporarily revived American industry. But this was a short-lived revival. From 1999 to 2016, the nation lost 22 percent of its factories while the number of manufacturing jobs collapsed, falling from 17.2 to 11.5 million.[75]

Punctuating manufacturing's demise was the retail sector's ascent and replacement of industry as the nation's second largest sector of employment.[76] A sector rife with part-time work and low pay, retail's rise was part and parcel of a decades-long trend of stagnating wages for blue-collar workers. Adding to these economic doldrums were the economic and psychic shock waves emanating from the 2008 crash. This economic tsunami hit the white working class especially hard. The most gruesome and notable consequence of this was the spike in "deaths of despair." In a world of increasing life expectancy, America's white working class was the lone demographic across the globe to see a reverse. Dying early from suicide, drug addiction, alcohol abuse, and spiritual despair, members of the white working class were ripe for a demagogue.[77]

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72 "A Reagan Legacy: Amnesty for Illegal Immigrants," *All Things Considered*, NPR, July 4, 2010, https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=128303672; Abby Budiman, Christine Tamir, Lauren Mora, and Luis Noe-Bustamente, "Facts on U.S. Immigrants, 2018," *Pew Research Center*, August 20, 2020, https://www.pewresearch.org/hispanic/2019/06/03/facts-on-u-s-immigrants.

73 "Immigration Trends and the Immigration Debate," Bipartisan Policy Center (blog), August 14, 2017, https://bipartisanpolicy.org/report/immigration-trends-and-the-immigration-debate/.

74 Steven Weisman, "Reagan's Campaign Advisers Say He Would Face Tough Race in '84," *New York Times*, September 18, 1983; Derek Thompson, "A World Without Work," *The Atlantic*, July/August 2015, https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/07/world-without-work/395294/; Vaclav Smil, *Made in the USA: The Rise and Retreat of American Manufacturing* (Boston: MIT Press, 2013), 110.

75 Heather Long, "U.S. Has Lost 5 Million Manufacturing Jobs Since 2000," *CNN*, March 29, 2016, https://money.cnn.com/2016/03/29/news/economy/us-manufacturing-jobs/.

76 Smil, *Made in the USA*, 133.

77 David Berreby, "Deaths of Despair: Why Are So Many Americans without College Degrees Dy-

With downscale white voters an increasingly important piece of the GOP base, it is little wonder that free trade, long a Republican shibboleth, became in 2016 a hotly contested issue. Yet again, Trump, alone among all the major GOP hopefuls, occupied the protectionist lane.

From interventionism and free trade to immigration, Donald Trump had the paleoconservative lanes to himself. Riffing on Buchanan, Trump's 2016 thesis amounted to a j'accuse against bipartisan elites for betraying working-class Americans on this trio of issues. In a marked deviation from the Old Right, however, Trump promised to protect welfare state basics—at least for deserving "real Americans." Not coincidentally, a cadre of paleoconservative thinkers had already formulated an "ideological fusion" with the traditional left on the welfare state issues. According to them, the "us against them" bipartisan betrayal strategy depended upon creating group identity around common economic grievances. The Old Right's antipathy to the welfare state was supplanted by political realities. To achieve their primary political aims, paleoconservatives needed to coalesce culturally and economically populist working-class whites into their movement.[78]

In the primaries, Trump's geographic areas of strength neatly mirrored Buchanan's from 1992. Both demonstrated strength in the early and Super Tuesday primaries in the Northeast (New Hampshire and Massachusetts) and in the South (Georgia and South Carolina). Unlike Trump, Buchanan had only competed in selected contests. In this light, Buchanan's earning 22 percent of the primary vote against an incumbent president is that much more impressive. Competing everywhere, Trump earned approximately one-third of the votes in the early primary, Super Tuesday, and early March contests.[79] Political novices who possessed media savvy and espoused paleocon issues, Buchanan and Trump shared much.

Relying on paleoconservative themes and facing a divided field, Trump's early pluralities gave him the momentum to take the nomination. Winning pluralities until the April ACELA primaries,[80] he demonstrated consistent appeal to a significant minority of GOP voters. It was only after he established a significant lead that he won

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ing Prematurely?," *CQ Researcher*, January 27, 2023, https://library.cqpress.com/cqresearcher/document.php?id=cqresrre2023012700.

78 Drolet and Williams, "America First," 19.

79 "2016 Presidential Republican Primary Election Results," Atlas of US Presidential Elections, David Leip (personal website), accessed April 15, 2022, https://uselectionatlas.org/RESULTS/national.php?f=0&year=2016&elect=2; "Primary Season Concludes Without Much Drama," *Congressional Quarterly Almanac 1996*, 52nd ed., https://library.cqpress.com/cqalmanac/document.php?id=cqal96-841-24597-1091706#H2_3.

80 ACELA is the name for the Amtrack passenger train that serves the northeast corridor, which connects a series of cities stretching from Boston to Washington, DC. The ACELA Primary refers to the common primary date on which voters in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, Rhode Island, and Connecticut cast presidential primary ballots.

primary majorities. In the general election, Trump's 46.1 percent of the popular vote did exceed projections. Nate Silver, for instance, pegged Trump's vote at 44.9 percent. This was a small distinction with a huge difference. Clinton won the overall vote by three million ballots, but low Democratic turnout boosted Trump within striking distance of a political inside straight. Drawing just the right cards, he exceeded his national vote average by approximately two percentage points in Michigan (47.6 percent), Pennsylvania (48.8 percent), and Wisconsin (47.9 percent). In so doing, he eked out narrow wins in each and took the White House via the Electoral College.[81]

Paleocons, the Obama Coalition, and Dealignment

Trump cannily used paleoconservative bromides to win the nomination and presidency. But his candidacy led to further political dealignment, not a realignment. Indeed, the former president won due to his opponent's weakness not his strengths. This reality bodes poorly for his nascent GOP coalition. First, Clinton garnered 4.4 million fewer votes, or 3.5 percent fewer overall votes, than Barack Obama in 2012.[82] Most of these 4.4 million voters did not switch to Trump. The majority of these voters simply stayed home. Unfortunately for Clinton the most noticeable decline was in the African American vote. In Michigan, a state Clinton lost by 100,000 votes, 75,000 mostly black Detroiters stayed home. In Wisconsin, Trump replicated Mitt Romney's 2012 vote total. Unfortunately for Clinton, 230,000 fewer Badger State voters turned out. Trump got the Romney voters. Clinton could not woo enough Obama voters to vote. She lost Wisconsin by 30,000 ballots.[83]

Declines in voter turnout do not wholly explain Clinton's loss. A second rationale for Clinton's failure was working-class whites who voted for Trump. Nationally, 9 percent of 2012 Obama voters cast ballots for Trump. The overwhelmingly majority of these voters were working-class whites.[84] According to one analyst, almost one in four of Obama's 2012 white working-class supporters defected in 2016. They supported Mr. Trump or a third-party candidate.[85] Pennsylvania, a relatively competitive state

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81 Nate Silver, "The Real Story of 2016," *FiveThirtyEight,* January 19, 2017, https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/the-real-story-of-2016/.

82 Philip Bump, "4.4 Million 2012 Obama Voters Stayed Home in 2016—More than One-Third of Them Black," *Washington Post*, March 12, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/politics/wp/2018/03/12/4-4-million-2012-obama-voters-stayed-home-in-2016-more-than-a-third-of-them-black/.

83 Silver, "The Real Story of 2016"; Malia Jones, "How and Where Trump Won Wisconsin in 2016," *UW Applied Population Lab*, November 21, 2016, https://apl.wisc.edu/shared/tad/how-and-where-trump.

84 Bump, "4.4 Million."

85 Nate Cohn, "A 2016 Review: Turnout Wasn't the Driver for Clinton's Defeat," *New York Times*, March 28, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/28/upshot/a-2016-review-turnout-wasnt-the-driver-of-clintons-defeat.html.

that Democrats had held since 1988, was ground zero for this phenomenon. Clinton's 44,000 vote deficit there was powered by a weakness with the state's downscale white voters. In Pennsylvania, working-class white support for Trump and, to a lesser degree, depressed black turnout in Philadelphia spelled the difference.[86] Trump squeaked out an improbable victory by the thinnest of margins, a feat that was not likely to be repeated, as revealed by 2020.

Adding to the statistical improbability is the history that aided Trump. Since Andrew Jackson, no two-term Democratic president has passed the White House on to a Democratic successor. The diverse nature of the Democratic Party lends itself to factionalism. Saddled with this history, decades of political baggage, and a paucity of charisma, Clinton still took 48.2 percent of the vote because Trump was so personally noxious and his policies only appeal to a plurality of conservatives. Democrats should take heart: a weak candidate, saddled with a divided coalition and history, nevertheless won the overall vote count by three million votes.

Added to this is the divided and contentious nature of the paleoconservative world. Unused to wielding power, paleoconservative thought leaders fumble when trying to increase their ranks. During the Obama era, Paul Gottfried, a leading paleoconservative academic, coined the term "alt-right" as an exercise in growing his movement's ranks. Joining with the provocateur Richard Spencer, Gottfried promoted the alt-right as an alternative, hipper moniker for paleoconservatives and expand their ranks. Alas, this alliance was short-lived. Spencer's explicit embrace of white nationalism, eugenics, and an avowedly "racialist" ideology spurred a schism that splintered many paleocons from the alt-right.[87] The revolving door of staffers and advisors in the Trump White House was more than a reflection of the president's metronome of moods and quirks. Paleoconservatism is not a philosophy fitted for broad coalitions.

Weak with college-educated women, educated suburbanites, and millennials, Trump's Republican Party performed poorly in elections throughout his tenure. A series of competitive special elections in GOP territory sent shivers down Republican elites' spines. Following these was the 2018 midterm shellacking. On top of losses in the Congress, Republican control of governorships went from 33-16 to 26-24, and of

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86 Stephen Herzenberg, "Reflections on the Election and the White Working Class . . . and Some Links Worth Reading," *Keystone Research Center*, November 16, 2016, https://krc-pbpc.org/research_publication/reflections-on-the-election-and-the-white-working-class-and-some-links-worth-reading/; Laura Hughes, "Some Pennsylvania Democrats Regret Not Voting in 2016," *Washington Post*, August 24, 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/some-pennsylvania-democrats-regret-not-voting-in-2016-they-say-theyll-be-sure-to-cast-a-ballot-in-2020/2019/08/23/e2d4f4c0-a1b0-11e9-b732-41a79c2551bf_story.html.

87 Seth Bartee, "Paul Gottfried and Paleoconservatism," in *Key Thinkers of the Radical Right: Behind the New Threat to Liberal Democracy*, ed. Mark Sedgwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), chap. 7; Matthew Sheffield, "A History of Hate: How the Alt-Right Became Racist," *Salon*, December 8, 2016, https://www.salon.com/2016/12/08/how-the-alt-right-became-racist-a-short-history-of-hate-part-1/.

state legislature chambers from 57-42 to 52-47—in other words, from a clear advantage to a near draw.[88] Trump's historically low approval ratings did not augur well for his reelection and a GOP majority in the Senate. Prognosticators pointed to a potential Electoral College repeat as the president's best hope. Electoral College or no, candidates who lose the majority vote are never in a position of political strength. Those down-ballot are surely aware of this stark reality. Indeed, if Democratic advantages with millennials, women, and minorities hold, the GOP might be destined for minority status.

The 2020 election demonstrated why Democrats should have kept the champagne in the cellar. Obama's 2008 and 2012 victories reveal the McGovern coalition's maturation. In 2012, Obama lost the white vote by the very same percentage, 20 points, that Walter Mondale did in 1984.[89] In 1984, however, white voters comprised nearly 90 percent of active voters. Twenty-eight years later, whites encompassed around 72 percent of those who voted. The result is that Mondale's 1984 landslide loss, 58.8 percent to 40.6 percent, became Obama's narrow popular win, 51.1 percent to 47.2 percent. The percentage of nonwhites and the young is a growing piece of the electorate. The ratio of older white voters is declining. Nevertheless, the 2016 election reveals the centrality of Democrats' winning a respectable percentage of the white working class. The linchpin of the New Deal coalition, working-class whites have been the central weakness of the McGovern coalition since its inception. Candidates who were Southern, Protestant, and white, Clinton and Carter, were able to win enough of the demographic for victory. Outside of Southern whites, Obama also performed well with this group. But Hillary Clinton's weakness with them along with soft black turnout proved the difference.

The 2020 electoral results offered even worse news for the Democrats. Despite their victory in the presidential contest, the party lost twelve House seats and only took control of the Senate because Trump was more interested in insurrection than winning two Georgia Senate seats. Deep dives into the data demonstrate white, black, *and* brown working-class voters shifting to the Republicans.[90] The 2022 midterms offered more of the same. To be sure, Democrats were delighted by the Red Wave's disintegration. But the GOP's disastrous midterm was dictated by extreme candidates not Biden's popularity. Where Republicans nominated extremists (Arizona, Michigan, and Pennsylvania), they lost. When the GOP nominated "moderate" Trumpists, Ron

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88 Aaron Blake, "3 Election Years Under Trump, 3 Decisive GOP Losses," *Washington Post,* November 6, 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/11/06/election-years-under-trump-decisive-gop-losses/.

89 Chris Cillizza and Jon Cohen, "President Obama and the White Vote, No Problem," *Washington Post*, November 8, 2012, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2012/11/08/president-obama-and-the-white-vote-no-problem/.

90 Ezra Klein, "David Shor Is Telling Democrats What They Don't Want to Hear," *New York Times*, October 8, 2021, https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/08/opinion/democrats-david-shor-education-polarization.html.

DeSantis and Brian Kemp, they won easily. Democrats possess a hammerlock over the popular vote for the presidency. But Trump's paleoconservative turn has given the GOP a decided advantage in the Electoral College and near parity in Congress. The shifting nature of the Republican and Democratic coalitions means neither party can coalesce an enduring majority.

The Reagan coalition crumbled over Iraq, the Great Recession, nativism, and the uneven benefits of a postindustrial, globalized economy. This enabled Trump to ride a paleoconservative wave to the nomination. The president's lawless behavior, loutish personal conduct, and refusal to take COVID-19 seriously are largely responsible for his 2020 defeat and the Republican Party's lackluster 2022 midterms. Untethered from the former president's personal foibles, many paleoconservative policies very well might enjoy significant popularity with the Republican rank and file and the larger electorate. But uncompromising opposition to immigration and the nativist rhetoric that accompanies it will doom conservatives with educated urbanites.

Meanwhile, the McGovern/Obama coalition is not destined to become a majority party with the consistent presidential landslides and enduring congressional margins that force the opposition to reconfigure. Reliance upon poor, minority, and youth voters makes consistent victory difficult. These demographic groups are simply not consistent voters. Democratic struggles for turnout in local, state, midterm, and special elections will continue. A weak majority party at the presidential level and an obstinate and inflexible congressional opposition will only create more gridlock, partisan divisions, and a toxic political environment.

REVIEW

Karen Lee Ashcraft, *Wronged and Dangerous: Viral Masculinity and the Populist Pandemic*, Bristol: Bristol University Press, 2022, 264 pp., $149.95 (Hardback), $19.99 (Paperback)

Reviewed by Meredith L. Pruden (Kennesaw State University)

In December 2022, as I was reading Karen Lee Ashcraft's *Wronged and Dangerous: Viral Masculinity and the Populist Pandemic* in preparation for the review I now write, a brief exchange took place on Twitter between a young climate activist and a nearly middle-aged former professional kickboxer (tweets typed exactly as they appeared):

> Andrew Tate (December 27):
>
> Hello @GretaThunberg
>
> I have 33 cars.
>
> My Bugatti has a w16 8.0L quad turbo.
>
> My TWO Ferrari 812 competizione have 6.5L v12s.
>
> This is just the start.
>
> Please provide your email address so I can send a complete list of my car collection and their respective enormous emissions.
>
> Greta Thunberg (December 28):
>
> yes, please do enlighten me. email me at smalldickenergy@getalife.com.

Combined, these two tweets—shared between an upper-middle-class white Swedish female teenager (at the time of tweeting) on the autism spectrum and a thirty-six-year-old, cis-hetero, mixed-race, US-British expat living in Romania (and avowed misogynist) with a purported net worth in the tens of millions—garnered some 540 million views, 240,000 likes, 703,000 retweets, and tens of thousands of comments. They are a snapshot into the sort of viral masculinity about which Ashcraft writes in

Wronged and Dangerous and a prescient reminder of Ashcraft's warning that blaming and shaming aggrieved masculinity simply does not work to change the hearts and minds of its adherents. But, more than that, they exemplify Ashcraft's call to employ a public health frame to the "pandemic of feeling" that is "New Populism's" particular brand of aggrieved masculinity, which is, in essence, an identity politics hiding in plain sight.

Ashcraft provides four reasons for her public health framing, which I will unpack more fully later in this review but want to relate directly here to the exchange between Thunberg and Tate. First up—harm to others. Despite allegations of interpersonal violence against women, including physical assault and rape, as well as human trafficking, Tate is a hero of the manosphere (a darling, if you will), and his December 2022 arrest in Romania on suspicion of organized crime and human trafficking seems to have also made him something of a martyr, with protests of angry young men erupting in Greece shortly thereafter.[1] While Tate has yet to be indicted, he has spent several months in jail and was moved to house arrest in late March pending a court appearance in this case. In other words, he is networked misogyny personified. A second point—generalized harm. According to Ashcraft, generalized harm is about collateral damage. Chief among them, in addition to the mishandling of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, is the global climate crisis. She points to the "link between environmental damage and masculinity" (168), wherein green initiatives are feminized in the human-versus-nature binary, and the backlash—exemplified by such practices as "rolling coal" and driving oversized cars with high emissions (like those Tate tweeted about)—equates to "proof" of dominant masculinity.[2] The third point is what Thunberg terms "small dick energy" in her tweet and Ashcraft calls "death by pufferfish" in the book. In both cases, aggrieved masculinity is a performative blowing up that is fueled by the perceived (that is, *felt*) threat against dominant manhood. Ironically, according to Ashcraft, a pufferfish response based in aggrieved masculinity and white racial resentment is "a major cause of physical disease and death" for men that threatens white men's health (170). Finally, Ashcraft refers to "pufferfish at scale" as the fourth way in which New Populism's aggrieved masculinity demands a public health approach. Pufferfish at scale refers to the evolution of backlash politics, resulting in antigovernment sentiment and the removal of government-sanctioned health and safety protections. These removals, of course, lead to negative health outcomes for everyone—including the most privileged men (cis white men) who stoked the ire in the first place. An example of pufferfish at scale, related specifically to Tate, is the surge in support for Tate following his arrest, which included discussions

1 Nilofer Khan, "Andrew Tate's Fans Chant 'Free Top G' in a Viral Video; It Portrays the Malevolent Atmosphere He Has Created," *Mashable*, January 19, 2023, https://me.mashable.com/culture/24193/andrew-tates-fans-chant-free-top-g-in-a-viral-video-it-portrays-the-malevolent-atmosphere-he-has-cre.

2 The term "rolling coal" describes vehicles, usually large trucks with diesel engines, that have been modified—against environmental protection laws in the United States and elsewhere—to produce huge plumes of black smoke. "Rolling coal" has been noted by some pundits and researchers to be a form of right-wing provocation in the so-called culture wars.

around men's rights, mental health, and free speech, both in the court of international public opinion and in some Western courts of law.[3] Tate's arrest has become one more example of so-called cultural Marxism running roughshod in nations the world over.

As I hope this brief example demonstrates, Ashcraft's *Wronged and Dangerous* is a timely, relevant, and much-needed corrective to academic accounts of right-wing populist animus that downplay, ignore, or, occasionally, downright erase gender as an analytic approach. However, to be clear, there are scholars working across a variety of disciplines who already aptly deploy Ashcraft's recommended gender-first framework to studies of the far right, conservative populism, white nationalism, and (of course) the manosphere. In fact, I count myself among them. The lack of attention to issues of intersectionality in academic accounts of populism and, specifically, the far right is one of the main reasons I branched out from work on the manosphere some five years ago. But, as Ashcraft makes abundantly clear, these folks remain relatively few and far between. Instead, Ashcraft argues, many scholars take a class-first approach to this issue that amounts to a "collective denial" of binary gender norms and relevant gender-based resentments as the root cause of the phenomenon. At the end of the day, *Wronged and Dangerous* is as much about viral aggrieved masculinity's connection to right-wing populism as it is about a sociophysical analytic approach. This sociophysical analytic approach, which understands reality as "social and physical at once" (15), addresses gender from an intersectional perspective and is, thus, better equipped to confront right-wing populism laterally—what Ashcraft calls empathy from the side or the "communicability of feeling" (3). In other words, lateral empathy recognizes how viral masculinity (as *feeling*) spreads but stops short of justifying associated complaints. This contrasts with other common responses to populist grievances—oppositional blaming and shaming or compassionate empathy from the front—both of which legitimize such complaints by meeting them "on [their] own terms" (4). Researchers rooted in more critical fields will likely find themselves nodding in agreement with the author's call to break down the well-worn binaries allowing gender to establish social hierarchies and adhere to marked bodies, while those unversed in intersectionality will find this work accessible and, I expect, also an incentive to more deeply consider "gender as a force in everyday encounter" (53).

Wronged and Dangerous is organized into four parts, each containing five relatively brief chapters. Part 1, titled "Gender as an Acquired Taste," lays the foundation for what follows and provides a high-level overview of some of the central tenets of the book—rooted *primarily* in feminist, critical race, and sexuality studies (though Ashcraft is an organizational communication scholar). The author introduces the necessity for a co-constitutive sociophysical approach (in which "the social and physical worlds are already one . . . reality is social and physical at once") to viral masculinity by problematizing

3 Tate is considered by many journalists, researchers, and fans to be a men's rights influencer for his *brand* of masculinity. He has also publicly stated several times that mental health problems are not real, and he is a vocal advocate for unfettered free speech. These elements not only elevate his profile among disaffected men but are touchpoints for larger culture war debates.

normalized gendered thinking that sees reality as material/hard/masculine *or* socially constructed/soft/feminine (15). In addition to this theoretical contribution, the author provides a more applied contribution by naming a series of "bad habits" folks tend to have related to gender, and ways to fix them. For instance, one such bad habit is "gender = women" (28), which is the notion that gender is of foremost concern when talking about women, and subsequently, a universal group of women is constructed. In contrast, men are primarily seen as individuals first and not commonly viewed as a universal, gendered group. Ashcraft's solution to this bad habit is to remind ourselves to see gender on everyone—especially men, since this is where it is commonly erased—and to think frequently about how the world is gendered (28). To demonstrate binary gendered thinking, Ashcraft offers two case studies, analyzed through the lens of common media and scholarly responses. The first reviews the handling of national COVID-19 responses by "populist strong men" versus women leaders (21). In Ashcraft's words, "In short, gender was a side story when it came to men and populism but the lead story when the leaders in question identified as women" (21). For instance, populist strong men who did a poor job of handling their nation's COVID-19 responses were still seen in terms of individual shortcomings rather than men's failings. On the other hand, more effective COVID-19 responses by women leaders were often attributed not to individual attributes but to the mere fact they were women. The second, related, case examines "mask-ulinity" and further unpacks hierarchies of power already noted in the first case. Here, Ashcraft notes some promising changes—insofar as "mask-ulinity" is often recognized more intersectionally as a conservative white male phenomenon—while also tracing a brief history of mask wearing and how gendered performances around masking are communicable feelings that come upon us, often seemingly out of nowhere. Taken together, this section of the book is an excellent primer on the widespread damage such binaries produce on a global scale, as well as a good reminder for those who are already knowledgeable.

Part 2 of *Wronged and Dangerous*, titled "The Feel of New Populisms," shifts gears to a review of populism and its commonly cited attributes, its evolution to *New* Populism, and considers why existing anti-populist approaches fail to achieve their stated goals and what viral masculinity has to do with it. Drawing on work by political scientist Cas Mudde and others, Ashcraft describes populism as a "thin-centered" ideology, meaning it is ideational, deliberately ambiguous, and highly malleable as a result.[4] Moreover, there are several traits commonly associated with populism, which Ashcraft provides. These attributes include narratives of the people against the establishment (sometimes referenced in the book as the "deep state"), a general sense of us-versus-them antagonism (that is sometimes three-dimensional and includes Othering), a veneer of flat organization and direct communication from charismatic leaders, and

4 For additional context around populism, see Cas Mudde, *The Far Right Today* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2019); Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser, "Populism," in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Ideologies*, ed., Michael Freeden, Lyman Tower Sargent, and Marc Stears (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 493–512.

a tendency to employ an aggressive rhetorical style. Turning to New Populism, which Ashcraft notes is more accurately described as New Populisms, the author makes the case that something has changed in recent decades. Specifically, among other things, she notes that New Populism needs democracy to thrive and alters democratic practices in the process (notably by governing as antigovernment). It also takes advantage of new media environments to more widely and efficiently spread its agenda, which is more about feeling than ideology.

What is that feeling? The sense of aggrieved masculine entitlement, according to Ashcraft, is paramount, and it is why standard antipopulist approaches (e.g., shaming the base) not only do not work but also wind up justifying right-wing populist resentment. Instead, she suggests we view populist viral masculinity as a "downrising" of "spiraling momentum" that includes not only the base but also elites, the left, and technologies (86). A "downrising" refers to the "dispersed agency of New Populist feeling," and it encapsulates the ways in which humans (the left, the right, everyday citizens, elites) and technology contribute to it. This shift is intended to shed light on the ways in which actors other than the conservative base are implicated in right-wing populist sentiment. The elites on the right, for example, fund astroturf movements and stoke populist resentments in campaign speeches, media interviews, and on their social media handles. The left (while not equally culpable) can entrench such resentments when they blame and shame conservatives and when they act as "dismissive elites" (91). Finally, Big Tech platforms that monetize outrage, mis- and disinformation, and conspiracies because they net more eyeballs and longer times on platform are deeply implicated in the virality of populist masculinity.

In part 3, "Probable Cause," Ashcraft tackles class-forward approaches to New Populism, the "collective denial" of gender as its cause, and how aggrieved entitlement moves as New Populist anger (120). She also provides an example of an intersectional, gender-first analysis using a case study of two films (more on this later). Class-forward approaches to New Populism break down, according to Ashcraft, because its sentiment is not only, or even mainly, about economic inequality. Nor, she says, is it primarily about cultural marginalization, or racial and religious resentment. It begins with gender. Full stop. As Ashcraft writes, "New Populism . . . is precisely what populism is *not* supposed to be—a project of identity politics. It is a gender-based *movement* that vents and soothes aggrieved masculinity by (re)claiming its generic status as The People" (106). For this reason, she argues we must think about class as intersectional because it so often stands in as a substitute for identity and culture.

Here, Ashcraft heads off several commonly cited reasons why New Populism cannot be about gender. These denials include such defenses as that women also participate in these movements, patriarchy is so common as to be a nonstarter for analysis, hypermasculinity is on the fringes, and other similar repudiations. However, Ashcraft unpacks these denials. Related to women's involvement, she notes that "masculinity is available to everyone" (122) and gendered norms around compulsory heterosexuality incentivize women—especially white women—to participate in New Populism even if it means supporting "strongman" leaders. Related to the ubiquitous and common

nature of patriarchy, she notes that "common doesn't make it commonplace" (123). In other words, "patriarchy is no mere residue; it's still here because we're still doing it" (123). It is a result of our ongoing "gendering practices" (124). Moreover, related to hypermasculinity as fringe, Ashcraft briefly traces how antifeminist and masculinist groups have become the core of New Populist movements. In sum, the author does an admirable job dismantling them each in turn before exploring how New Populist anger moves. This movement happens because aggrieved masculinity "is the sensational linchpin" that "runs on a binary code that is easy to translate" (136–37).

Ashcraft rounds out this section with an intersectional, gender-first analysis of the films *Fight Club* and *The Joker* (mostly focusing on *The Joker*) to demonstrate how masculinity and class are co-constitutive in New Populism. This section shows how starting with gender and moving outward to other identity markers, as well as to cultural, political, and economic contexts, nets a richer evaluation. Ashcraft begins by historicizing aggrieved masculinity in the context of men's movements dating from the 1970s before moving into how it has reared its head in outrage media, the Tea Party, and other such spaces. Against this backdrop, Ashcraft highlights not only how the content of *The Joker*—for instance, its protagonist is in a crisis of masculinity, a beta picked on by alphas and an unpopular comedian in a crumbling city, who ultimately exacts his catastrophic revenge—connotes the stickiness between white male grievance and class oppression, but also how the film's creation in and of itself tells the same story. In brief, the film's writer, producer, and director created *The Joker* as a response to "woke" Hollywood's supposed cancellation of bro humor—and received eleven Oscar nods for his "trouble" that year.

Ashcraft's analysis of *The Joker* points to three "unsustainable supremacies" in relation to aggrieved masculinity and New Populism (152). The first supremacy is an "expectation to come ahead of Others," which is thwarted both by top-down injustice and by bottom-up cheating (153). The second is "identification with the universal subject," which causes these men, when asked to "acknowledge their own partial identity," to read this request as a form of "reverse discrimination" (153). Finally, the third supremacy is "the pursuit of self-containment" or the "foundational fantasy or potent impermeability," as contrasted with the constant permeability of women and Others (153). Not only are these supremacies present in *The Joker*, according to Ashcraft, but the film also functions as one among many cultural narratives that circulate and reinforce manly grievance and the supposed crisis of masculinity.

Finally, part 4, titled "Virality and Virility," transitions to positioning viral masculinity and New Populism (or perhaps, in Ashcraft's terms, viral masculinity *as* New Populism) through a public health frame. Crucial first steps to taking a public health approach to the phenomenon, she says, are moving from toxic to viral masculinity and employing lateral empathy to better recognize that New Populism is about "the *feeling* of manhood under siege" because that feeling is real even if it is not true (159). Ashcraft unpacks at some length why understanding New Populist masculinity is better accomplished through a viral, rather than a toxic, frame. In other words, she argues for a move from toxic masculinity as poison to viral masculinity as the communicability of feeling.

To be clear, Ashcraft is not suggesting that we empathize with the *content* of New Populist arguments. Rather, she is suggesting we acknowledge aggrieved masculinity as a "sociophysical contagion" and work to stop its spread (160). While I am not generally a fan of viral framings to describe nonmedical phenomena, the author does make a persuasive case for its use here through the connection to bodily sensation and detrimental health outcomes. As mentioned, Ashcraft cites four reasons for New Populism as a public health concern. First, a litany of evidence implicating this political "pandemic" in harm to others—for example, online and networked misogyny, interpersonal violence, and mass killings. Second, evidence of more generalized harm, such as failure to address the climate crisis and the handling of COVID-19 responses. Third, anger over imperiled manhood, which exacerbates health risks, such as physical disease and death, for those attuned to the bodily sensations of aggrieved masculinity, what she calls "death by pufferfish" (170). One example Ashcraft provides for death by pufferfish is white male support for Second Amendment rights, which has contributed to disproportionate suicide risk for that demographic. Fourth, "pufferfish at scale," a.k.a. backlash governance (172).

Part 4 also digs into how feelings of "manly right, wronged" move across the manosphere (and beyond); examines the case of critical race theory (CRT) through the lens of the manosphere-as-playbook; situates New Populism (and the manosphere) as a brand; and challenges readers to adopt critical feeling practices (184). Drawing on work by Sarah Banet Weiser and others, Ashcraft attributes the "animation" of "manly right, wronged" to networked misogyny as a growing transnational movement not limited to online spaces. In this way, she asserts, the manosphere functions as a "sociotechnical hive of activity" that circulates and amps up sensation, connects it to local contexts, and focuses all that affective energy onto supposed culprits (184). Because the manosphere behaves in this way, according to Ashcraft, it doubles as a New Populist playbook for waging culture wars and, ultimately, shaping public policies. She traces the rise of anti-CRT campaigns—from a "local" newspaper op-ed with Heritage Foundation connections and a conservative think tank alum on a mission, to outrage media and a US senator's speech, oddly similar to the original op-ed and to common manosphere narratives, at the National Conservatism conference—as one example of how the manosphere proof of concept was used to usher in a barrage of anti-CRT state and federal legislation. Ashcraft also uses this example to connect the manosphere and New Populist identity politics to neoliberal sensibilities around branding and communicative capitalism insofar as they all function through a "less conscious" sensation designed to be shared like commodities in an attention economy (206).

Ashcraft wraps the book with a "call to arms" and a call for help, asking, "What would it look like to approach the culture wars this way, as if virus mitigation were the charge?" While she admits she is unsure of the answer, she does hint that "critical feeling" from a place of lateral empathy is a good place to start (209). Critical feeling, according to Ashcraft, is a way to awaken and attend to our oft-neglected senses that are outside systems of representation. In other words, critical feeling cultivates an attention to the ways in which affect and emotion exacerbate the circulation of ideologies because

feeling is what allows ideology to sneak up on us through the "sensory 'side doors'" (212). These side doors are where Ashcraft asserts we are especially unaware or even sensorially illiterate (Westerners in particular). Therefore, she offers several questions one can ask oneself related to critical feeling but connecting "brain *with* body," for example, "*How* did I come to feel this?" or "How did it grow so intense as to seem irrefutable?" (213). Here, Ashcraft employs what she considers to be populist concepts (lateral empathy and critical feeling) alongside her public health frame for harm reduction in the face of New Populist viral masculinity.[5]

While *Wronged and Dangerous* is a straightforwardly written, timely, and at times quite funny contribution to our understanding of the gendered nature of populism (providing, as well, practical advice on the same), I have a handful of quibbles, which I hope are read as a good-natured response to the author's "call to arms."

I have four theoretical comments, followed by several admittedly personal—yet relevant—gripes. I will begin with the former. First, Ashcraft's sociophysical approach feels like strands of feminist sociology's symbolic interactionist frameworks, such as "Doing Gender."[6] While she does spend some time unpacking social constructionist and performance models, their relevance to her own approach could be examined more explicitly. Second, it seems implied that the brand of New Populism Ashcraft highlights is right leaning, but this clarification goes largely unstated. A more explicit connection to right-wing or conservative or radical-right populism would be beneficial. Third, one of the hallmarks of populism as a thin-centered ideology is that it needs to be grafted on to other thicker ideologies. Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser name tribal nationalism.[7] Ruth Wodak names neoliberalism.[8] Male supremacism is another such thicker ideology, but this is left unexplored. Fourth, in a book that urges us to unlearn binaries, I am unconvinced by Ashcraft's suggestion that the point of New Populist hostility is the sharing of feeling and not content, with the content being merely a "bonus" (188). While this is an inversion of the hard/soft binary that historically viewed feeling as soft/feminine and content as hard/masculine, it remains a binary nonetheless. I am left wondering, why not both/and?

Onto the latter. While I have no full-throated recommendation for alternatives, I do not agree with Ashcraft's assertion that the "manosphere is the best term we have for capturing how far-right communities operate as an interconnected whole, a transnational movement adhered by the glue of the gender binary," nor that we should stop using terms like "far right" or "white nationalism" (179). For one thing, while her

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5 Ashcraft sees these concepts as being more "richly" populist than New Populism because they are "of, by, and for The People," cannot serve "narrow interests," and cannot be "handed off to the experts" (214).

6 Candace West and Don H. Zimmerman. "Doing Gender," *Gender & society* 1, no. 2 (1987): 125–51.

7 See Mudde and Kaltwasser, "Populism."

8 Ruth Wodak, *The Politics of Fear: What Right-Wing Populist Discourses Mean* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2015).

suggestion valuably foregrounds gender, it runs the risk of erasing other supremacisms. It is possible to take a gender-first approach and emphasize the role gender plays in these spaces without lumping everything under the manosphere. For another thing, white supremacist groups (also usually sexist) were among the first to use the internet for recruitment and mobilization—they preceded what we now call the manosphere, to which they clearly remain connected.[9] Additionally, in the discussion of populism and New Populist grievances, the "deep state" is referenced by Ashcraft more than once. This feels like a lost opportunity for interrogating how intersectional gender-first analysis also must consider other identity categories. The deep state as a concept, for example, can be traced back to antisemitic and antiglobalist conspiracy theories about the supposed Zionist Occupied Government, or ZOG. Finally, an in-text accounting of why many feminist scholars no longer cite by name the original author of the notion of aggrieved masculinity is warranted. While Angela Nagle gets a nuanced critique in the main body of Ashcraft's text, only a vague critique of this other author is provided in the endnotes, which feels like an important oversight.

Despite these critiques, Karen Lee Ashcraft delivers a compelling account of how the bodily sensation of aggrieved masculinity as New Populist identity politics is felt by human beings, how it is shared widely, expediently, and effectively, and how it ultimately causes individual and generalized harm in the process. It is my hope that scholars across disciplines use this book to take stock of their own "bad habits" related to gender and populism and to build better ones in their place by heeding her call to take up this intersectional work in their own regionally specific contexts. As a fellow traveler on this research trajectory, I am excited to see how folks blaze their own trails using the framework Ashcraft has provided in *Wronged and Dangerous*.

9 The white nationalist web forum Stormfront, for example, was founded in 1990.