AFFECTIVE IDEOLOGY AND TRUMP'S POPULARITY

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Abstract
For too long, analysis of right-wing populism has been caught between the Scylla of invocations of macro-scale structural factors such as economic precarity and the Charybdis of belief-centered notions of ideology. The answer to false belief about structural factors was to have been ideology critique, which would cognitively correct false belief by presenting arguments about the true structure of society, how the 2008 crisis really came about, the racial makeup of welfare recipients, the economic benefits of immigration, and so on. The rather complete failure of such a top-down, cognitive, notion of ideology critique has highlighted the need to target the personal and interpersonal emotional factors at work in constructing and maintaining right-wing populist movements. These emotional factors should be seen as direct investments, such that voters are not fooled by false beliefs, but directly desire what populism promises to deliver: an America that is great again, a restoration of the proper hierarchy among whites and "minorities," a rebuke to "liberal elites," and so on.
We first survey work in political theory and psychology on emotion and right-wing populism (section 2), then we present a notion of "affective ideology" (section 3) that puts belief and desire on equal footing, insisting on the inseparable union of emotions and cognition in concrete life, and allows for a full spectrum of emotions, including hope and optimism alongside fear and anxiety, as factors in cementing right-wing populism. We conclude with a discourse analysis – using primarily Hochschild's case study of the Louisiana Tea Party – that illustrates the utility of "affective ideology" as an instrument for analyzing Donald Trump's appeal to American voters (section 4).

Affective Ideology and Trump's Popularity

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1. The new Strength of right-wing Populism

The election of Donald Trump as president of the United States has lent special importance to the discussion of the contemporary prominence of right-wing populist movements. Trump's victory is not an isolated event; even if not fully victorious, several right-wing populist movements have had impressive showings in recent elections in Western Europe. Among others, we see in France the Front National (FN), in Germany the Alternative for Germany (AfD), and in Austria the Free Party of Austria (FPÖ). Further afield, major countries in Eastern Europe (Hungary), Western Asia (Turkey), and East Asia (the Philippines) now have leaders whose electoral base and government policies can also be seen as right-wing populist.

We agree with Mikko Salmela and Christian von Scheve (2017) that a relational or an interpersonal analysis of political emotion is needed if we want to come to grips with right-wing populism. They propose two interpersonal and transformative emotional processes as mechanisms mediating macro- and personal-level analyses: 1) *ressentiment* (transformation of fear, via repressed shame and lack of acceptable outlet, producing targeting of enemies) and 2) "*emotional distancing*" (transforming an identification with shame-laden identities of economic precarity – "failed or endangered breadwinner" let's say – to more secure attributes such as race and nationality).

Our focus should be interpersonal, because macro-analyses of economic anxiety from neoliberal atomization (we are all competing against each other as bundles of human capital or "entrepreneurs of the self"), post-crisis austerity, and globalized capital mobility, while perhaps a necessary condition for understanding the current wave, requires as well a theory of the psychological mechanisms, especially affections that traverse groups and bring people together, thus constituting right-wing populism as a movement, rather than simply an aggregate. People feed off each other in movements, which grow stronger, more norm-constituting and norm-enforcing, the more they attract people who exhibit similar (bodily) commitments.

For quite some time, political psychology and political philosophy tended to have diverging accounts of right wing populism. For the most part, political psychology looked to the intersection of situational factors (e.g., times of crisis and the lost of jobs) and dispositional factors (e.g., personality needs to manage anxiety and losses). Here there was some invocation of the negative emotions of fear and anxiety, but they tended to eschew the notion of ideology. On the other hand, political philosophy tended to look to a belief-centered concept of ideology, which gave short shrift to the affective component of political allegiance. Recent work in political psychology, however, has invoked the concept of ideology, though its treatment of emotion as "existential motivation" still operates in a largely belief-centered notion of ideology, and moreover remains focused on fear and anxiety.

To get going on our analysis, we first survey work in political theory and psychology on emotion and right-wing populism (section 2), then we present a notion of "affective ideology" (section 3) that puts

belief and desire on equal footing, insisting on the inseparable union of affect and cognition in concrete life, and allows for a full spectrum of emotions, including hope and optimism alongside fear and anxiety, as factors in cementing right-wing populism. We conclude with a discourse analysis – using primarily Arlie Hochschild's case study of the Louisiana Tea Party – that illustrates the utility of "affective ideology" as an instrument for analyzing Donald Trump's appeal to American voters (section 4).

2. Precursors in Political Theory, Psychology, and Neuroscience

First, let us note that the interplay of emotions and interests in politics has been studied for a long time, though not always with a theory of emotions. Certainly members of the Frankfurt School worked on the moment of emotions in politics, such as Leo Löwenthal (1949) in his study on the techniques of agitators in America. Today we would say it is a study of the techniques of right-wing populism. For him populism addresses primarily "emotional complexes" (Löwenthal 1949: 13) of distrust, dependence, exclusion, anxiety, and disillusionment. These techniques are successful because they answer to the emotional structure of the modern individual and the "fundamental condition of modern life: malaise" (14). People support the agitator, but not primarily because of his arguments or his suggested solutions; rather than an idea of a good and efficient policies, it is the permanent emotional arousal of the supporters that is triggered in populism: "In agitation this suggestion of proximity and intimacy takes the place of identification of interests" (118). Populism takes current desires and emotions, manipulates them, amplifies them, and deflects them from that which would be the solutions of their problems, problems which lie deep in the structure of western civilization. If those problems would change, the role of populism for the people would become irrelevant (139).[1]

Another important example of mid-20th Century work on affective politics is found in Jean-Paul Sartre (1948) on antisemitism, which for him is not an opinion or idea but a "passion" (6) or an "involvement" (7; the French is *engagement*). Antisemitism in addition is also a "free and total choice" and "a conception of the world" (11). We feel a close similarity to our position and that of Sartre, in that he focuses on antisemitism as an emotional force, but unlike Sartre, we do not focus primarily on the question of decision, which presupposes an autonomous subject. For Sartre, there are no specific reasons or experiences for antisemitism. Rather, antisemites feel that there "is something strange with Jews" and the most they can say is that some alleged "attributes" of "Jewish people" lie at the root of their fear and uneasiness. At a loss for specific causes, they fall back on a long history of anti-Jewish stereotypes, especially in the Christian tradition. In the last decades, despite their richness, the theories of the Frankfurt School or Sartre fell out of favor. Hence, most of the recent works neglects this older work. So many of the recent works on affects in the political give the impression that they break new ground in their analyses.

Among recent popular works we can note Thomas Frank's *What's The Matter with Kansas?* (2004) analyzes how emotional appeals have overridden what should have been seen as economic self-interest on the part of lower-income voters. On the other hand, George Lakoff's *The Political Mind* (2008) rejects the association of the unconscious with the emotional and the conscious with the cognitive. Instead he wants to render conscious the "frames" of the "cognitive unconscious" that shapes our political discourse. His hope in making the workings of the reflexive unconscious reflectively

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1 Other examples of Frankfurt School work on affective politics would be Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer on antisemitism in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* or Wilhelm Reich's work in *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*.

accessible is to facilitate deliberative democracy. Despite this focus on the deliberative, he nonetheless refers to political emotion in noting that progressives appeal to empathy while conservatives appeal to fear and authority. Jonathan Haidt's *The Righteous Mind* (2012) focuses on different moral logics leading to political impasses and bitterness. In Haidt's "social intuitionist" model, in the vast majority of cases emotion-laden moral intuitions drive moral judgments, with moral reasoning following after. Moral reason is thus motivated by prior intuitions, so it is much more like a lawyer fighting a case than a scientist searching for truth. The political problem comes from a population whose differing intuitions stem from multiple moral values. While the emotion-laden intuitions of American-style "liberals" come from the logics of care and fairness, "conservatives" also have strong intuitions from moral logics of liberty, loyalty, authority, and sanctity.

There is also been a shift in political science. The subfield of political neuroscience has been developing for 10-15 years now. One of the important technical questions is that of "dual processing" theories, that is, separate channels for fast, "bottom-up," automatic or "reflexive," and mostly emotional processing and slower, "top-down," executive or "reflective," and mostly cognitive processing (Neuman et al. 2007). Departing from a strict dual processing model, Micaheal L. Spezio and Ralph Adolphs propose a very interesting "recurrent multilevel appraisal model" in which "the evaluative processing and emotional processing functions form bidirectionally coupled, iterative loops that are extended in time" (Spezio and Adolphs 2007: 83). Following this perspective, interests and emotions of subjects are not separated but folded into each other. They are two sides of the same process.

More recent work in political neuroscience follows the same lines but it's their invocation of the notion of ideology that provides an opening to our work. Some of this work takes a "bottom-up" approach whereby heightened physiological response to aversive stimuli, or generalized heightened fear and anxiety, predict conservative political opinion (the so-called Nebraska School, e.g. Hibbing et al. 2014). Although this work is interesting, we are more attuned to the work of Jost et al. (2009), who use the notion of "elective affinities" with regard to the neuroscience of ideology. They argue that one must take a diachronic approach, looking to the way experience and brain structure and function are linked and reinforce each other in historically built-up ways. Thus, in a rather more sophisticated approach, they complement the bottom-up work of the Nebraska School with a "top-down" experience-mediated neural plasticity that allows for a spiraling recursion eventually producing a fit or "elective affinity" between political opinion and brain structure and function (Jost et al. 2009).

We relate our own approach to these different theories and focus on the emotions or rather affective modes of ideology. To understand right-wing populism it is necessary to look at the physical as well as the psychological moments of ideology. Ideology is more than cognitive processes, it is a whole bodily formation and modulation.

3. The Concept of Affective Ideology

If we want to understand right-wing populism our focus should be on transformative emotions, because for too long, a belief-centered notion of "ideology" was seen as the analytical lens for right-wing populism, as "false belief" was the way to account for interest-contrary behavior. Ideology is supposed to explain non-coerced social reproduction, that is, production and reproduction of "bodies politic." It's

very often limited to cognitive errors that distort the perception of social reality in unequal societies by masking exploitation, but wewant to expand this notion to include the affective as well as the cognitive.

The answer to false belief was to have been ideology critique, which would cognitively correct false belief by presenting arguments about the true structure of society, e.g. how the 2008 crisis really came about, the racial makeup of welfare recipients, the economic benefits of immigration. The rather complete failure of such a top-down, cognitive, notion of ideology critique has highlighted the need to see the personal and interpersonal emotional factors at work in constructing and maintaining right-wing populist movements. These emotional factors should be seen as direct investments and attunement, such that voters are not fooled by false beliefs, but directly desire what populism promises to deliver: an America that is great again, a restoration of the proper hierarchy among whites and "minorities," a rebuke to "liberal elites," and so on.

"Ideology" has a psychological and a functional sense:

Psychologically, ideology is the process that produces a rough coincidence of body political affective-cognitive patterns of an entire society. What is shared is an orientation to the world such that objects appear with characteristic affective tones: an enculturated person will not experience just "this action," but "this beautiful and graceful action that everyone should admire," or "this grotesque and shameful action that should be punished."

Functionally, the sharing of affective-cognitive orientation we call "ideology" contributes to the stability and reproducibility of social patterns of thought and practice on daily, lifespan, and generational scales. Ideological social reproduction is non-coercive, but no one thinks social reproduction happens by shared affective-cognitive patterns alone; all societies have practices of physical force that can, at least in theory and when properly applied, punish or eliminate those prone to system-damaging behavior such as free-riding or bullying. Call that coercive social pattern reproduction.

We want to be able to see the relation of the psychological and functional senses of ideology to each other and the relation of that pair to coercive reproduction. We should note that while no one thinks shared ideology alone is enough to ensure social reproduction, some hold that contemporary societies have rendered the functional sense of ideology otiose via sophisticated forms of coercive reproduction and their attendant collective action problems (Rosen 1996). As we will explain, we don't share that position; we think ideological buy-in on the part of a critical portion of the enforcers of coercive reproduction is necessary, but only with a notion of ideology expanded to include the affective.

To understand the role of emotions in ideology it is important to understand them not only as an individual disposition. Emotions are more than just individual, they are relational, they act beyond individual intentions and feelings with their "own" agency. Emotions are an inter-bodily force that influences subjects in the social fields they inhabit. With the focus on populism the role of emotions is crucial. We follow here Sara Ahmed in her understanding of emotions:

> In the affective economies [like recent right-wing populism], emotions *do things*, and they align individuals with communities – or bodily space with social space – through the very intensity of their attachments. Rather than seeing emotions as psychological dispositions, we need to

consider how they work, in concrete and particular ways, to mediate the relationship between the psychic and the social, and between the individual and the collective. (Ahmed 2004: 119)

To get to "affective ideology," we have to distinguish between belief-desire psychology as a philosophical explanation of behavior and the psychological processes involved in the encoding of experiential regularities. This absorption or enculturation mode of ideology transmission accords with research done on unconscious transmission of racial bias via body comportment independent of the semantic content of accompanying words (Castelli et al. 2008). The experiential encoding of regularities is going to encode the affective tone of the situation along with representations of the state of the world. From the perspective of experiential encoding, emotions aren't separate mental states that bind beliefs to agents; they are an inherent part of the experience and become associated with the representational content.

Hence the emotions produced in the scenes of daily life are part of what is transmitted by the identity-constituting practices: the reproduction of the practice of white supremacy for a slave-holding family (to use Jason Stanley's 2015 example) is not simply accounted for by instilling in children beliefs with the propositional content of racial superiority and inferiority and binding them to those identities by love for friends and parents who participate in that practice. The reproduction of the practice of white supremacy is also constituted by an affective structure of white pride and vengeance motivated by white vulnerability, and hatred, fear, and contempt for blacks that is encoded along with the representational content of the scenes of humiliation, torture, and death that constitute the daily practices of the coercive reproduction side of plantation white supremacy (see Baptist 2013 for claims that widespread torture was responsible for increased productivity on cotton plantations).

To conclude, if we restrict ideology critique to identifying cognitive errors then we risk missing the production of emotional commitments that allow for the punishment of coercive reproduction. But if we push too far into the affective at the expense of the cognitive, are we really talking about "ideology" anymore? Now some people, sometimes, do respond to a cognitively oriented ideology critique. However, that seems only to happen after a change in social identities – a move to a new location, the gaining of new friends – and that change has an affective component. We should retain the term "ideology," but broaden its scope to include the affective as well as the cognitive.

4. Trump's affective Politics of Hope and Fear – Hochschild's Readings

Trump's right-wing populism is a really good example to focus on a specific capacity of emotions, their capacity to open the imagination and bodily capacities of subjects for a new and better future. His ideological politics are so powerful and made him the president of the United States because they are promises to increase, enfold, and open new affective capacities or potentialities in the bodies of the subjects and bring them together. The supporters felt and feel empowered that they are finally able to influence and change the future like they want to.[2]

To understand populism it is important to look at the specific temporality of an affect as Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari do. We prefer the term emotion instead of affect but think emotion also as a

2 Our focus on these issues is inspired by a talk by Alexa Färber and Laura Kemmer (2017) on the promises of the urban, especially of public transport in Rio De Janeiro.

relational bodily force with the capacity to open and change the future. An affect, or in our definition an emotion, has a connection to "virtuality". The virtual is the ontological "realm of potential" (Massumi 2002: 31) where the capacity for further developments in the social already exists. So the virtual is the future that is already present but not "actual" yet. This means that even if it is real, it has to become actual to have concrete influences in the empirical world. In other words, the virtual is the condition of the indeterminacy and productivity of an emotion, of its force to open the present for a new and different future.

Affective forces open the future of relations for new potentials, e.g. for a better life or a life with less pain and fear. This is the reason why Laurent Berlant points out that

> [a]ll [affective] attachments are optimistic. When we talk about an object of desire, we are really talking about a cluster of promises we want someone or something to make to us and make possible for us. This cluster of promises could seem embedded in a person, a thing, an institution, a text, a norm, a bunch of cells, smells, a good idea-whatever. (Berlant 2011: 23)

Berlant defines optimism in a very broad sense as the opening of another future which could bring you closer to the satisfaction of your desires.

For our case study on right-wing populism it are Trump's politics and the ideas he presented which open for his supporters the possibility of a better future. The support of the American people is influenced by their "*emotional self-interest*" as well as "*economic self-interest*" (Hochschild 2016: 228). Both moments are related however. This is the big mistake of many theories of ideology. They often focus only on cognitive mistakes relative to economic interest. However, there are different "promises" which "stick" (Ahmed 2010: 21ff.) to the affective politics of Trump and himself. We shouldn't neglect Trump's ability to call upon the hope of his supporters. He seems like an answer for several of their problems.

In the following paragraphs we focus on the ethnographic work of Arlie Hochschild's new book. In *Strangers In Their Own Land*, Hochschild (2016) relays the results of several years of research in southern Louisiana of a sub-group, a particular cultural formation, the right-wing populist "Tea Party" ("Taxed Enough Already"). Her research enables us to produce an exemplary case study on affective ideology. Although elements of Hochschild's analysis probably generalize at least partially to other groups of Trump supporters, in this article we would like to bracket that question and follow her analysis somewhat closely.

Like Hochschild says:
> Trump is an 'emotions candidate'. More than any other presidential candidate in decades, Trump focusses on eliciting and praising emotional responses from his fans rather than on detailed policy prescriptions. His speeches – evoking dominance, bravado, clarity, national pride, and personal uplift – inspire an emotional transformation. [...] Not only does Trump evoke emotion, he makes an object of it, presenting it back to his fans as a sign of collective success. (Hochschild 2016: 225)

One of the things Hochschild found is *ressentiment*. Here we follow the definition in Salmela and von Scheve (2017) of ressentiment as negative emotions stemming from a shame-laden weak social position, but with blocked outlets for those emotions, lead to a displaced targeting of others. Thus,

ressentiment is an essentially interpersonal and transformative emotion. Gifted leaders can manipulate the target of that displaced negative emotion, even back onto the sinful nature of the weak, per Nietzsche's analysis of the "priests".

But it's important to note that Hochschild's subjects do not feel ressentiment of the one percent. They were actually admired as successful, thus reinforcing the positive value for the Tea Partiers of ambition. Rather, it was ressentiment at "liberal elites" who scolded them for their lack of sympathy with "women, minorities, and immigrants." Hence they were scolded for their emotional responses (what Hochschild calls "feeling rules"), without being able to act on the negative emotion aroused in them by being scolded, because that would call down upon them another round of scolding.[3]

Hence Hochschild diagnoses an emotional trap in which working poor Southern whites found themselves: they didn't want to label themselves as victims (of, say, multinational corporations with their globalizing of production and localizing of pollution, or of shifts away from their skills to those of the "knowledge economy"), yet they felt they were being scolded for not feeling sympathy for what others proposed as victims ("women, minorities, immigrants"), but that they couldn't see as in any way worse off than they are. It is the emotions evoked by identity politics that is at stake. They weren't feeling the way liberal elites told them – presented evidence for why – they should be feeling. But most feelings are not under immediate rational control: they are built up from emotions patterned by institutionalized encounters, and must be dealt with ex post facto, if at all, by rational reflection.

So, the trap is sprung when we turn to those institutions. Hochschild's subjects felt they were being scolded not just for their lack of sympathy for others, they felt where no worse off than they are, but also for their positive valuation of church-going, of "family values", of heterosexual marriage, of hunting and football, and of hard work and sacrifice. Yet, when they talked about their values, they felt they were unfairly being accused of being racist and sexist and homophobic. So they had no safe haven: they couldn't disparage those they thought were being unfairly advantaged, and they couldn't uphold their own values. Hochschild explains that for her subjects, a racist is someone who explicitly uses the "n-word" and who actively and consciously hates and works against blacks (primarily), Hispanics, and Asians. The notion that racism need not be active and personal, but might also cover the acceptance of deep beliefs of racial hierarchy, or acceptance of invisible structural racism (racial housing segregation being chalked up to in-group elective affinity rather than, say, the history of federal mortgage programs), was not part of their belief system.

Hochschild reconstructs the "deep story" for this group of Trump supporters. America is not a ladder, but a long line slowly making its way up a hill. At the top of the hill lies the American Dream: a house, a yard, financial independence, a retirement with family, friends, and recreation (often outdoors, hunting and fishing). You might not make it to the top of the hill, and in fact the line might not be moving very fast at all, but the endurance and sacrifice you display in line is valued by your community and by God.

However, the federal government is helping some folks "cut in line" ahead of them, and to make matters worse, it's those very identity groups they were being scolded for not identifying with. So this is doubly maddening: you're supposed to feel sympathy for people being unfairly helped ahead of you,

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3 Here Hochschild's analysis of resentment and ressentiment of "liberal elites" is compatible with that of Katherine J. Cramer (2016).

after all your hard work, self-reliance, patience, and sacrifice, yet you feel that were you to claim victim status, that would undercut your commitment to hard work, self-reliance, patience, and sacrifice.

Against this backdrop we have to analyze Trump's affective politics of hope and fear.

4.1. Hope

Trump "plays to people´s fantasies" and "offers people a bellicose fantasy of return and renewal" (Anderson 2016: 2) for America and the American people. There is an interesting blend of nostalgia and hope in Trump's promise of a return to the traditional and dignified values which the USA once stood for. At the same time Trump represented a new beginning, for he wanted to change the whole society in order to strengthen these values.

Trump's tactics catalyze interpersonal and transformative emotional processes of hope:

One, he acts unconstrained by the "political correct" or "PC" "feeling rules" people were told they had to accept, and scolded for not accepting, with regard to those identity groups that broke moral rules and yet were rewarded despite it. But Trump doesn't care about those rules, and he is admired for his frankness, for "telling it like it is." Hence Trump's mocking of the handicapped reporter was felt as a triumph of Trump as someone who by force of will and character had freed himself from unfair PR feeling rules. The handicapped reporter broke moral rules by claiming victimhood status instead of just getting to work with what God gave you.

Second, and here is the transformation, by following his example, Trump then offers to his followers a release from being scolded, from being told what to feel, and the transformation of that into affirmation. That is, in his behavior he offers his followers both a formal element of flouting rules, whatever they might be, but also a helpful content, as his scapegoating of the identity groups is welcome confirmation that they don't deserve the favoritism the federal government is giving them, and that it's okay to despise them; thus from shame to pride in their stances toward "victims."

Third, he offers a vision of success. Rich successful businessmen are not resented by the Tea Party, but admired. There's an old joke that many poor folks in the States feel themselves to be "millionaires, but temporarily undergoing some financial difficulties." Hochschild connects this to Southern white admiration of the antebellum planter class. Trump politics offers the hope for the "real" Americans to be great again and to "win" as Americans.

Fourth, he provides in-person rallies. Hochschild has good descriptions of the ecstasy of being among many folks felt to be in agreement.[4] In her analysis of the rallies, Hochschild references the "effervescence" of which Émile Durkheim (1915) wrote in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, the uplift caused by the experience of unity with others sharing the same emotional commitments to the group to which everyone belongs. Recent crowd psychology attests to the power of affirmative co-presence but doesn't follow the Durkheim/Gustave LeBon line in which people in a crowd "lose

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4 Here we could talk about subpersonal entrainment, e.g. Tollefsen and Dale (2012). While we want to emphasize the interpersonal in this presentations say, we do want to mark points of contact for further research on the subpersonal.

themselves"; rather, contemporary work claims that people add an identity, that of crowd member (Reicher 2012).[5]

In highly intense and affective moments of togetherness where the future seems wide open and changeable, another particular moment of affective ideologies emerges. In affective situations argumentations and facts lose their power. Affective attachments and intensities are more import to the supporters than the arguments of Trump. For the affected bodies, it is most important to feel hopefully and participate in the affective flows and not that the argumentation of Trump is clear, valid, or true. This is the reason why his politics are so influential and mobilizes so many subjects. Trump doesn't need to comply with traditional values of a political discussion to be successful. Here, affects are stronger than facts. This is also the reason why the criticism of his arguments, lies, distortions, or failures is not enough to convince the supporters to stop supporting him.

4.2. Fear

The pictures of the present Trump draws, especially during his campaign, were pictures of America in a fundamental crisis, an America which has failed to continue its past successes. With this as his background he was able to attract mobilized supporters, because he enables them to hope to be successful again. The future seems to get worse and all Americans seems to lose "everything" (Trump quoted by Anderson 2016: 5). In this story America in total have bleak prospects: dilapidated infrastructures, bad jobs, the threat of unemployment, immigrants, Muslims, feminists, Mexicans, terrorists, liberal values and so all of which stand for weakness and political correctness. Trump's genius was to repeat his fundamental affective message of failure that only he could remedy, of despair that he could offer hope to change, through e.g. many different individual stories, anecdotes, and quips. Hence Ben Anderson can rightfully say that Trump told and tells "anxious stories of national vulnerability" (4) which produce fear of the future. He stresses the feeling and angers "that the wrong people always win" (7).

There are especially two very interesting moments of the fears of Trump supporters.

First, a good bit was made of the correlation of death rates of whites with Trump support (Guo 2016, building upon Case and Deaton 2015), consistent with the political psychology finding that evoked mortality salience is correlated with conservative ideology preferences (literature reviewed in Jost et al. 2009). But it's not just overall death rates and a generalized conservatism that interests us here. A correlation with increased Trump support was found with increasing rates of "deaths of despair," defined as drug, alcohol, and suicide mortality (Monnat 2016). While Shannon Monnat is a bit of an economic reductionist, such that these deaths are mere indices of "economic distress," from our interpersonal emotion perspective, it is perhaps not only fear of one's own death that is evoked by such deaths of despair, but also the memory and prospect of mourning for others who felt abandoned by current society that was relieved by Trump's promises to make America great again. Again, interpersonal and transformed emotion.

Second, the economic profile of Trump supporters gave them an average annual income of $70,000. So, they are personally not doing too badly (Ehrenfreud and Guo 2016). But the prospects of progress

5 See also Kølvraa and Ifversen (2017): "subjects are now understood as enjoying ideology, as engaging affectively with its fantasies of utopia or grand narratives." (194)

for their children and the children of their neighbors and other community members are not good. So here we have an indirect association; the failure or decreased prospects of the children was the focus of the anger felt at the target or eliciting object or perceived cause, government preference for "women and minorities." That is, they were angry at the children's treatment. This anger could also be transformed to personally experienced anxiety – would they be next? Here again we see the interpersonal propagation of transformed emotion.[6]

4.3. Building a new Nation

Trump is able to connect his politics to the values and emotions of his supporters. In affective intensifying processes the subjects are empowered and get self-confident enough to be (again) proud of themselves as male, white, conservative, middle-aged, heterosexual Americans with a more or less good income.

In chapter 15 of Hochschild (2016), "Strangers No Longer: The Power of Promise," she describes her experiences during a campaign rally of Trump. She describes the event in really powerful images. The Trump supporters feel like "[e]conomically, culturally, demographically, politically […] strangers in their own land" (Hochschild 2016: 222) but they see in Trump the personification of hope, the hope for a better future. A future with happiness and wealth, in which Americans can be proud again of their nation that is no longer suffering from other countries or threats and that is also able to protect itself. All of these moments are integrated or saved in Trumps famous slogan: "Make America great again," which mobilizes emotions and brings the supporters together. Together they feel hopeful and elated – now, "*they are no longer strangers in their own land*" (225). They are finally "home."

Circulating emotions of right-wing populism aim at building this new "home" as a form of empowerment which will bring happiness and self-confidence back to the supporters. With reference to Durkheim's work on religion Hochschild calls this moment a "collective effervescence […] a state of emotional excitation felt by those who join with others they take to be fellow members of a moral or biological tribe. They gather to affirm their unity and, united, they feel secure and respected." (225) It is the coming together of the crowd around Trump which triggers the desires and emotions of his supporters. The affective coming-together of the supporters in its highest intensities creates a (nationalist) "party atmosphere" (Stephens 2015: 2). The "affective national community is affirmed as a space of 'happy feelings'" (19).

This is the reason why the speeches and campaign of Trump were so often funny and why audience members often laughed – right-wing politics are a great liberation from what Hochschild calls "feeling rules." As Anderson puts it:

> It's the fun of feeling liberated as finally someone other than you is publically saying everything you were told you couldn't or shouldn't. The fun of not conforming to norms of action and

6 In future work we hope to explore the racial undertones of Trump's basic message as threats to the "psychological wages of whiteness" that the neoliberal substitution of individualized "diversity" for structural and institutional reform only exacerbated. We would look to the visibility of minority-identified "welfare" with the hoped for continuation of the "white socialism" of tax-deduction supported employer-provided health care, the mortgage interest deduction on individual federal income tax, tax-sheltered individual college savings, or individual retirement accounts, and so on (for a quick overview, see Ladd 2017).

thought that you never fully believed in or felt like you consented to. Often, it's the fun inseparable from violence. It's the fun of being on the side of the bully. Perhaps Trump gives people permission to have fun again in a mood and situation of too serious crisis ordinariness, permission to enjoy their resentment and grievances, permission to enjoy hate. (Anderson 2016: 14)

Throughout the campaign Trump "acts as a great antidepressant. Like other leaders promising rescue, Trump evokes a moral consciousness. But what he gives participants, emotionally speaking, is an ecstatic high. The costumes, hats, signs, and symbols reaffirm this new sense of unity" (Hochschild 2016: 226). In its highest intensity the emerging emotions form the different bodies to a "brother- and sisterhood of believers" or a "joyous unity of the gathering" (226). In such body politics doubt or skepticism in the supporters is erased. The core of true believers are so emotionally attached to the rush they feel in embracing Trump's populism that they are beyond all critical positions with regard to the words and actions of Trump on the rostrum. Introducing such a cognitive reflection would pull them out of the moment, and cause their bodily intensities to drop so much and so fast that would loose their emotional relation to the other persons of the crowd.

This affective unity gives the supporters a new strength and confidence that they could finally influence politics and that finally something will markedly change in their live. Life isn't a bad destiny any more. The emotional waves are a moment of empowerment to break through the felt oppression of the society, with its feeling rules, political correctness, and openness to migrant or refugees to name only a few of the critics of Trump supporters. To come back to our previous mention of Löwenthal, Trump as an agitator becomes the "advocate of social change" (Löwenthal 1946: 6).

This new unity is indeed only constructed in distinction to an enemy like "Muslims", "blacks", "feminists", "Mexicans", "the establishment" or political correct "liberals". "The act of casting out of the "bad one" helps fans unite in a shared sense of being the "good ones" who are now, like, the majority, no longer strangers in their own land" (Hochschild 2016: 226). Anderson's analysis resonates with that of Hochchild: Trump offers "a form of affective solidarity based on the affirmation of the validity and truth of those grievances and resentments – the affirmation of the validity and truth that your are right, that you have been sold out by, lied to, abandoned by, and conspired against by the 'establishment'" (Anderson 2016: 7).

The affective politics of right-wing populism succeed in building a new imagination of a contemporary strong nationality which promises a powerful America like Trump does in his constantly repeated slogan. In his landmark 2006 book, *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson points out that a *nation* is always a "product" of a "creation," a product of the "imagination" of the subjects and not a pre-given social state. We can add that these imaginations are highly affective, since, even if Anderson himself focusses on the discursive production of nations, he also notices the affective "attachment" (Anderson 2006: 141) of subjects to one nation. This attachment could be so strong that they are willing to die for their country. "It is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion." (6) He also characterizes the imagination of every nation as "*limited*", because only a specific group of people belong to it, a nation is also "*sovereign,*" it is autonomous in relation to other nations, and it is "a *community*" (7), because it is imagined that the people of the same nation are equal and part of the same collective regardless of the actual distribution of wealth.

In our reading of political emotion, we consider that collectivities are produced through affective ideologies and the circulation of different emotions. As Ahmed says, a nation, nationalism, or the imagination of a nation, are first and foremost built through the circulation of two emotions: love and hate. Emotions are "sticking together" (Ahmed 2004: 119) the individual body of a subject and the collective-social body of a nation. They constitute both through the circulation between "bodies and signs" (117). In ordinary white male nationalism, the collective body of one's "own" nation and its subjects are an object of love, such that subjects who supposedly do not belong to the same nation become an object of hate (118). Every object of hate "embody the threat of lost: lost jobs, lost money, lost land" (118), and we can add, the loss of a healthy life.

You can find these emotions of love a nation in moments of strong solidarity between the subjects of one nation. They are willing to help each other and in a case of emergency many of them would also die for "their" nation and "their" people in protecting them. The imagination of a nation is highly affective and increases the potentials and capacities of the subjects. But at the same time the construction of a nation is always the construction of an "outside" and "the other". In this process of building a nation there are also emotions of hate. Those who don't or should not belong to one's nation become the hated.

The anxiety about the future of the nation by supporters of right-wing politics shift to the hate of specific objects. Common affective racist and sexist stereotypes and authoritarian attitudes are two reasons for the changing of real social anxiety into cultural fears of immigrants, Muslims, women, or liberals. Because they are anxious about their future, subjects are looking for scapegoats who could be blamed for their problems. This is an antagonistic understanding of the world between "them" ("privileged" persons, "bureaucrats", "Washington", "the establishment"), and "us" (the "normal" and "modest" persons). They end up hating the weak, the frightened, and the helpless. Through such hate, they stabilize their own personality in a time of crisis (Adorno 1950).

The "others" are therefore at a high risk of becoming victims of discrimination and violence enacted by those who feel themselves to be the "true" subjects of a nation. Increasing affects are important causes when attitudes of hate become actions of hate. A highly affective nation building enables and is always related to rage and hate crime. All the "others" are in danger.

In this process of nation building the coercive reproduction function of affective ideologies is getting important again. Right-wing populism is a threshold and has a tendency towards a more repressive and violent social reproduction. Especially, in highly intensive moments during political campaigns or in a crowd of supporters populism emboldens and triggers subject to act violently against the "others" (of a nation or community). Political events with a tense atmosphere have a great impact on hate crime, as it was blatantly obvious after 9/11 when the hate crime against Muslims and Arabs rapidly increased (Disha et al. 2011). During his campaign and after the election of Trump with his hate speeches on Muslims, Mexican, immigrants, his discriminating words against woman, and people with disabilities, we see a similar development. The hate crimes against Muslim were up 78%, against Jews 2.66%, Gender/Transgender 40%, blacks 4.25%, or Arabs 219% over the course of 2015 (Levin and Grisham 2016). The hate crimes against Muslims are most since 9/11 era. In 2016 hate crimes have continued to rise. They rise more than 20% last year in specific metropolitan areas "fueled by inflamed passions during the presidential campaign." (Reuters 2017) All the victims are in the logic of right-wing populism people who "cut the line" and are privileged. Even if Trump affective politics are not the only reason they have a great impact on the increase of hate crime.

5. Conclusion

The phenomena of right-wing populism cannot be reduced to cognitive support for the policies of Trump. He mobilizes populism but he is not the only reason. "It resonates with and become part of the affective conditions of a post-Financial crisis world in which spreading economic precarity is being met by the irruption of populism of the left and right across" (Anderson 2016: 3) all over the world. And right-wing populism has of course a long history in western societies.

The paragraphs about the relation between Trump and his supporters have shown that there isn't a clear distinction between the cognitive conditions like their rational and reflexive motives of the Trump supporters and their more emotional involvement. Both the cognitive as well as the emotional motives of the subjects are interlinked and strengthen each other. To understand the phenomena Trump and in the end right-wing Populism it is necessary to focus on the diverse interplay of these two different modes of relations.

Let us end with a brief note to Gabriel Tarde's microsociology (1903) as providing a theory of the propagation of interpersonal emotion. For Tarde, the elementary social unit is the modification of a subject's beliefs and desires (their affective-cognitive structures) by imitation, opposition, or invention. Such modification constitutes waves or flows which traverse societies. This fluctuation gets "sedimented" in rates too high to be "overcoded" by traditional meaning systems, so that relatively novel emotional complexes can be propagated along social channels.

While it's (we can hope) overkill to connect the National Socialists with current right-wing populism, consider in conclusion a Tardean reading of the case study by William Sheridan Allen, *The Nazi Seizure of Power* (2014 [1965]). For Allen, it wasn't so much the effects of the Depression that started the radicalization of the petty bourgeoisie of Northeim as "the fear of its continued effects" (24). Reduction of credit directly and economically hurt workers, but the uncertainty of the valence of the emotional investment in credit flows, as we saw above, set up the propagation of fear: "the rest of the townspeople, haunted by the tense faces of the unemployed, asked themselves, 'Am I next?' 'When will it end?' Because there were no clear answers desperation grew" (24-25).

Such a Tardean microsociological analysis of the interpersonal emotional waves of right-wing populism – the propagation of anger, ressentiment, and "emotional distancing" from shame – should be one of our tasks in future research.

It will be very unlikely, or better, impossible that Trump's emotional politics will satisfy all the desires and all the hopes of his supporters. Hochschild (2016: 8ff) calls this "the great paradox" in which people vote for a party and a person who will not solve their different and complex problems at all. In the end their anxiety about the future will remain. Even if Trump is not the solution of their issues and problems he in fact is already changing the cultural values of what it does mean to be an American. This remains a problem too. But right-wing politics will remain "cruel" in Berlant's sense of "cruel optimism": an

> *affective structure* of an optimistic attachment involves a sustaining inclination to return to the scene of fantasy that enables you to expect that this time, nearness to this thing will help you or

a world to become different in just the right way. But, again, optimism is cruel when the object/scene that ignites a sense of possibility actually makes it impossible to attain the expansive transformation for which a person or a people risks striving; and, doubly, it is cruel insofar as the very pleasures of being inside a relation have become sustaining regardless of the content of the relation, such that a person or a world finds itself bound to a situation of profound threat that is, at the same time, profoundly confirming (Berlant 2011: 2).

This cruelty of right-wing populism could be a starting point in the struggle against it.

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