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Emergência global do conservadorismo político

As múltiplas evidências de uma nova onda política conservadora em todo mundo, seja por meio da competitividade crescente dos partidos de extrema direita seja por modalidades novas de golpes institucionais, têm despertado atenção de analistas e ativistas. A eleição de Donald Trump nos EUA, a consolidação eleitoral de Marine Le Pen na França, o nativismo do *UK Independence Party* (UKIP) que inspirou o *Brexit*, a escalada etnocentrista do governo Modi na Índia, xenofobia e chauvinismo de coalizões governamentais na Hungria e Polônia, além do golpe de Estado no Brasil e a derrota de governos de centro-esquerda, como a Argentina, são exemplos conspícuos.

É possível abordar cada uma dessas tendências de forma particular, mas há elementos comuns para análise da expansão das forças políticas conservadoras. Mas antes de avançar nessas delimitações é importante salientar que o emprego do conceito de conservadorismo não pode ser exclusivamente normativo, ou seja, não se refere apenas à reivindicação de um conjunto de valores tradicionais e à expectativa melancólica de retorno a um passado idealizado. Conservadorismo aqui também se vincula a uma posição relativa em relação ao repertório de direitos e políticas públicas voltados ao acesso isonômico a bens e serviços da cidadania, ou seja, toda transformação institucional que se afaste desse ponto de justiça distributiva pode ser considerada como uma opção conservadora, independente do repertório ideológico a ela vinculada estar ou não associado a uma expectativa normativa de uma sociedade tradicional.

Ano passado, a socióloga norte-americana Nancy Fraser jogou mais lenha nessa fogueira ao cunhar uma expressão aparentemente paradoxal: “neoliberalismo progressista”. Chamou atenção sobre como um amplo repertório de ideias progressistas, geralmente associadas à autonomia individual, pode ser perfeitamente compatível com o conservadorismo de um mundo macroeconômico e institucional baseado na concentração a riqueza. Isso quer dizer que o conservadorismo como um repertório de iniciativas políticas e macroeconômicas, voltado para concentração de renda, pode se apropriar de bandeiras culturais subversivas para justificar moralmente sua agenda.

Nesse contexto, a perda da capacidade de persuasão do *establishment* político e dos conglomerados de imprensa sobre o eleitor mediano nos EUA e Inglaterra tem produzido novas terminologias e ressuscitado antigas. O conceito de pós-verdade agora anda lado a lado com o tema do populismo. Apesar desse agudo mal-estar no eixo atlântico norte em relação aos rumos da política, os dados sobre o colapso econômico da classe média norte-americana, baseados na consolidação de um sistema tributário regressivo, como resumido por Thomas Piketty, já se apresentavam como uma tendência persistente desde os anos 1980. A emergência de movimentos nativistas, como o *Tea Party*, cuja base social é constituída pelos grupos que mais sofreram com o empobrecimento da classe média nos EUA, tem sido instrumentalizada por *think tanks* e conglomerados de mídia, e passaram a jogar um papel crucial na criação de um ressentimento de fundo racial, xenófobo e chauvinista que desembocou na eleição de Donald Trump. Os trabalhos recentes de Theda Skocpol e Vanessa Williamson permitem uma leitura mais detalhada.

Na América do Sul, as variáveis para a emergência conservadora possuem uma outra composição. As coalizões de centro esquerda que governaram a região nos últimos 15 anos conseguiram estabelecer políticas públicas moderadas, com resultados positivos do ponto de vista da redução da desigualdade. Aproveitaram um intervalo macroeconômico de bonança, com preços elevados das *commodities* agrícolas, minerais e energéticas para financiar suas estratégias de desenvolvimento. Expandiram o mercado de consumo doméstico pela elevação da renda do trabalho, produzindo novas demandas por bens e serviços que passaram a ser atendidos especialmente pelo mercado privado. Essa expansão foi irrigada por novos mecanismos crédito, públicos e privados, numa ampla financeirização do acesso a serviços como educação, saúde e previdência. O excelente trabalho da Lena Lavinas – *The Takeover of Social Policy by Financialization: The Brazilian Paradox* – descortina esse aspecto das administrações do Partido dos Trabalhadores no Brasil, com pistas importantes para avaliar como isso afeta a solidariedade política que deveria vincular a fruição do serviço com o sentimento de pertencimento à cidadania. De toda forma, esse dilema sobre o padrão de oferta de bens e serviços baseado no crédito não explica exclusivamente a virada política conservadora. A atuação hipertrofiada de conglomerados econômicos e suas associações perversas no âmbito da sociedade civil tiveram e ainda têm um papel importante para o colapso da democracia no Brasil. O jornalismo de guerra, associado a novos padrões de ativismo político do judiciário, conhecidos como *lawfare*, desequilibraram significativamente o pêndulo político.

Na Europa, as pressões que impulsionam o conservadorismo político possuem origens variadas. O modelo de integração monetária, que subtraiu a margem de manobra dos países membros para enfrentar crises financeiras e no balanço de pagamentos, penalizou os elos mais fracos da integração. Esse foi o caso da reestruturação da dívida da Grécia. Ao mesmo tempo, consolidou as tendências eurocéticas nos sistemas partidários do continente, como é o caso da *Front National*

francesa e do UKIP no Brexit. Os trabalhos recentes de Joseph Stiglitz e Yanis Varoukakis sobre os dilemas da integração europeia oferecem bons indícios sobre as origens macroeconômicas do conservadorismo. O baixo crescimento e a elevada carga de endividamento público sobrecarregou o orçamento público, forçando a Europa mediterrânea a cortar despesas públicas, particularmente nos serviços de *welfare* num contexto acentuada desigualdade e desemprego de dois dígitos. A literatura especializada sobre partidos de extrema direita na Europa, a exemplo de Cas Mudde, aponta que a intolerância ascendente não está associada às perdas de ordem econômica, mas sim a preocupações e reivindicações relacionadas com questões socioculturais e de política identitária, que a crise migratória só aguçou. No entanto, o aprofundamento de padrões estratificados de acesso a bens e serviços na Europa não pode ser desconsiderada.

Nesse número especial, reunimos um conjunto relevante de contribuições de pesquisadores que se dispuseram a avaliar os mais distintos aspectos da emergência do conservadorismo político globalmente.

O volume começa com o trabalho do professor Fernando Muñoz que se debruça sobre o conceito de constitucionalismo partidário. Em seu artigo *Constitucionalismo partisano de derecha en el Chile contemporáneo* Muñoz busca entender a forma pela qual as instituições e procedimentos do moderno constitucionalismo são empregados nas disputas para fazer avançar objetivos partidários de longo e curto prazo. Para isso o autor faz uma análise das estratégias do constitucionalismo partidário da direita chilena contemporânea.

O artigo que se segue – *Coups, “smart coups” and elections: Right power strategies in a context of Left hegemony* – desdobra uma análise comparada dos modelos de golpe de Estado na América Latina. O professor Barry Cannon emprega o arcabouço teórico do Michel Mann para desenhar uma nova tipologia de golpes institucionais. Ele chama atenção para o fato de que as análises sobre as estratégias de poder da direita na América Latina carecem de uma abordagem que não se limite aos estudos de competição partidária. Dessa forma, Cannon investe numa análise mais abrangente, baseada na sociologia política e em teorias da psicologia política. Para isso, apresenta três planos de análise: eleitoral, extraeleitoral e semi ou extraconstitucional. Usando como estudo de caso a deposição da presidente Dilma Rousseff em 2016, o artigo busca desenvolver uma tipologia que o autor denominou de *smart coup*. Esse modelo permitiu que as forças políticas de direita desalojassem a esquerda do poder combinando mecanismos extraeleitorais e extraconstitucionais, com relativa legitimidade institucional e popular.

Percorrendo uma senda semelhante a Cannon, o trabalho de Guilherme Simões e Giovana Soares procura também escapar do enquadramento partidário para entender o conservadorismo brasileiro. Realizam uma etnografia nas pulsões fascistas que tomaram corpo desde as primeiras manifestações de rua de 2013. O artigo *O fascismo no Brasil: o ovo da serpente chocou* procura estabelecer as homologias

entre as definições conceituais do fascismo e as representações discursivas dos manifestantes favoráveis ao *impeachment* entre 2013 e 2016.

Cruzando o atlântico, temos o artigo dos professores Veith Selk and Jared Sonnicksen – *Between Opportunism and Limitation: the resurgence of populism and the right-wing populist 'Alternative for Germany' (AfD)*. Eles oferecem um panorama do principal partido de extrema direita da Alemanha, o Alternativa para Alemanha (*Alternative für Deutschland* AfD). Os autores realizam uma cuidadosa costura conceitual, apontando as origens do populismo de direita e como seu repertório ideológico se filia a correntes ideacionais históricas, decisivas para República Federal Alemã. O eixo de sua agenda está circunscrito a forma como a AfD capitalizou politicamente as clivagens em torno do tema da abertura das fronteiras.

Ainda na Eurásia, Maria Snegovaya discute o giro conservador que teve lugar na Rússia nos últimos quinze anos em comparação com Hungria e Polônia. No seu *Political Conservatism in Russia*, Snegovaya procura mostrar que esse retrocesso tem origem socioeconômica e reflete a frustração da sociedade em relação ao rebaixamento da qualidade de vida provocado pela liberalização. Na Rússia, onde os processos de modernização foram mais superficiais, as antigas elites políticas puderam recuperar o poder precocemente e reverter as transformações sociais. Ao mesmo tempo Snegovaya alerta que Putin foi capaz de manipular as distintas escolas de pensamento conservador em seu benefício.

Para encerrar, há um artigo que trata do conservadorismo no sul da Ásia. O professor Surajit Mazumdar realizou uma excelente recuperação historiográfica do sistema partidário para entender a emergência da extrema direita na Índia. O seu artigo *Neo-Liberalism and the Rise of Right-Wing Conservatism in India* avalia as origens e consequências do giro conservador a partir da eleição de 2014. O artigo alega que a vitória de Narendra Modi serviu como instrumento político de reafirmação da elite econômica indiana.

Carlos Henrique Santana



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Constitucionalismo partisano de derecha en el Chile contemporáneo

Right-wing partisan constitutionalism in contemporary Chile

* Fernando Muñoz L.

Resumen

Este artículo propone el concepto de *constitucionalismo partisano* a fin de comprender la manera en que las instituciones y procedimientos del constitucionalismo moderno son utilizadas en la consecución de objetivos partisanos de corto y largo plazo. Se ilustra este concepto mediante un estudio de estrategias de constitucionalismo partisano empleadas por la derecha en la política chilena contemporánea.

Palabras clave: política constitucional, constitucionalismo partisano, constitucionalismo de derecha, Chile.

Abstract

This article puts forward the concept of partisan constitutionalism in order to understand the form in which the institutions and procedures of modern constitutionalism are used in the struggle to advance short and long-term partisan objectives. It illustrates this concept with a study of partisan constitutionalism strategies deployed by the right in contemporary Chilean politics.

Keywords: constitutional politics, partisan constitutionalism, right-wing constitutionalism, Chile.

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Introducción: el constitucionalismo partisano como categoría de la política constitucional

Al momento de concluir este trabajo, la prensa informó a la opinión pública internacional de un sorprendente evento: el Presidente de Brasil, Michel Temer, logró que el Senado aprobara una reforma constitucional que consagra medidas de austeridad fiscal destinadas a durar durante las próximas dos décadas. La propuesta de Temer, de llegar a ser aprobada también por la Cámara de Diputados, significará transformar en una regla constitucional, destinada a prevalecer por sobre la legislación futura, una medida de política fiscal que restringe la capacidad estatal de llevar a cabo intervenciones de carácter redistributivo. Si hubiésemos de identificar a los ganadores y perdedores de tal propuesta, no cabe duda de que habríamos de señalar, respectivamente, a los ricos contribuyentes tributarios y a las pobres clases populares. Si hubiésemos de adscribir una orientación política a tal propuesta, no cabría sino calificarla como una medida de carácter neoliberal y, en el contexto específico de la salida del Partido dos Trabalhadores del poder ejecutivo, de derecha.¹

La iniciativa de Temer corresponde a un caso paradigmático de utilización marcadamente partisana de potestades constitucionales; en este caso, de la potestad de reforma constitucional. Aquí denominaré como *constitucionalismo partisano* toda aquella praxis político-partidista que emplea instituciones y procedimientos de carácter constitucional a fin de hacer avanzar los intereses inmediatos y de largo plazo del respectivo sector político. Los actores que practican el constitucionalismo partisano tratan las instituciones y procedimientos contenidos en los textos constitucionales como un campo de batalla más en el cual librar su lucha político-partidista. En este caso, y debido a los contenidos específicos de la iniciativa de Temer, hablaré específicamente de *constitucionalismo partisano de derecha* o, para simplificar, de *constitucionalismo de derecha*.

El ejemplo ya señalado es aún más significativo si se toma en cuenta que Temer llegó a la presidencia brasileña tras un proceso de impeachment que removió a la presidenta Dilma Rouseff, caso que ha sido caracterizado por numerosos comentaristas como un caso de 'golpe blanco', analogando a través de dicho término la salida de Dilma del poder ejecutivo con las situaciones que afectaron al Presidente de Honduras Manuel Zelaya, arrestado por el ejército y exiliado tras haber desobedecido una sentencia de la Corte Suprema de su país que le ordenaba no llevar a cabo un plebiscito, y al Presidente de Paraguay Fernando Lugo, depuesto tras un rapidísimo proceso de acusación constitucional que no le proporcionó ni siquiera tiempo para preparar su defensa contra los cargos que se le formulaban. Por añadidura, al caracterizar como un 'golpe' estas salidas prematuras del ejecutivo, los comentaristas suelen hacer alusión a otros casos situados aún más atrás en el tiempo; particularmente, al golpe de estado que afectó en 1973 al Presidente de Chile Salvador Allende.

Sin embargo, a mi juicio, la comparación entre estos casos oscurece más que esclarece, pues no se toma suficientemente en serio el hecho de que, a diferencia del caso de Allende, e incluso del caso de Zelaya, es muy difícil emplear el discurso de la legalidad –implícita pero inequívocamente presente en el concepto de ‘golpe’ como su anverso conceptual– para cuestionar la legitimidad de la salida del ejecutivo de Lugo y de Dilma, pues ambos procesos se sujetaron a los procedimientos previstos por las respectivas constituciones de dichos países.² Así, el subsumir de manera indistinta los cuatro casos en cuestión bajo el paraguas de la ilegalidad mediante el concepto de ‘golpismo’ resulta en un reductivismo particularmente anacrónico; congelado en otra época histórica. Esto, ya que formas de acción partisana propias de la era del neoliberalismo globalizado, época en la cual se ha acelerado e incrementado la exigencia de someterse a la legalidad nacional y supranacional, son entendidas como meras variaciones de formas de acción partisana propias de la guerra fría, época en la cual la comunidad internacional estaba explícitamente dividida en dos y estaba, por ello, dispuesta a hacer vista gorda de aquellos casos de ilegalidad partisana ocurridos dentro de la órbita de influencia de alguna de las superpotencias de la época; situación ejemplificada, desde cierta perspectiva, en el golpe contra Allende. Y si el estudio de la relación entre acción partisana y constitucionalismo quiere captar con claridad histórica los eventos que concitan su interés, entonces dicho estudio debe rehusarse a leer la acción partisana en la era neoliberal a la luz de la acción partisana propia de la guerra fría.

En otros términos, el estudio de la política constitucional debe intentar explicar cómo se lleva a cabo la acción partisana hoy en día dentro de las coordenadas geopolíticas, culturales, e institucionales de la globalización neoliberal, caracterizadas por la juridificación del discurso público mediante el lenguaje de los derechos fundamentales y de los principios constitucionales, la juridificación de la política doméstica mediante instituciones y procedimientos positivizados constitucionalmente, y la juridificación del intercambio económico global a través de tratados internacionales y tribunales de alcance transnacional. Desde luego, la fuerza de la juridificación no se deja sentir de manera homogénea a través de las distintas esferas de la vida social ni, mucho menos, a lo largo y ancho de la desigual topografía del mundo neoliberal, donde la juridificación neoliberal afecta de distintas maneras a los distintos *demos* y sus respectivas *polis*. En la época neoliberal, el respeto a la legalidad es un recurso más a utilizar en la competencia económica global.

Mi punto, en consecuencia, es que la noción de ‘constitucionalismo de derecha’ debiera ser reconocida como una categoría de la política constitucional en su propio mérito. El desafío teórico que plantea este camino consiste en dejar de entender estrategias de política constitucional propias de la contemporaneidad neoliberal, ejemplificadas en los casos de Lugo y de Dilma, a la luz de estrategias partisanas propias de la guerra fría, ejemplificadas en el golpe de Estado en el Chile de 1973. Incluso más, como sugeriré en breve, el empuje de este esfuerzo revisionista puede llevarnos a

rediscutir la comprensión prevaleciente de este último caso, a fin de evidenciar que se trata del punto de partida de una de las manifestaciones de constitucionalismo de derecha más exitosas de la región de las últimas décadas.

¿Es posible construir una teoría comparada del constitucionalismo de derecha? Mi intuición es que esa posibilidad depende de una previa construcción de tipologías y clasificaciones articuladas a nivel de los estados nacionales. El estado, incluso en la era neoliberal, sigue siendo el espacio orgánico de la política constitucional, puesto que, en cuanto campo de batalla partisana, ella está precisamente orientada a apoderarse de los recursos simbólicos y políticos de la forma de legalidad estatal más elevada, la constitucionalidad. Una teoría del constitucionalismo de derecha debe comenzar, en consecuencia, en el ámbito doméstico estatal, para ir avanzando acumulativamente a partir de esa línea de base.

En este trabajo me aproximaré a la idea de constitucionalismo de derecha a partir del caso chileno. Este caso presenta características que le hacen servir de excelente punto de partida para una reflexión sobre la acción partisana que la saque del contexto de la guerra fría y la traiga al presente neoliberal. Quizás la mejor razón de que el caso chileno sirva este propósito se debe precisamente a que la salida del poder de Allende está registrada en el imaginario político mundial como el caso paradigmático de intervención partisana característica de la guerra fría. El general Augusto Pinochet, en ese sentido, se ha transformado en la cara paradigmática, la caricatura incluso, del militar golpista latinoamericano. Tras el descubrimiento de sus cuentas secretas en el banco Riggs, ni siquiera la derecha chilena está dispuesta hoy a disputar esa caracterización; dichas cuentas lograron destrozar la imagen que la derecha tenía de Pinochet como un estadista virtuoso que, al igual que el dictador romano Cincinato, asumió la dictadura para salvar la república. La destrucción de esta ficción es, desde luego, un desenlace positivo. Sin embargo, no podemos permitir que, junto con ello, desaparezca la conciencia de un hecho que, si bien no debe su existencia a las habilidades o destrezas de Pinochet, sí nos obliga a abandonar la caricatura putschista. Me refiero al hecho de que el golpe de estado en Chile, a diferencia de la mayoría de las dictaduras militares latinoamericanas, logró instaurar un régimen social e institucional que ha mostrado hasta el momento una asombrosa resiliencia, expresada en el hecho de que no sólo el modelo económico, social y político instaurado por la dictadura sino también la Constitución promulgada fraudulentamente durante dicho período se han mantenido, con cambios mínimos, tras el fin de la guerra fría y el advenimiento de los gobiernos civiles de centro-izquierda de la Concertación en 1990.

Hablar de constitucionalismo de derecha, en el caso chileno, supone hablar del proyecto político que le ha dado conducción a dicha praxis partisana. La historia de dicho proyecto comienza en 1967, cuando el estudiante de derecho Jaime Guzmán, perteneciente a las tradicionales familias aristocráticas chilenas, funda el así llamado Movimiento Gremialista, una agrupación ultraconservadora y militantemente católica, a fin de resistir el avance de la izquierda en la Universidad Católica de Chile. Este

contexto le permitió a Guzmán comenzar a desarrollar un discurso político centrado en la crítica de la 'politización' de la sociedad civil, esto es, de la movilización social en pos de transformaciones estructurales. Durante el gobierno de Allende, Guzmán, a esas alturas ya docente de derecho constitucional en la misma casa de estudios, se transformó en un reconocido dirigente opositor; y, tras el golpe, en el más importante asesor constitucional de la Junta Militar. Tras la entrada en vigencia en 1981 del texto constitucional en cuya redacción participó, Guzmán percibió que el futuro de su proyecto político dependía de la capacidad de adecuar sus estrategias al contexto de normalidad constitucional que dicho documento preveía que comenzaría hacia fines de la década. Por ello, en 1983 Guzmán fundó un partido político, la Unión Demócrata Independiente (UDI); y en las primeras elecciones parlamentarias hacia fines de la dictadura, en 1989, compitió por un escaño senatorial. Pese a que Guzmán obtuvo tan sólo un 17%, quedando por detrás de los dos candidatos de centroizquierda que obtuvieron cada uno de ellos en torno a un 30%, el sistema electoral implementado por la dictadura le permitió llegar al Senado. En 1991, una de las últimas células del movimiento militar de izquierda todavía operativas puso fin a su vida; pero el partido que organizó, y el ecosistema político-intelectual articulado en torno a él, ha mantenido hasta el día de hoy un protagonismo central en la utilización de los procedimientos e instituciones constitucionales con el propósito de defender el modelo neoliberal.

La tradición del moderno constitucionalismo de derecha chileno encuentra su hora cero en el golpe de estado de 1973, el que le dio la posibilidad a un reducido grupo de abogados y economistas de derecha de transformar radicalmente la sociedad, la política, la economía y la cultura chilenas. El golpe de 1973 es, en ese sentido, más que un simple putsch; tanto ese evento como los actos de violencia política habitualmente subsumidos bajo la categoría de violaciones a los derechos humanos deben ser entendidos como actos de instrumentalización de la violencia con el objetivo de llevar a cabo transformaciones políticas de carácter constituyente. Durante el período en que se redactó el texto constitucional, el cual va de 1973 a 1980, la estrategia medular del constitucionalismo de derecha chileno fue el atrincheramiento constitucional;³ el insertar sus intereses de corto y largo plazo en el texto constitucional, cuya rigidez fue reforzada a través de reglas de modificación considerablemente más difíciles de satisfacer que las que contenía la Constitución anterior. Desde el fin de la dictadura y la llegada al poder ejecutivo de la centro-izquierda en 1990, la UDI, y en general la derecha chilena, ha explotado hábilmente todas las posibilidades de utilización partisanas de las instituciones y procedimientos del estado constitucional de derecho. Particularmente importante ha sido la obstaculización de toda reforma significativa al entramado constitucional y legislativo legado por la dictadura mediante el poder de veto que le dan a los parlamentarios de derecha los altos quórum de reforma constitucional y de aprobación de leyes contemplados por el texto constitucional. Esa estrategia ha estado acompañada por la formación de opinión pública a través del periódico *El Mercurio*, invariablemente comprometido con las facciones más

intransigentes de la derecha, y de centros de estudios financiados por el empresariado; por la reproducción de cuadros técnicos y políticos, particularmente mediante el rol desempeñado por la Facultad de Derecho de la Universidad Católica, hasta el día de hoy centro de formación de dirigentes de la UDI y de abogados constitucionalistas cercanos a su agenda; y, cuando se vuelve necesario, de estrategias de recurso a la jurisdicción constitucional en sus diversas formas, tanto al Tribunal Constitucional, cuyo rol de revisión de proyectos de ley y decretos administrativos le transforma en una verdadera 'tercera cámara legislativa', como a los tribunales ordinarios mediante el uso de la acción de protección de derechos constitucionales, mediante la cual han podido judicializar iniciativas opuestas al programa político de la derecha.

El estudio del constitucionalismo partisano de derecha en el Chile contemporáneo sugiere la existencia, como parte del repertorio de modos de actuar de dicho fenómeno, de al menos las siguientes tres estrategias: *atrincheramiento constitucional*, consistente en la inscripción en el texto constitucional de objetivos de largo plazo e intereses inmediatos del movimiento; *partisanización de la judicatura*, tanto de la constitucional como de la ordinaria, mediante el nombramiento de jueces que suscriben los objetivos partisanos de largo plazo de la autoridad que los nombró, de tal manera de asegurar la legitimación judicial de reglas partisanas de rango constitucional o legislativo; *obstrucción legislativa*, consistente en la utilización de procedimientos constitucionales para impedir la realización de reformas; y *litigio constitucional*, consistente en la utilización de la jurisdicción constitucional. Distintos casos de constitucionalismo partisano, desde luego, adoptarán las estrategias que se adecúen a sus propios objetivos y al escenario constitucional en el cual se desenvuelven. En este sentido, lo que ofrezco aquí se trata de un esfuerzo prematuro y tentativo por identificar algunas estrategias típicas del repertorio del constitucionalismo de derecha en estudio. Debido a que en un anterior trabajo estudié lo que considero el caso más sostenido de litigio constitucional llevado a cabo por el constitucionalismo de derecha chileno contemporáneo, el litigio contra la píldora del día después (Muñoz 2014), en este lugar me concentraré en ofrecer casos que ilustran las estrategias de atrincheramiento constitucional, de partisanización de la judicatura y de obstrucción legislativa.

Atrincheramiento de reglas que debilitan a los sindicatos

Durante el período que precedió al golpe de Estado, los sindicatos habían sido uno de los principales instrumentos del conflicto social redistributivo. Socavar la fuerza de ellos a futuro era, en consecuencia, un objetivo estratégico de la derecha. Es importante, en consecuencia, comprender la importancia que el sindicalismo tenía antes de 1973. Sus luchas y movilizaciones fueron responsables de importantes conquistas durante la vigencia de la Constitución de 1925, ejemplificadas en el incremento sostenido de prestaciones sociales y el aumento real de los salarios durante la segunda mitad de los 60' y los primeros años 70'.

Al menos tres razones explican esta capacidad del sindicalismo de incidir en la distribución de la renta nacional. La primera consiste en el esfuerzo de los trabajadores de articularse unitariamente, lo que se expresó durante el período de 1953 a 1973 en la existencia de una organización multisindical que agrupaba a los principales sindicatos y federaciones sindicales chilenas, la Central Única de Trabajadores (CUT). La segunda corresponde a la politización de la CUT, expresada en la proclamación de diversas transformaciones estructurales en la sociedad chilena como objetivos programáticos de la propia organización multisindical. La tercera consiste en el incremento paulatino de los niveles de afiliación sindical de la totalidad de los trabajadores, llegando hasta llegar a comprender a un tercio de la fuerza laboral hacia el período de la Unidad Popular, el mayor nivel de sindicalización en la historia chilena.

Ahora bien, ¿qué explica el incremento en la tasa de sindicalización durante los períodos de Frei y Allende? Para dar con la respuesta, es necesario tener presente que durante el período que va de los años 30' a 1973 hay ciertas circunstancias que varían y otras que se mantienen estables. Entre las circunstancias que varían se encuentra la actitud de los Ejecutivos hacia la movilización sindical y la protesta popular en general, actitud que durante gran parte del período consistió en la represión e incluso en la matanza de trabajadores o pobladores movilizados, como ocurrió en Ránquil (1934), Plaza Bulnes (1946), José María Caro (1962), El Salvador (1966), Pampa Irigoín (1969). En cambio, durante los gobiernos de Eduardo Frei (1964-1970) y Allende (1970-1973), el Ejecutivo abrazó públicamente un discurso de reivindicación de los intereses de los sectores populares. Si bien el programa de la 'promoción popular' de Frei no implicó que no haya habido casos de represión durante su gobierno, durante el gobierno de Allende se tradujo incluso en el uso del control de la fuerza pública, que el Ejecutivo detentaba constitucionalmente, con el fin de prevenir el desalojamiento violento de pobladores de terrenos en ocupación, lo que supuso dejar sin ejecución resoluciones judiciales que ordenaban el desalojo de los mismos. Estos cambios a nivel de la actitud del Ejecutivo parecieran haber incidido en la disposición al involucramiento social de todo tipo, incluyendo el sindical.

Una circunstancia, en cambio, que se mantiene estable durante todo el período es la regulación legal de la sindicalización. Ella favorecía la consolidación de la membresía sindical estableciendo la inscripción automática de los trabajadores en los sindicatos industriales ya constituidos. Así, el artículo 382 del Código del Trabajo señalaba que en los sindicatos industriales que hubiesen obtenido personalidad jurídica –la cual se obtenía presentando una solicitud con tal objeto ante la Inspección del Trabajo– “se considerarán sindicalizados todos los obreros de la empresa, fábrica o industria”. Entonces, si bien la existencia de un sindicato en una determinada empresa era algo que debía ser requerido, solicitado, no algo que el régimen jurídico estableciera *ipso facto*, al menos una vez que aquel estuviese constituido, la incorporación de nuevos miembros era un asunto automático.⁴

Ahora bien, para los sectores civiles que apoyaron el golpe y dieron sustento y conducción política a la dictadura, los resultados de la movilización sindical tenían un carácter negativo. Jaime Guzmán criticaba la existencia de “sindicatos politizados, o lo que es peor, erigidos en grupos de presión más fuertes que el propio Estado y capaces de obtener injustos privilegios que además perjudican gravemente la economía”, los que, a su juicio, contribuían al conflicto social generando “un cuadro social de huelgas generalizadas y permanentes” (Guzmán 1991, 339). Por su parte, los economistas que asesoraron a la Junta Militar conocidos colectivamente como los ‘Chicago Boys’ también consideraban como perjudicial para el funcionamiento de la economía que “los distintos grupos sociales o de presión se organicen y traten de utilizar los recursos del Estado en su directo beneficio” (De Castro 1992, 30).

El movimiento sindical era, en el alineamiento de amigos y enemigos articulado por la Junta Militar, un enemigo importantísimo. Ello explica que una de las primeras medidas llevadas a cabo tras el golpe de Estado fuese la cancelación de la personalidad jurídica de la CUT a través del Decreto Ley N° 12, de 17 de septiembre de 1973, “por haberse transformado en un organismo de carácter político, bajo la influencia de tendencias foráneas y ajenas al sentir nacional”. Asimismo, el Decreto Ley en cuestión prohibió “toda organización y acción, propaganda de palabra, por escrito o por cualquier otro medio, que revelen, directa o indirectamente su funcionamiento”. Paralelamente, las fuerzas armadas desencadenaron un proceso de persecución, amedrentamiento y asesinato de dirigentes sindicales que duró durante todo el período de la dictadura. Finalmente, el ‘Plan Laboral’ de 1979, comprehensiva reforma al derecho sindical contenida en cuatro decretos leyes, restringió la negociación al interior de cada empresa y permitió evitar la paralización de actividades a través de medidas que autorizaban el reemplazo de trabajadores en caso de huelga.

La discusión al interior de la Comisión de Estudios de la Nueva Constitución (CENC), el órgano de asesores constitucionales que redactó el anteproyecto constitucional de la dictadura, evidenció el profundo rechazo hacia los elementos que habían permitido el éxito del sindicalismo durante la vigencia de la Constitución de 1925. Así, por ejemplo, en la Sesión 195, el Ministro del Trabajo, Sergio Fernández, argumentó que “es preciso que se consagre constitucionalmente que las organizaciones libres no deben tener compromisos partidistas” y que se le diera “rango constitucional a la incompatibilidad entre ser militante de un partido político y dirigente sindical”. También criticó el sentido mismo del actuar sindical en el período anterior, declarando que el deber de los sindicatos debía ser el “satisfacer las necesidades u obtener beneficios para los afiliados al sindicato” pero en un sentido “subordinado siempre al bien común”. Pareciera ser que para Fernández, el incremento de la participación de los trabajadores en el ingreso nacional iba *contra* el bien común. Y el principal instrumento de presión de los trabajadores, la huelga, era para Fernández “un instrumento que ha sido usado por ciertos grupos políticos como un instrumento de la lucha de clases”, que “crea odiosidades, desconfianza” y que, en última instancia, “es la forma en que se

manifiesta la fuerza, la ley del más fuerte". Sergio Diez llegó a afirmar, secundando a Fernández, que "la huelga es una expresión de la barbarie" (!). Pinochet, por su parte, en su memorándum *Normas para la Nueva Constitución*, enviado a la CENC en 1977, planteó que la Constitución debía perseguir el objetivo de lograr la "[s]uperación de la huelga como instrumento válido para enfrentar los conflictos laborales". Así lo presentaba José Piñera, como Ministro del Trabajo, en la Sesión Secreta Legislativa de la Junta Militar de 25 de junio de 1979:

[E]n la forma en que está concebido el esquema de huelga en el proyecto de negociación colectiva, con reemplazo de los sindicatos comunistas que se declaran en huelga, éstos se irían prontamente para afuera, porque precisamente la idea de formar un sindicato comunista en este esquema, se traduce en un suicidio de los comunistas.

El objetivo de disminuir la fuerza de los sindicatos se plasmó en diversas reglas constitucionales y legislativas. Así, por ejemplo, la Constitución prescribe en su artículo 19 N° 19 que las "organizaciones sindicales no podrán intervenir en actividades político partidistas" y establece, en su artículo 23, una rígida separación entre lo 'gremial' y lo 'político'. Otra forma de reducir la fuerza sindical consistió en imposibilitar constitucionalmente que futuras leyes establecieran la obligatoriedad de la afiliación sindical o su carácter automático. En la Sesión 206 de la CENC, Guzmán planteó la necesidad de que la Constitución tomara una postura frente a lo que caracterizó como "el problema de la afiliación libre u obligatoria a las organizaciones gremiales que se formen en el campo de una respectiva actividad". Guzmán reconoció que la libre afiliación podía conducir a la atomización de la fuerza laboral en diversas organizaciones o derechamente a la no participación en ellas; pero aún así se inclinó por consagrar la libertad individual en esta materia, aseverando que ella le parecía una "consecuencia natural" de la libertad sindical. Guzmán reforzó este argumento observando que en general le costaba concebir "un derecho que sea obligatorio, porque entonces ya no pasa a ser derecho, sino una función". La Constitución, recogiendo las opiniones de Guzmán, establece en su artículo 19 N° 19 que "[l]a afiliación sindical será siempre voluntaria", lo que busca impedir el establecimiento de reglas sobre afiliación sindical como las existentes hasta septiembre de 1973. Así, la fuerza de los sindicatos esté estructuralmente supeditada a un acto individual de afiliación, en línea con la concepción individualista del mundo que sustenta el proyecto neoliberal. Finalmente, el nuevo Código del Trabajo promulgado por la dictadura autorizó el reemplazo de trabajadores en huelga, medida que priva a la huelga de toda capacidad de lograr su objetivo funcional de empoderar a los trabajadores frente a sus empleadores.

Atrincheramiento y legitimación judicial de reglas que favorecen electoralmente a la derecha

El segundo caso de atrincheramiento constitucional que me interesa presentar aquí, y que ofrecerá también un ejemplo de legitimación judicial de reglas, corresponde al establecimiento de un procedimiento electoral diseñado para maximizar el resultado de los partidos de derecha y minimizar las posibilidades de representación electoral de los partidos de izquierda. Este objetivo se logró mediante un diseño de distritos electorales orientado a sobrerrepresentar geográficamente a los lugares donde la Junta Militar obtuvo un mejor resultado en el plebiscito de 1988, unido a un peculiar sistema electoral, el así llamado *sistema binominal*. Dicho sistema fue creado en 1989 mediante una reforma a la Ley de Votaciones Populares y Escrutinios:

Artículo 109 bis.- En el caso de elecciones de Parlamentarios, el Tribunal proclamará elegidos Senadores o Diputados a los dos candidatos de una misma lista, cuando ésta alcanzare el mayor número de sufragios y tuviere un total de votos que excediere el doble de los que alcanzare la lista o nómina que le siguiere en número de sufragios.

Si ninguna lista obtuviere los dos cargos, elegirá un cargo cada una de las listas o nóminas que obtengan las dos más altas mayorías de votos totales de lista o nómina, debiendo el Tribunal proclamar elegidos Senadores o Diputados a aquellos candidatos que, dentro de cada lista o nómina, hubieren obtenido las más altas mayorías.

Si el segundo cargo por llenar correspondiere con igual derecho a dos o más listas o nóminas, el Tribunal proclamará electo al candidato que hubiere reunido mayor cantidad de preferencias individuales.

La particularidad de este sistema es que dificulta la obtención de mayorías parlamentarias y, con ello, dificulta la aprobación de legislación que modifique el status quo, favoreciendo la legislación aprobada durante la dictadura. Dicho sistema también tiende a la conformación de dos coaliciones, debido a que deja automáticamente sin representación a una coalición o partido que obtenga el tercer lugar en las elecciones. Un importante detalle histórico-contextual es que, antes del golpe, el sistema de partidos políticos chileno había estado caracterizado por la existencia de los así llamados 'tres tercios'; es decir, la derecha, el centro, y la izquierda. Si bien la izquierda marxista había sido prohibida constitucionalmente, este sistema se orientaba a asegurar que ella no tendría representación electoral, por cuanto se estimaba que, en la medida en que la izquierda lograra competir electoralmente pese a la prohibición (la cual fue por lo demás revocada en 1989), ella obtendría siempre el tercer lugar y en consecuencia quedaría fuera del Congreso, como de hecho ocurrió.

Desbaratar el sistema de partidos que había permitido el surgimiento de proyectos políticos redistribucionistas representaba, en consecuencia, al mismo tiempo un objetivo de largo plazo y un interés inmediato de la derecha. Podemos encontrar esa preocupación en el Informe de la Subcomisión CENC encargada del estudio del

Sistema Electoral y del Estatuto de los Partidos Políticos, documento entregado a la CENC en su sesión de 12 de julio de 1978. Podemos leer en dicho Informe que el “sistema electoral proporcional imperante en nuestro país hasta el 11 de septiembre de 1973, a juicio de esta Subcomisión, estimuló la división de la sociedad y agravó la lucha entre los partidos políticos, entidades que, con el tiempo, fueron monopolizando la expresión ciudadana con exclusión casi absoluta de los sectores independientes, lo que contribuyó a la inestabilidad de los gobiernos con gran rotativa de alternativas, exageró el poder de las directivas nacionales de los partidos y creó las condiciones ideales para el surgimiento de las colectividades marxistas.” En opinión de sus integrantes, al “favorecer la expresión de todas las opiniones”, el sistema representativo “acentúa la función de las oposiciones sin matices y el carácter conflictivo de las sociedades políticas, haciendo difícil el establecimiento de una mayoría permanente de Gobierno”.

Los elementos electorales de esta estrategia de distorsión del paradigma democrático fueron introducidos por la Junta Militar mediante una reforma a la Ley sobre Votaciones Populares y Escrutinios promulgada el 16 de mayo de 1989, tras nueve meses de tramitación. Dicho proyecto de ley resolvió dos dudas centrales que aun pendían en materia de organización política: primero, cuál sería la división geográfica del electorado para efectos de la integración de la Cámara de Diputados y el Senado; y segundo, cuál sería el sistema electoral mediante el cual dichas autoridades serían elegidas. En aquel entonces, la Junta Militar ya contaba con un indicador respecto de la tónica electoral del futuro cercano, proporcionado por los resultados del plebiscito de 1988. Así las cosas, la Junta resolvió estas dos preguntas de una manera funcional a su interés por preservar su ‘modelo’, sobrerrepresentando mediante un diseño partisano de los distritos electorales a los sectores políticamente conservadores y dificultando la traducción de las mayorías electorales en mayorías parlamentarias.

Ahora bien, en un caso que también equivale a una medida de atrincheramiento constitucional, la Constitución de la dictadura había creado una nueva categoría de ley, las leyes orgánicas constitucionales, determinando que las leyes que la Constitución expresamente calificara como tales requerirían de las cuatro séptimas partes de los diputados y senadores en ejercicio para su aprobación, modificación o derogación. Hasta ese entonces, las reglas constitucionales chilenas jamás habían contemplado un quórum legislativo distinto de la mayoría simple de los diputados y senadores presentes. Adicionalmente, la Constitución también había determinado que dichas leyes debían ser revisadas por el Tribunal Constitucional, cuyos integrantes habían sido nombrados por la Junta Militar. El legado político, económico y social de la Junta Militar quedaba así protegido mediante una serie de candados que operan distorsionando la expresión política de las mayorías.

Por tratarse de una materia de rango orgánico constitucional, el proyecto de reforma electoral iniciado por la Junta Militar fue remitido al Tribunal Constitucional para su revisión. La atención de diversas organizaciones políticas, que hicieron llegar

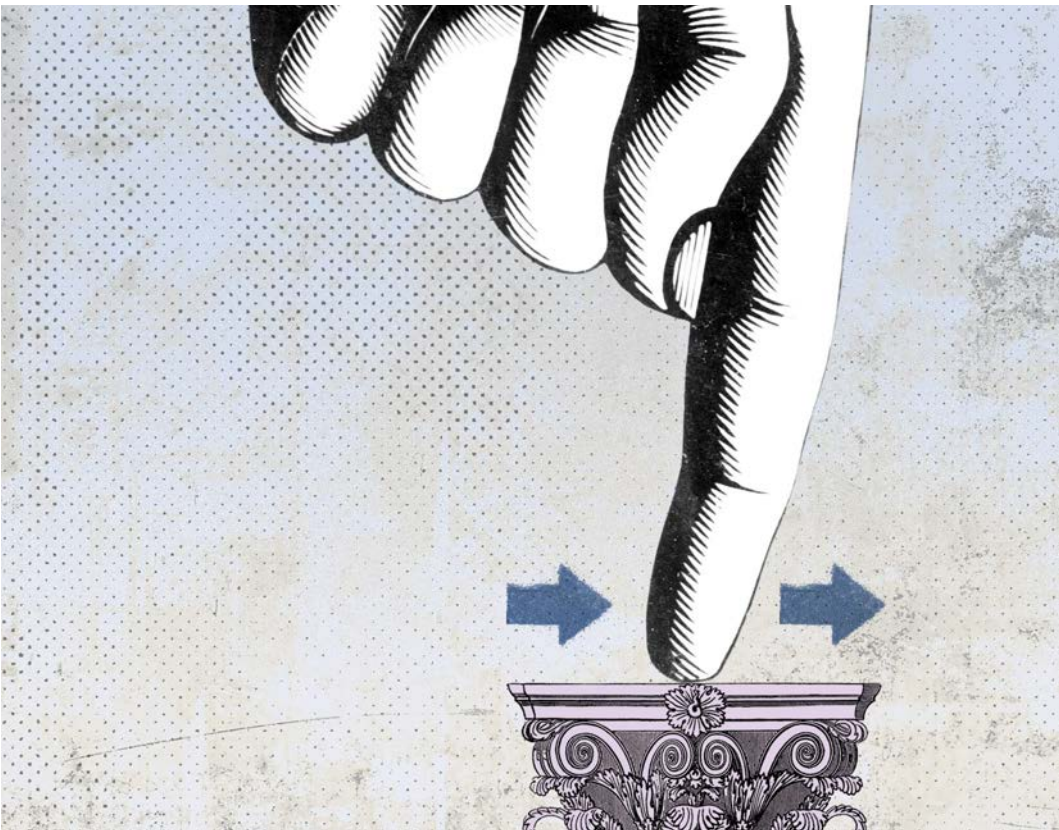
sus planteamientos al Tribunal, estuvo puesta en la modificación que este proyecto de ley hacía respecto del requisito de residencia de los candidatos a parlamentarios en la región por la que compitieran para la primera elección. El distritaje partisano no pasó, sin embargo, desapercibido para un grupo de profesores universitarios, quienes argumentaron mediante una presentación al Tribunal, de fecha 18 de agosto de 1989, que la organización de los distritos infringía los principios de igualdad política establecidos en el propio texto constitucional de la dictadura. Dichos principios, escribieron, “constituyen la base esencial del ejercicio de la soberanía en una República democrática y el carácter igualitario del sufragio, se ve como una de las expresiones más capitales de aquel deber del Estado y todos sus órganos que se consagra en las Bases de la Institucionalidad”, consistente en “asegurar el derecho de las personas a participar con igualdad de oportunidades en la vida nacional”. En contraste con ello, y analizando los distritos electorales diseñados por el legislador –esto es, por la Junta Militar–, los peticionarios observaron que “la diferencia del valor del sufragio de un distrito electoral a otro en el proyecto de ley en examen varía de 1 a 5,58, vale decir, un 558%”.

Con fecha 12 de mayo de 1989, el Tribunal Constitucional emitió su pronunciamiento respecto a la constitucionalidad del proyecto de ley de la Junta Militar. El Tribunal resumió la petición antes reseñada de la siguiente manera: “el fundamento esencial de la objeción consiste en que no sólo no hay igualdad, sino tangibles diferencias en su conformación, lo que implicaría la infracción de aquellos preceptos de la Carta que tratan de la igualdad de oportunidades para participar en la vida nacional, la igualdad ante la ley, el sufragio igualitario”. La respuesta del Tribunal fue sostener que dicho reparo de constitucionalidad “carece de todo fundamento, ya que el constituyente entregó al legislador de la ley orgánica constitucional respectiva la determinación de los distritos electorales”. Para el Tribunal, la Constitución dejó “amplia facultad al legislador para determinar los distritos electorales. Ni siquiera consideró conveniente fijarle criterios o pautas de modo que el legislador ha tenido libertad para considerar factores de carácter geográfico, territorial, poblacional, socioeconómicos, estratégicos, etc.” El Tribunal, convenientemente, hizo caso omiso de los “criterios o pautas” evidentemente contenidos en los artículos 1º, 4º, y 15 de nuestra Constitución, que proclaman sin ambigüedades la igualdad política y la concretizan en el sufragio igualitario.

Obstrucción legislativa de propuestas redistributivas

La tramitación de la Ley Nº 19.966, que establece un régimen de garantías en salud también conocido como Plan AUGE (Acceso Universal de Garantías Explícitas) nos ofrecerá un ejemplo de obstrucción de medidas legislativas de carácter redistributivo. En efecto, el Ejecutivo ingresó una propuesta legislativa el 25 de junio de 2002 que contemplaba la creación de un Fondo de Compensación Solidaria orientado a

“terminar con las diferencias de precio que enfrentan las personas en razón de su sexo, edad y otros factores de riesgo”. A instancias de la Comisión de Salud de la Cámara de Diputados se introdujo una indicación estableciendo que “ninguna forma de funcionamiento del Fondo de Compensación Solidario podrá contemplar el traspaso neto de recursos desde el Fondo Nacional de Salud, o desde sus afiliados, hacia las Instituciones de Salud Previsional, o hacia sus afiliados”. Dicha indicación, que tenía por propósito asegurar que “el aporte fiscal no [fuera] un subsidio que pueda ser portable por parte de los beneficiarios, sino que [fuera] un aporte al sistema Fonasa para complementar o suplir las cotizaciones en caso de que éstas no se puedan hacer”, despertó la oposición de los diputados UDI Julio Dittborn y Gastón von Mühlenbrock, y fue calificada por la senadora UDI Evelyn Matthei como “inaceptable”. La discusión era relevante para los grupos de interés que operan en el sistema de salud, pues el fondo no sólo significaría un traspaso “desde las Instituciones de Salud Previsional al Fondo Nacional de Salud que ha sido estimado entre \$ 15.000 y \$ 18.000 millones” sino que, además, de ser consagrada la imposibilidad de traspasos podía desincentivar el traspaso de cotizantes del sistema público al privado y, más aún, incentivar el camino inverso.



Demos un salto hacia adelante en la historia. En la Sesión de 4 de agosto de 2004, el proyecto de ley fue aprobado en general por el Senado. La Senadora Matthei intervino para destacar que un proyecto de ley que “en su momento generó discusiones apasionadas, amenazas de paro en los hospitales, protestas de los gremios de la salud, votaciones divididas en la Cámara de Diputados, etcétera”, estuviera listo para ser despachado por el Senado “en unos minutos, gracias a que todo viene resuelto prácticamente por unanimidad”.

Es precisamente lo inesperado de esta unanimidad, si consideramos la oposición que había despertado anteriormente en los parlamentarios de la UDI, el síntoma que sugiere la existencia de algo más detrás de ella. Disintiendo de la optimista intervención de Matthei, el senador de centro-izquierda Nelson Ávila argumentó que dicha unanimidad se alcanzó “sobre la base de hacer sucumbir el Fondo de Compensación Solidario”, al cual calificó como “el alma del proyecto”. Para Ávila, tal abandono permitió que el “ámbito privado” se restara “de colaborar en un sistema de salud que está marcado por las gravísimas diferencias económicas existentes en la población”, expresadas en una “salud estratificada según la condición económica de los habitantes del país”.

Como respuesta, Matthei replicó duramente que “sostener que el Fondo de Compensación Solidario era el alma del proyecto AUGE sólo refleja la ignorancia que suele exhibir alegremente en esta Sala el Senador señor Ávila”. La razón de tal descalificación era que, según la Senadora, la centro-izquierda oficialista “tenía los votos suficientes para aprobar el Fondo de Compensación Solidario y no requería los de la Oposición”. No había existido un veto opositor en la legislación ya que, como la propia senadora hizo ver, “es una materia de quórum simple, no calificado”, por lo que “si el Gobierno decidió conversar con nosotros fue pensando en que ello era lo mejor para el futuro de la iniciativa, y no porque necesitara nuestro apoyo”.

A primera vista podría parecer que la senadora Matthei tenía razón en calificar la eliminación del Fondo de Compensación Solidario como un resultado de la deliberación imparcial. Un examen del registro histórico sugiere, sin embargo, algo distinto. Más bien lo que ocurrió fue que en este caso, tratándose de una ley simple donde los quóruns no servían para bloquear la iniciativa redistribuidora, los parlamentarios UDI opuestos al proyecto simplemente recurrieron a la barrera de contención última: el Tribunal Constitucional.

En efecto, en la sesión 12 de diciembre de 2002, el diputado UDI Patricio Melero planteó que el proyecto era inconstitucional; afirmación que reiteraron en la sesión de 15 de enero de 2003 los diputados UDI Marcelo Forni y Angélica Cristi en razón de que se afectaba el derecho de propiedad. El Primer Informe de la Comisión del Salud del Senado, fechado el 30 de abril de 2004, señala que en la Discusión General del proyecto el senador de derecha Alberto Espina alegó que “desviar parte de la cotización a la formación del Fondo de Compensación Solidario puede adolecer también de inconstitucionalidad, en la medida en que se priva a los cotizantes de

una parte de la cotización que les pertenece, de la que no podrán disponer porque la ley lo ha hecho por ellos". En la discusión en particular, el senador Espina precisó aún más su objeción, argumentando que destinar una parte de las cotizaciones de salud "a integrar el Fondo de Compensación Solidario implica el establecimiento de un impuesto encubierto, afecto a un fin específico, y constituye una flagrante violación del derecho de propiedad de cada afiliado respecto de sus propias cotizaciones de salud". Sobre la base de tales argumentos "anunció que se abstendría en la votación de los mismos y que parlamentarios de su sector recurrirán al Tribunal Constitucional para que dilucide estos puntos". A esta reserva de constitucionalidad, como se denomina al anuncio que se hace de la intención de recurrir al Tribunal, se sumó la senadora Evelyn Matthei.

La historia después de esto es simple. En la sesión de 10 de agosto de 2004 el diputado de derecha Francisco Bayo expresó su satisfacción con "la eliminación del Fondo de Compensación Solidario por parte del Senado", la cual, "lo dijimos en esta Sala y también en el Senado", tenía "visos de inconstitucionalidad, y no hay ninguna duda de que así habría sido". ¿Y cómo se resolvió la discrepancia política entre los partidarios y los detractores del Fondo? El Ejecutivo, interesado en lograr la aprobación del proyecto de ley, retiró la indicación ante el anuncio de los parlamentarios de derecha de recurrir al Tribunal Constitucional. En suma, el Tribunal Constitucional funcionó aquí como un mecanismo de obstrucción del proceso legislativo, al proporcionar a los parlamentarios de la UDI de una amenaza creíble de que impedirían la aprobación de la creación del proyecto AUGE de no ser retirado el Fondo de Compensación Solidario del mismo.

A modo de conclusión: el estudio de la política constitucional en la era del retorno de la política

El período que va de la caída del muro de Berlín a la crisis económica de 2008 pareciera haber representado un retroceso de la política que, de ser un espacio de contestación de la relación entre capitalismo y democracia, como lo había sido durante el 'corto siglo XX', pasó a transformarse en un ámbito de desnuda gestión tecnocrática. Diversos eventos ocurridos desde el 2008 en adelante, incluyendo significativas oleadas de movilización social a partir de 2011, parecieran indicar la existencia de un proceso de acelerada descomposición de la legitimidad del modelo global neoliberal consolidado tras la caída del muro. Por añadidura, el reciente triunfo de Donald Trump en las elecciones presidenciales norteamericanas ha atraído considerable atención hacia las manifestaciones populistas antiliberales. Las perspectivas que abren estos eventos para el estudio de la política constitucional, particularmente del constitucionalismo partisano, son significativas. En efecto, abundan las señales de que el 'retorno de la política' que estamos experimentando aumentará la importancia del estudio del constitucionalismo partisano, Gobiernos populistas de derecha como el

del partido Fidesz en Hungría ya han llevado a cabo estrategias de atrincheramiento constitucional y de partisanización de la judicatura. Así y todo, las perspectivas de dicho análisis deben contemplar la posibilidad de que la reacción contra la globalización derive en una destrucción del entramado de tratados de libre comercio que hacen posible el libre movimiento de capitales a lo largo y ancho del mundo. En la medida en que el retorno de la política no acabe con la globalización neoliberal, el respeto por la legalidad nacional e internacional mantendrá el valor que detenta hoy en día, lo cual seguirá asegurando la importancia y vitalidad del constitucionalismo partisano. No está de más tener en consideración, sin embargo, que los tiempos que vivimos nos han recordado que, cuando se trata de imaginar el futuro, no podemos dar nada por sentado.

Notas

¹ Es importante hacer esta salvedad, pues en países como España o Chile el 'atrincheramiento' de medidas de austeridad a nivel constitucional, legislativo o administrativo ha sido propuesto por partidos políticos tradicionalmente caracterizados como de izquierda. Si bien el Partido dos Trabalhadores también ha experimentado un desplazamiento hacia posiciones neoliberales, su hegemonía política y electoral desde la llegada de Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva a la presidencia se ha sustentado en gran medida en políticas de gasto social que se verían gravemente dificultadas con la reforma constitucional propuesta por Temer.

² La solución a este dilema, en el caso de Lugo, consistió en un primer momento en anunciar su intención recurrir al sistema interamericano de derechos humanos, invocando así la suprallegalidad internacional en reemplazo del lenguaje de la legalidad nacional. Como se ve, también Lugo intentó emplear de manera partisana una forma de legalidad, en este caso la del derecho internacional de los derechos humanos.

³ Empleo la expresión 'atrincheramiento constitucional' como un calco semántico del concepto inglés de *constitutional entrenchment*.

⁴ Esta regla operaba respecto de los sindicatos *industriales*; respecto de los sindicatos de *profesionales*, el Código establecía la necesidad de que los trabajadores que se incorporasen a la empresa solicitaran activamente su afiliación al sindicato. Detrás de esta distinción se encontraba la distinción contenida en el artículo 1º del Código entre *empleado*, "toda persona en cuyo trabajo predomine el esfuerzo *intelectual* sobre el físico", y *obrero*, todo aquel que "trabaje por cuenta ajena en un oficio u obra de mano o preste un servicio material determinado".

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Coups, “smart coups” and elections: Right power strategies in a context of Left hegemony

*‘Golpes, “golpes inteligentes” e eleições:
Estratégias de poder direitas num contexto
de hegemonia de esquerda’.*

* Barry Cannon

Abstract

Most analyses of Right-wing power strategies in Latin America highlight the relative paucity of dedicated Right-wing political parties, and the preponderance of non-electoral strategies. Despite this such studies continue to privilege the electoral over other strategies. This paper presents a more wide-ranging, comprehensive perspective based on political sociology and political psychology theories. Here strategies are categorised at three levels – electoral, extra-electoral and semi- or extra-constitutional - which can be activated in a multi-layered manner, depending on the level of threat perceived to Right objectives and on conditions on the ground. Using the case study of the removal of Dilma Rousseff from the presidency in Brazil in 2016, the article seeks to illustrate the ultimate aim of achieving a “smart coup”, whereby left governments are forced out of office with relatively little bloodshed and an element of popular and institutional legitimacy. In this way the Latin American Right aims to integrate electoral and non-electoral strategies to the democratic context of Left hegemony in the region.

Keywords: Latin America, Right, Threat, Strategies, Smart Coups

Resumo

A maioria das análises das estratégias de poder de direita na América Latina destacam a relativa escassez de partidos políticos de direita dedicados e a preponderância de estratégias não-eleitorais. Apesar disso, tais estudos continuam a privilegiar o eleitoral em detrimento de outras estratégias. Este artigo apresenta uma perspectiva mais abrangente baseada em sociologia política e teorias de psicologia política. Aqui, as estratégias são categorizadas em três níveis - eleitoral, extra-eleitoral e semi- ou extra-constitucional - que pode ser ativado de várias maneiras, dependendo do nível de ameaça percebida aos objetivos do Direito e às condições no terreno. Além disso, em casos de grande ameaça, o ideal é conseguir um “golpe inteligente”, pelo qual os governos de esquerda são forçados a sair do cargo com um elemento de legitimidade popular e institucional. Deste modo, a Direita Latino-Americana tem como objetivo integrar as estratégias eleitorais e não-eleitorais ao contexto democrático da hegemonia de esquerda na região

Palavras-chave: América Latina, Direito, Ameaça, Estratégias, ‘Golpes inteligentes’.

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Introduction

What and who are the Latin American Right, and what is their role in and impact on politics in the region? In this article I argue that traditional political science accounts of the phenomenon, with their emphasis on political parties and institutions, fail to grasp the multi-faceted nature of the Right in the region, with its context of vertiginous inequality. Instead I offer a more complex, layered and comprehensive view of the Latin American Right, composed of the following elements.

First, I identify, following Bobbio (1996), the central role of inequality, particularly class inequalities, in Left/Right differentiation. Second, I advance Michael Mann's concept of social power as an alternative framework, with its focus on power networks in the economic, ideological, political, military and transnational arenas. Third, I illustrate the key position of neoliberalism in Latin American Right discourse and policy. Moreover, I argue that the ultimate aim of such ideological preferences is to form what I call *right-oriented state/society complexes*, in which neoliberal forms of governance are embedded into Latin American power structures at the national, regional and transnational level. Ultimately, the "full spectrum" stability of such governance makes it much more difficult for ideological alternatives to prosper, as it is supported not just by state actors, but those at the sub-state and supra-state level too.

Fourth, I also argue that the success of this project has been fundamentally threatened by post-neoliberal, 'pink tide' governments in each of the power networks, provoking a multi-level strategic response from the Right. This has three inter-linked and complementary levels: the institutional, taking in parties, elections and institutions; mobilisational, involving not only popular mobilisations, but also elite 'structural' and 'instrumental' power (Fairfield 2015) especially in the economy and in the media, respectively; and, semi- or extra-constitutional, building on the previous strategies but aimed at a more immediate removal of a sitting Left president. I offer Brazil as a case study to illustrate the operation of these strategies. Overall I argue that the Latin American Right is a multi-faceted phenomenon, which reacts to the threat of the Left to elite interests, and presents a wide variety of strategic responses to this threat, with an ultimate aim to embed neoliberal governance at the national, regional and transnational levels. In this way, the analysis, unlike many previously, incorporates actors at levels above and below the state, as well as at the level of the state itself in a more systematic fashion.

The Right in theory

How can we define the Left/Right cleavage? First, following Bobbio (1996), issues of inequality are essential to its definition, both over time and across space; policy solutions may change but this central concern is constant. Second, this concern with inequality also has profound class consequences: policies associated with the Left

can involve more state intervention to lessen inequalities, while those on the Right seek to lessen state intervention with regard to inequalities, but to increase it with regard to ensuring market dominance. Each policy option has implicit and explicit outcomes favouring some classes over others, and hence class and, in particular, the role of elites should be central to any discussion of the Right. Third, such debates do not remain within State boundaries, but also structure international and global policy making, giving such debates an important transnational aspect (Noel and Thérien 2008; Silva 2009). Finally, the Left/Right debate takes place within a wider and never-ending struggle for hegemony between these fundamental worldviews. While certain consensus may emerge at particular times, these are rarely fixed and can and will be challenged.

In light of this discussion the core meaning of the Left/Right distinction can be conceived as "whether one supports or opposes social change in an egalitarian direction" (Ronald Inglehart cited in Noël and Thérien 2008, 10). As neoliberalism is recognised by many as leading to increased socio-economic inequality (Harvey 2005; Stiglitz 2012; Piketty, 2014), it can be argued that those who support and actively promote neoliberalism are on the Right of the political spectrum while those who oppose them, or at least question them, are to the Left. There is also, it must be noted, an important social conservative aspect to Right wing discourse which itself has an anti-egalitarian thrust. Yet this rarely disturbs, and often complements, the centrality of neoliberalism to the Right's overall project. The Right then, in the current historical context, is a class-based, elite-led project with neoliberalism as its ideological core.

The Right in Latin America

Chalmers et al. (1992) briefly trace the history of the Right in 20th century Latin America and note that political parties were not prominent in its political expressions throughout that century. During the Import Substitution Industrialisation (ISI) period, from the 1930's to the 1960's, many segments of the Right had 'personal, bureaucratic, and clientelistic ties' to state power (Chalmers et al. 1992, 4) which obviated the need for Right political parties in most of the region. However, these national-populist regimes betrayed their rightist allies, by supporting and encouraging 'populist, participative corporatism' (Chalmers et al. 1992, 4) which threatened elite dominance in favour of popular sectors, particularly as the global crises of the Keynesian model and its Latin American, ISI equivalent began to take hold.

As O' Donnell (1978) shows, the sense of threat felt by elites in the face of popular empowerment in the ISI period, led the former groups to turn to the military for support in the 1970s and early 1980s, drawing together an 'alliance of technocrats, the military and state-linked businesses' (Chalmers et al. 1992, 4) to rule the state through 'bureaucratic authoritarianism' (O' Donnell 1978). This arrangement, however, turned out to be spectacularly unsuccessful, at least in political terms, for a number of reasons,

including the unreliability of the military as an ally, especially due to the many human rights abuses committed by them during this period and, above all, the end of the Cold War and the eventual disappearance of the threat of the revolutionary Left. Therefore, as the 1980s progressed, sectors of the Right began to embrace democracy and indeed played a 'crucial role, if not dominated, transitions to democracy' in this period (Chalmers et al. 1992, 3). This position also allowed the Right to redefine democracy in the liberal sense of competitive democratic institutions, while the equalising, substantive elements of democracy were muted (Chalmers et al. 1992, 5). Right-wing sectors loosened their previous close ties to the state, in favour of a new emphasis on parties, legislatures and elections (Chalmers et al. 1992, 7), and a separation between state, society and church. The aim, then, was to create a Lockean 'night-watchman state' although this was not always achieved in practice (Chalmers et al. 1992, 9).

The Latin American Right then goes far beyond political parties in this account. Traditionally the authors maintain, the main actors on the Right were Church hierarchies, the military and socio-economic elites (Chalmers et al. 1992, 7), and as neoliberalism develops there is an increasing role for the private media, and 'large firms and powerful think tanks' (Boron 1992, 69) with a distancing between the military and the state. The new 'core constituency' then of the Latin American Right – that is 'those actors of society that are most important to its political agenda and resources' (Gibson 1992, 15) - are those groups who support the free market and a lessening of state power over market relations.

Therefore, it is not political parties which dominate the Right in Latin America, but rather the paramount expressions of economic (business groups), ideological (Church, media, think tanks etc.), and military power. It is these which condition political power, without negating the possibility that political power can also shape and condition these areas of power in turn. In effect, there is no hierarchy between these different sectors of power; indeed, if anything elites seek harmony between all four of them in favour of the supremacy of their own social power. The problem for the Right then is not how to transform the traditional relationships between these areas of power and the State 'into institutionalised and responsible representation' as Chalmers et al. (1992, 4) maintain, but rather how this can be done without allowing elite domination in all four areas to be threatened. Hence, the aim is achieving stable regimes of governance, which nonetheless, do not threaten, but rather enhance elite dominance and the liberal economic and political models which they support.

Yet, this broader vision of the Latin American Right, in this and most other treatments of the subject matter (Middlebrook 2000; Luna and Rovira Kaltwasser 2014) is muted in favour of an analytical accent which remains invariably on the subsidiarity of these other areas of power to state power. Indeed, often they are not recognised as distinct areas of power in their own right, but rather as simply sectional interests which jostle for recognition with other such interests, such as labour, to have access to state power. Yet this underestimates the overwhelming weight of elite dominance in

these areas of power and its ability to override political power and reorient it to an elite worldview. The literature on the Latin American Right then is dominated by a liberal, institutionalist, pluralist perspective, which is insufficiently equipped to analyse the complexities which the vertiginous asymmetries of power present in the region. The issue of power then should be central to any analysis, as these elites possess greater social power than any other group in Latin American societies.

Mann, Social Power and the Latin American Right

Here I contend that Michael Mann's concept of social power provides a broader framework from which to view these different arenas. For Mann, power operates through 'multiple overlapping and intersecting sociospatial networks' (Mann, 1986, 13), within a specifically identified territory. These networks of power reflect the four sources of social power in any given social formation - ideological, economic, military, and political –none of which has primacy as and of itself, but which can develop such primacy at distinct moments in history in different societies, depending on the context found.

Mann defines each power network as Weberian 'ideal types' with their particular organisational forms. *Ideological* power then is 'when meaning, norms and aesthetic and ritual practices are monopolized by a distinctive group [which must be] highly plausible in the conditions of the time' (Mann 1986, 23). *Economic* power 'derives from the satisfaction of subsistence needs through the social organisation of the extraction, transformation, distribution, and consumption of the objects of nature' (Mann 1986, 23). This process causes the formation of social classes, with the dominant class monopolising control over these processes (Mann 1986, 23). *Military* power 'derives from the necessity of organised physical defence and its usefulness for aggression' (Mann 1986, 26). Ideally, in democracies, military power should be subservient to political power, but this is not always the case as Latin America's history of military regimes amply demonstrates.

Political power 'derives from the usefulness of centralised, institutionalised, territorialised regulation on many aspects of social relations' in other words 'state power' (Mann 1986, 23). Political power can take *despotic* or *infrastructural* forms, the first when elites 'take decisions without negotiation with groups in civil society' (Mann, 2002, 2); the second when states 'possess infrastructures penetrating universally throughout civil society, through which political elites can extract resources from, and provide services to all its subjects' (Mann, 2002, 2). In most advanced democracies, state power is despotically weak but infrastructurally strong, that is that states have high levels of command over each network of power, but that this command rests on equally high levels of popular legitimacy, usually achieved through political parties. It also has a strong transnational element, usually organised along imperial or multi-state lines (Mann, 1986, 27). As Silva (2009) points out, this factor has important

consequences for Latin America in particular due to the region's high dependence on international financial institutions, foreign investment, international markets and the influence of the United States.

The central issue for Latin American states to develop democratically then is, according to Mann (2002), the lessening of inequalities, which in turn requires the reduction of oligarchical power with an increase in state power. Yet, here I argue that Latin American elites possess sufficient collective power across each of the four power networks to successfully resist any move towards greater social equalisation, which would by necessity involve a lessening of their own power. Moreover, Fairfield (2015) shows that neoliberalism has increased rather than lessened the business elite's structural and instrumental power, using it to reinforce that ideology, both nationally and transnationally, across each of the power networks. Hence, neoliberalism is central to the maintenance and extension of elite power in the current historical conjuncture, a fact recognised both in Right-wing discourse and in Right-wing policy performance.

Right-Wing Neoliberal Discourses and Practice in Latin America

Cannon (2016) finds that among Right or liberal-leaning civil society groups and political parties in four countries in South America – Argentina, Chile, Colombia and Venezuela – there is a still firm adherence to neoliberal market-based principles with, however, a more nuanced appreciation for the need for poverty alleviation. In terms of state/market relations there is a firm consensus around the subsidiarity of the state to the market. State intervention in the economy – and indeed society – must be kept to a minimum, if it should exist at all; indeed the state should regard the economy as the preserve of the private sector and ensure its continuance. Basic public services – primarily health and education – should be provided for the poor, but these services do not necessarily need to be provided by the state. Nor is the aim to lessen socio-economic inequality, but rather to facilitate individual participation in the market, with employment, in the private sector preferably, seen as the main goal. This viewpoint hence is in line with orthodox neoliberal policies as promulgated by international financial institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank, as well as mainstream political thinking in Europe and the United States (Silva 2009, 39).

Views on inequalities of class, race or gender are for the most part unacknowledged by subjects in all four countries, with instead an emphasis on the individual, who with the right guidance, support and personal effort and regardless of race, class or gender, can participate in national life and achieve success to any level. Women may 'choose' not to participate in the market in order to devote time to family, and this is sometimes ascribed to her essential nature, as innately caring and nurturing and not simply to her individual choice. It is to be noted, however, that such gender stereotypes are not generalised as in Argentina and Chile, in particular, there is a general acceptance

on the need for action to improve gender equality in the workplace. Nevertheless, policy solutions offered are primarily market based, voluntary and rarely accept state intervention. Meanwhile, education, especially in Argentina, is identified as key to ensure that a supposed innate entrepreneurialism predominates in the popular imagination.

Hence, despite some differences around levels of state provision, discourse among Right-leaning and liberal actors, in politics, civil society and in business, across these four countries reflects a remarkably coherent view of the type of society required in Latin America; one based on neoliberal, market-based tenets in which resulting inequalities are of scant concern. These findings are similar to those found by Reis (2011) in her study of Brazilian elite attitudes on the same issues, providing further evidence of their prevalence among elites in the region.

Furthermore, on examining policy options in four Latin American countries which are most dominated by neoliberalism in the current context – Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru – we find such beliefs transformed faithfully into policy. Despite Left-led governments in two of these countries (at the time of writing Chile and Peru), neoliberalism is so deeply embedded in national power networks that alternative policy options are extremely difficult to implement without fierce elite resistance. *Economically*, these countries are characterised by little state controlled enterprise and low levels of market controlling state intervention, and with high levels of market freedom, corporatisation and transnationalisation of business ownership structures. They also have highly open trading regimes, with a large number of free trade agreements (FTAs), most commonly with the US. FTA's are particularly important as they usually contain legal clauses which inhibit policy change liable to prejudice profit, regardless of its social or environmental benefits. Equally importantly, these rules are usually governed by courts outside national jurisdictions, often in the United States.

Ideological regimes are controlled through highly concentrated and oligopolized media ownership structures which show heavy editorial biases in favour of maintaining and deepening the neoliberal status quo. Moreover, networks of liberal and right-wing think tanks, supporting and espousing neoliberal tenets, are found in each of these countries often established with financial support from transnational organisations. *Political* regimes show remarkable levels of ideological uniformity in favour of neoliberalism, and even when this is not the case, policy deviance from neoliberal tenets is highly controlled due to the embeddedness of neoliberalism in the other power networks. *Militarily* these regimes usually maintain alliances with the United States, cooperating with that country in the region, and sometimes, beyond, including facilitating US intervention under the banners of the so-called wars "on drugs" and "on terror". As can be seen by this account, high levels of *transnational* influence traverse most of these power networks, mostly from the US but also from Europe, and increasingly from China. Moreover, the official establishment in 2012 of the transnational organisation Pacific Alliance (PA), grouping these neoliberalised

states together, with Costa Rica and Panama as future candidates for membership, suggests a longer term transnational project with the potential to homogenise this political economy model throughout the Latin American region.

In each of these countries then neoliberalism has formidable *collective power* in the sense that neoliberal advocates have horizontal linkages across all of the power clusters examined here. The confluence of interests around neoliberalism between elites in each of these power clusters result in a narrowing of space for ideological alternatives to gain traction. Confluences of interests can also aggregate around social conservatism and law-and-order issues, but neoliberalism will usually be privileged. As stated, organisations such as the Pacific Alliance aims to further embed this model at the transnational level, linking it up to the key centres of neoliberalism in North America and Europe and then across to the economies of East Asia, as well as projecting itself as an alternative to existing regional groupings such as ALBA and Mercosur. Furthermore, with the accession of Chile to the OECD and with Colombia also on its way to becoming a member, such agreements will make it even more difficult to deviate from neoliberal tenets and opens up the possibility for their extension across the region. These regimes I therefore suggest are *right-oriented state/society complexes* due to the deep embeddedness of neoliberal governance at the sub-state, state and supra-state levels. This makes it extremely difficult for non-neoliberal alternatives to prosper, even if such alternatives appear, as was the case, for example, in Peru under Ollanta Humala (2011-2016) (Adrianzén 2014).

Hence on a discourse and on a practice level, in the current historical context neoliberalism remains the main ideological project among the Right in many countries in the region, with a view to its eventual dominance throughout. Nevertheless, these tenets have been powerfully challenged since the beginning of the millennium, by post-neoliberal regimes seeking to control the excesses of the market and bring new forms of political participation into action.

Right-wing prospects in Left-led Latin America

The Latin American region, and particularly South America, has been affected by the “pink tide” of Left-wing governments which swept through the region from the millennium onwards, presenting a considerable challenge to Right-wing, neoliberal hegemony. In four countries – Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador and, above all, Venezuela - Right hegemony has been challenged to an important degree in each of Mann’s five power clusters, with each government introducing unorthodox policies contradicting important neoliberal tenets around free markets and/or liberal democracy. Yet this challenge has also been felt in a number of other countries, especially in the regional powerhouse Brazil where there is evidence of a shift in hegemony in each of the five areas, although not to the same intensity as in the above-mentioned states.

Economically, it could be argued that the threat to Right-wing hegemony was at three levels in the region during the apogee of the 'pink tide'. In the Bolivarian countries of Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador, and also in Argentina under Nestor Kirchner and then his wife Cristina (2003-2015), it can be assessed as from medium to high. These countries are the only countries in the region with significant reversals of privatisation as well as introducing other measures which control, intervene in, or contradict the freedom of the market, including exchange controls (Venezuela, Argentina), interfering with the "autonomy" of the Central Bank, price controls, debt defaults (Argentina, Ecuador) and land-redistribution (Bolivia, Venezuela) among others (Flores-Macias 2010, 415-6). Even in the so-called "social democratic" Left-led countries of Brazil and Uruguay, privatisation has been stalled, and in Brazil state intervention in the economy remained high during the first presidency of the PT's Dilma Rousseff (2010-2014). Hence while the greatest threat to the neoliberal project during the "pink tide" era is posed by Venezuela, followed by the other Bolivarian countries of Ecuador and Bolivia, there were also medium level threats in Argentina and even a low to medium threat in PT-led Brazil.

Similar findings are evident when one looks at the other power networks examined here. In the *political* arena, for example, the Bolivarian countries particularly have been distancing themselves from liberal representative models towards more participative ones. These were accompanied by strengthened executives, reduced checks and balances and restrictions on civil and political liberties creating a climate of 'class-based polarisation over the very meaning of democracy' (Smilde 2014, 29). In terms of *ideological* power, many Left governments strengthened state broadcasters, including at the regional level with the launch of Telesur, a type of Al Jazeera for the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) region. A variety of laws have been introduced by the three Bolivarian governments, and Argentina, to attempt to limit concentration of ownership and increasing control on content. Community ownership of media has been especially encouraged in Venezuela, but also in Bolivia and to a lesser extent in Argentina. While there are questions over the effectiveness of these measures in terms of increased democratisation of the media (Doleac, 2015) the moves are sufficient to set off alarm bells among elites who most benefit from the existing ownership structures.

Militarily, there are profound differences between the Bolivarian countries, other Left-led countries and neoliberalised countries, with the latter participating enthusiastically in US-led military initiatives, while the Bolivarian countries reduce or eliminate such cooperation and those in the middle remain neutral (Bitar 2013, 34-35). And in terms of *transnational* power, Left-led countries have embarked on new regional initiatives such as UNASUR, CELAC or ALBA, as opposed to the US dominated OAS (Organisation of American States) and the regional, neoliberalised Pacific Alliance. In all these ways then, the Left has posed serious challenges to Right-elite hegemony in many countries in the region, disturbing preceding attempts to establish stable

structures of neoliberal governance, not just at the national level, but also at regional and hemispheric levels too. Right-wing elites, however, have not taken this situation lying down, and instead have developed multi-level strategies seeking the removal of the threat posed by these governments.

Right-wing strategies in Left-led Latin America

Three levels of Right strategy can be identified in response to this situation of disturbed neoliberal hegemony by Left-led governments in the region: institutional, mobilisational, and semi- or extra-constitutional. The first strategy is largely contained within existing institutionality in the form of party and electoral activity; in the second, this can be complimented by popular demonstrations, investor strikes, media campaigns and a wide variety of mobilisational activities beyond the political power network and into all other networks including the transnational; and, in the third, semi- or extra-constitutional level strategic activity can be further extended to include the removal of the government, including with Armed Forces involvement but preferably in using semi-constitutional methods to ensure a smooth transition to a new Right-oriented government, in what I call 'smart coups'. These strategies, however, are not necessarily exclusive but rather can be complementary, emerging from the particular conjunctural dynamic. Their success is linked not just to the perception of threat felt by elites but also by the level of vulnerability of the democratic polity existing in a specific state. The higher the level of threat felt by elites and the higher the vulnerability of the polity, the more likely coups – 'smart' or otherwise - will occur, and even be successful. Overall, I suggest that this theoretical approach is more complete than previous, more traditional political science approaches, as it provides greater flexibility across time and space and greater comprehensiveness in its inclusion of a wider number of actors in a more systematised fashion.

1. Institutional Strategies

In terms of institutional strategies, this first of all refers to the building of institutionalised parties. Luna and Rovira Kaltwassser (2011) find two types of Right political parties in the region. The first type, with emblematic examples such as the UDI (Unión Demócrata Independiente/Independent Democrat Union) in Chile, are well organised, with a strong central hierarchy which nonetheless allows for decentralised territorial organisation and hence distinct types of electoral mobilisation. These parties can capture a combined popular support from both upper and lower social sectors, with frequent use of clientelism to support this. The second type of parties they identify, giving examples of the "U" party of ex-president Álvaro Uribe in Colombia and RN (Renovación Nacional/National Renovation) in Chile, are territorially centralised almost exclusively in the capital, with vertical decision-making structures. Election campaigns

are strongly centred on the candidate as a solution to a specific problem, such as Uribe's "democratic security" position in Colombia as an answer to that country's civil war. While many of the parties in both camps have differing historical backgrounds all 'have a privileged link with business sectors, which coincides with their free-market positions' (Luna and Rovira Kaltwasser 2011, 17).

Further strategies are the ideological colonisation of parties which have been historically Left, Left-populist, Social Democratic, Christian Democratic and indeed conservative in their ideological orientation. Some examples are AD (Acción Democrática/Democratic Action) in Venezuela, the MNR (Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario/Revolutionary Nationalist Movement) in Bolivia, Carlos Menem's Peronist Party in Argentina, the PRI (Partido Revolucionario Institucional/Institutional Revolutionary Party) in Mexico, and the Liberal Party in Colombia. The result of this has been the steady decline of the existing party structure in most countries in the region.

Finally, the use of democratic institutions to discredit sitting Left politicians is also a favoured strategy, thereby creating conditions of crisis which can favour the removal of a Left leader. Here Right-politicians which dominate such institutions blame institutional crises on Left leaders, rather than on the very institutions which the former dominate. In tandem elites use their considerable structural and instrumental power, particularly in the media, to amplify such charges. An emblematic example was the removal through impeachment proceedings of Dilma Rousseff in 2016, which is explored in more detail below.

2. Mobilisational Strategies

Mobilisational strategies involve a variety of activities beyond institutionalised, party based politics which nevertheless aim to install opposition parties and presidents in institutionalised power. Instances of such strategic manoeuvres against Left governments have been experienced in a wide variety of countries in the region, including Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, and Venezuela. In Argentina, the so-called *paro agrario* in 2008 was a particularly tense moment for the government of Cristina Fernández de Kirchner. Beginning in March that year, agricultural producers revolted against a new tax on exports of agricultural produce being introduced by the government, with regular demonstrations and supply shortages. It quickly escalated into one of the greatest challenges against her government from the Right, leading eventually to the latter's triumph, led by Mauricio Macri, in the 2015 elections. Similar tactics, including violence, took place in the rich, gas producing eastern provinces of Bolivia between 2006-2009, aimed here at secession, and at destabilisation of the Left government of Evo Morales. Finally, in Venezuela student-led demonstrations continued throughout the latter-part of the Chávez presidency (1999-2013) and right up into the subsequent administration led by Nicolás Maduro (2013-). These tactic were also used against President Dilma Rousseff in Brazil (see below). In most of

these cases we can see evidence of an activation of oligarchical power in many of the networks identified here, including economic, ideological and transnational.

Key features of these mobilisational strategies are, first, that they are led by elites as opposed to poorer groups, although the latter may become involved. Second, a wide variety of activity is used, from mass demonstrations, to more direct actions such as road blockades, production strikes etc. Third, they are almost always accompanied by comprehensive private media campaigns in support of the demonstrators. Fourth, in Bolivia and Venezuela in particular, US support, moral, strategic and financial was provided. Fifth, in almost all cases the ultimate aim was the removal of the government, except in Bolivia where the aim was secessionist, which if it had succeeded would have resulted in destabilisation of the government. It is important to note nevertheless, that these strategies did not result in the abandonment of electoral strategies and other institutional strategies, but rather accompanied them.

3. Semi- or Extra-Constitutional Strategies

The cases of Venezuela (2002), Honduras (2009), Paraguay (2012) and Brazil (2016), with a further possible but disputed case in Ecuador (2010), demonstrate clearly that coups, be they with or without military involvement, are possible in the current context, and as the Honduran (see Cannon and Hume, 2012), Paraguayan (see Lambert, 2012) and Brazilian (see below) cases illustrate, can succeed if national and international contextual circumstances are right. Most of these examples share a number of key characteristics. First, they build on previous institutional and mobilisational strategies, providing a multi-layered, dynamic, relational, and varied strategic approach. These involved demonstrations of some sort (with the exception of Paraguay); media campaigns in all cases against the sitting Left president; US and allied government support (again with the partial exception of Paraguay, at least with regard to the US) with mostly solid regional rejection of the coup; attempts at providing a veneer of institutionality to the removal of the government (except Ecuador and with the most successful example being Paraguay and Brazil); and, the direct involvement of all or some elements of the Armed Forces (with the exception of Brazil and partial exception of Paraguay).

Second, in all cases the aim was to reverse or stall any modifications to the economy and institutionality effected by the sitting Left government, that is a return to threatened models of elite-dominated polyarchy and market freedoms. Third, in each case almost all the power networks were involved: economic interests, often landed; ideological, especially the media; political, not just opposition political parties, but also state institutions; military, even in the case of Paraguay, although not so overtly; and transnational, most notably the United States, but also conservative governments in other parts of the West, such as Canada, Spain, Germany and the United Kingdom. These cases then are multi-layered strategies, involving sub-state, state, regional and

supra-national agents, working in close cooperation to achieve a mutually agreed goal – the removal of an elected, Left leader.

4. Brazil: A Case Study

A good example of all three of these strategies being put into action, is that of the eventual ousting of Brazil's PT President Dilma Rousseff in August, 2016. As noted previously Brazil under the Workers' Party stalled privatisation and increased state intervention in the economy, especially under Rousseff's first presidential term (2010-15). Brazil also led efforts to increase Latin American, particularly South American, autonomy from US dominated regional fora, most notably through UNASUR, and forged an independent foreign policy, with its involvement in the BRICS, its support of Venezuela and its relations with Iran among other features. In this way Brazil presented a low- to medium-level threat to the neoliberal project. Furthermore, it was a very successful threat, with high levels of economic growth for most of the PT period, and a dramatic lowering of poverty and even inequality.

Yet the recession beginning in 2013 presented an opportunity for Right elites to restore their total dominance of the State, using the considerable structural power available to it both inside and outside Brazil's institutions. This process began over a two-month period in June-July, 2013, on the eve of the Confederations Cup, with the country seeing the largest popular mobilisations since its return to democracy in 1985. Started by a small, left grouping protesting modestly against public transport fare rises in Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, these rapidly escalated into mass events, encompassing a whole range of issues and groups and drawing crowds of a million or more in the grand avenues of Sao Paulo. Initially the demonstrations were dismissed by right politicians and the right-wing corporatist media, with Gerardo Alckmin, right-wing PSDB governor of Sao Paulo state, branding demonstrators "vandals" and "troublemakers"; and right-wing journalists labelling them "terrorists" (Conde and Jazeel, 2013: 441).

Yet this attitude changed dramatically as military police brutally attacked demonstrators, injuring a number of journalists in the process, and the right-wing media sensed a perfect opportunity to attack the PT-led federal government (Conde and Jazeel, 2013: 442; Sader, 2013; Saad-Filho, 2013: 659). From thence on they offered blanket coverage of the protests, emptying these of their radical content and framing them as against the more generic "state inefficiency and corruption" (Saad-Filho, 2013: 659). Participation in the marches exploded, with some marches in July reaching over one million people (*ibid.*). According to Winters and Witz-Shapiro (2014: 138) by this stage all Brazil was aware of the marches, with only 3 per cent in polls *NOT* having heard of them.

Moreover, the themes of the original marches became subsumed in a cacophony of demands, from same-sex marriage to the return of the military government. Most

marchers were young and middle class, organising through social media, although local community groups and workers were often integrated into the multitude, these pursuing their own demands (Saad-Filho, 2013: 660). Demonstrators rejected party politics in general but particularly the PT-led administrations of “Lula” da Silva and Dilma Rousseff. This rejection of the PT and the directionless, leaderless nature of the demonstrations allowed the Right to co-opt and manipulate the demonstrations “in order to assert their own agenda”(Conde and Jazeel, 2013: 443). This consisted primarily of undermining and delegitimising the Rousseff administration while promoting the “neoliberal globalising project” (Saad-Filho, 2013: 662).

Indeed, the media and business elites saw this latest mobilisation as an opportunity to remove the PT from power altogether in the upcoming elections in 2014. With the economy in decline, the demonstrations helped push President Dilma Rousseff’s approval ratings in polls down from a high of 80 per cent before March 2013 (*ibid.*) to 30 per cent in mid-July of the same year (*ibid.*: 663). The government did attempt to win back the initiative: fare increases were rescinded, a new participative Public Transport Council was promised, and more money was pledged for public transport and for health (Conde and Jazeel, 2013: 445). Moreover, new laws against corruption were introduced and the government proposed a referendum on political reform. Yet of these initiatives, most were stopped in their tracks by the existing institutionality, itself a product of the elite-led transition to democracy, with its still firm imprint of the military dictatorship. Congress rejected the referendum proposal as “unfeasible” while cuts were announced for education and health (*ibid.*).



Ideological colonisation of emerging parties can also be observed in the Brazilian cases. In the 2014 elections, for example, there was a rush on the part of elites to endorse Socialist Party candidate Marina Silva in her challenge to Rousseff. Silva enjoyed considerable support among Brazil's highly oligopolized private media, and each time she surged in the polls, corresponding surges were felt in the Brazilian stock exchange, suggesting endorsement from the country's financial and business elite, despite her strong background in environmental politics (Grandin, 2014). Once Silva lost in the first round, however, elites support swiftly moved to Aécio Neves, the PSDB challenger.

The Right's gamble almost paid off in the elections, with Rousseff barely winning against Neves by a mere 3,28 per cent of the vote and the PT losing seats in Congress. This, however, emboldened the same sectors to organise more demonstrations in 2015 with similar demands attended by a similar demographic, in which calls for Rousseff's impeachment began to be heard and even for the return of the military government (Jimenez-Barca, 2016). Instrumental in the genesis of these protests were the corruption scandals involving the giant, mostly state-owned oil company Petrobras, providing kickbacks to politicians in return for favours, brought to light by a judicial enquiry known as *Lavajato*. While the media and elites project these scandals as being entirely the responsibility of Rousseff, despite her not having been accused of any crime, many of the accused are from the Right, including the Speakers of the Chamber of Deputies, Eduardo Cunha, and the Senate, Renan Calheiros, both from the PMDB; the chief opposition leader, and Rousseff's presidential challenger in the 2014 elections, Aécio Neves, of the PSDB; and, Michel Temer, the then vice-president also of the PMDB (Saad-Filho, 2015). Of these only Cunha has lost his position, after having served his purpose as the spearhead of the process which led to Rousseff's impeachment.

Temer, of course, ultimately replaced Dilma Rousseff as president on 31 August, 2016, despite the accusations of corruption against him, in a process similar to a "smart coup" as previously executed in Paraguay against President Lugo in 2012. After a tortuous and highly questioned impeachment process the Senate convicted Rousseff of using the *pedalada*, a commonly used accounting technique to temporarily reduce the deficit, despite a Senate committee previously declaring that this was not an impeachable offence (See Declercq, 2016 and Watts, 2016). While some suggested that this act was in order to stall the *Lavajato* process (see Miranda, 2016), it also became clear that a key objective was not just to restore neoliberalism but to embed it more deeply in Brazil's governance structures. Hence not only did Temer, on assuming the presidency, immediately announce standard neoliberal policies such as a firesale privatisation of state assets, including possibly parts of Petrobras, the State-owned oil giant (Robinson, 2016) and areas of the defence industry (Adghirni, 2016), as well as cuts in public spending on social programmes, and increased autonomy for the Central Bank (Leahy and Pearson, 2016), he also introduced a new law to set constitutional limits

on spending for the next twenty years (Robinson, 2016). This law will institutionalise austerity for the foreseeable future, eliminate the minimum allocation for education and health, reducing access for the poor to these social goods, and tie the hands of any future government to increase social spending. In this way neoliberalism becomes imbricated in the Brazilian state structure more deeply, making it even more of a right-oriented state/society complex than ever before.

Hence in Brazil we can observe a good example of a combined, multi-layered elite-Right strategy, using electoral, mobilisational and semi-constitutional tactics to remove a sitting Left leader. Right elite forces did not abandon electoral institutional politics; indeed, these were used to the full in attempts to remove Rousseff. However, mobilisation tactics were also used, with the mainstream media and business sectors playing a central role in promoting mass demonstrations aimed ultimately at her removal, despite her “extraordinary moderation” (Saad-Filho, 2013: 662). Furthermore, this move was reinforced by a conservative institutionalality, with little sympathy for closer popular participation in decision-making processes. This capitalised on popular discontent whipped up by the conservative media, engineering an impeachment process against Rousseff, which while regarding constitutional form, rested on a charge which was recognised even by a Senate committee as a legally dubious basis for impeachment proceedings. On this basis alone it can be considered an example of a ‘smart coup’, but one which nonetheless would not have been possible without executing the other levels of strategy identified here.

This removal was made possible, I would argue, for two reasons. First, it was due to the perception of threat felt by these elites to the continued presence of a PT-led administration, which despite tacking to the right during the first year of Rousseff’s second term was nonetheless unpredictable and reluctant to deepen the neoliberal project. The second reason it was possible was due to a highly vulnerable polity in Brazil, as identified by Mares (2014: 94-95), with a high preference to non-democratic solutions to problems, a low assessment of the sitting government and a high regard for the military. Hence the combination of a united elite against the Rousseff government alongside a weak polity made the ‘smart coup’ against Rousseff possible and perhaps inevitable.

Conclusion: A New Right for a New Millennium?

To sum up, in this article I argue the following with regard to the Right in Latin America. First, the Right in the region is shaped and controlled by the sources of social power to an extraordinary degree. These sources of social power – economic, ideological, political, military and transnational – are in the present conjuncture, dominated by neoliberalism, both at a discursive and at a policy level, reducing space for alternative policy constellations to emerge. The main aim of this new regional Right is to install at a national and transnational level, systems of neoliberal governance

which cannot be unravelled by possible Left alternatives without great difficulty, if at all. Such systems of neoliberal governance I have termed *right-oriented state/society complexes* due to their totalising nature across the power spectrum.

Nevertheless, the "pink tide" governments which emerged since the millennium, particularly those grouped under the Bolivarian label, organised transnationally into the ALBA grouping, have reversed elite social power in many of these power networks to a sufficient degree to alarm elites, suggesting a direct link between Right strategies and the intensity of change to the neoliberal model effected by Left governments in the region. Here I suggest, that the higher the level of such change, the higher the level of threat felt by elites to the neoliberal model, with the opposite also being true.

Right counter-acting strategies can vary in intensity and widen in terms of actors and activity in response to the level of perceived threat. I identify three levels of strategy: institutional, mobilisational, and extra-constitutional. In the first, this is largely contained within existing institutionality in the form of party and electoral activity, and the use of state institutions for partisan goals; in the second, this can be complemented by popular demonstrations, investor strikes, media campaigns and a wide variety of mobilisational activities beyond the political power network and into all other networks including the transnational; and, in the third, semi- or extra-constitutional level strategic activity can be further extended to include the removal of the government, including with Armed Forces involvement (extra-constitutional) but preferably in such a way as to ensure a smooth transition to a new Right-oriented government, in what I have called "smart coups" or semi-constitutional removals. I further argue that these strategies are not exclusive but can be complementary, emerging from the particular conjunctural dynamic.

Moreover, I tentatively suggest that the success of these strategies can be directly linked not just to the perception of threat felt by elites but also by the level of vulnerability of the democratic polity existing in a specific state. The higher the level of threat felt by elites and the higher the vulnerability of the polity, the more likely coups will occur, and even be successful. Overall, I suggest that this theoretical approach is more complete than previous, more traditional, political science approaches, as it provides greater flexibility across time and space and greater comprehensiveness in its inclusion of a wider number of actors in a more systematised fashion. I offer the recent removal of the PT administration led by Dilma Rousseff as a case study of such strategies being used successfully.

Grugel and Riggirozzi (2012), Wylde (2012) and others have argued that post-neoliberal forms of governance have emerged – tentative and experimental – which have sought to challenge neoliberal governance and reassert the role of the state in reinforcing popular citizenship, both in the economic and at the political levels. I suggest here that the Right has risen to defeat this challenge by seeking the return of neoliberal systems of governance, but this time made more secure through actual or mooted insertion into dense regional (PA) transnational (FTAs, OECD) and

inter-continental governance structures (TISA and TTIP), to ensure that such challenges, if they emerge again, are thoroughly neutered from the outset. We can see evidence of this in the rapid implementation of neoliberal measures by the newly installed Macri administration in Argentina (Kozameh, 2016; Adair, 2016) and by the "interim government" of Michel Temer in Brazil (Ituassa and Badia i Dalmases, 2016; Rocha, 2016). Right strategies then are multi-scalar in their approach involving non-state, state, regional and transnational actors to achieve neoliberalised governance structure which are dominated by these same actors.

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O Fascismo no Brasil: o Ovo da Serpente Chocou

Fascism in Brazil: The Serpent's Egg Has Been Hatched

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Resumo

O ressurgimento do fascismo, juntamente com a ascensão do voto religioso, torna as disputas políticas no Brasil mais complexas do que a clássica clivagem socioeconômica direita x esquerda, predominante até as Jornadas de Junho de 2013. Por meio de discussão teórica sobre o fascismo e da análise de discurso de manifestantes nos atos pró-golpe entre 2013 e 2016, percebe-se um processo de fascistização no seio da sociedade brasileira. A análise do discurso do deputado Jair Bolsonaro indica que ele se credencia como possível líder fascista.

Palavras-chave: Fascismo; Ideologia; Voto religioso; Conservadorismo; Manifestações.

Abstract

The new rise of fascism, together with the emergence of religious vote, makes political struggle more complex than classic socioeconomic cleavage right vs. left, prevailing until June 2013 uprising. By theoretically analysing activists' speeches in demonstrations between 2013 and 2016 in support of the coup we notice a process of fascistization inside Brazilian society. An analysis of MP Jair Bolsonaro's speech shows that he is qualified as a possible fascist leader.

Keywords: Fascism; Ideology; Religious vote; Conservatism; Demonstrations.

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Introdução

A disputa política brasileira, no plano federal, teve na polarização entre Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT), pela esquerda, e Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira (PSDB), pela direita, seu aspecto central desde a eleição de 1994. As chamadas Jornadas de Junho de 2013, como gigantescas mobilizações de rua, destoaram das disputas institucionais, que, mesmo que com contradições, claramente estavam delimitadas no eixo direita-esquerda. Se foram iniciadas por movimentos mais organizados, como o Movimento Passe Livre (MPL), logo as Jornadas sofreram um “desbordamento societário”, com “movimentos derivados” aproveitando “espaços abertos pelas mobilizações iniciais, sem, contudo, manter laços fortes, enquadramentos sociopolíticos, formas organizativas, referências ideológicas e repertórios de mobilização que os una ao MPL e/ou a outros iniciadores” (Bringel, 2013: 45).

As interpretações sobre aqueles eventos dramáticos são variadas, indo desde os que, enxergando uma “situação revolucionária”, apontam virtudes, de atores insubmissos que não protestam apenas na penúria mas por quererem melhorias contínuas, representando uma inovação não compreendida pelo engessamento petista (Cocco e Cava, 2013), até aqueles que veem o espalhamento do fascismo para além dos pequenos grupelhos assumidamente dessa posição no início das manifestações por passe livre, em derrota da esquerda na disputa pelo “significado das ruas”, em grande parte por conta da atuação enviesada da mídia e da criminalização da política por parte do Judiciário (Santos, F., 2013).

Mesmo o tema específico da violência, em si, é tratado de forma muito variada. Para Cardoso (2013), foi direcionada particularmente aos símbolos dos serviços públicos ineficientes e do déficit do direito à cidade, como os transportes, sendo assim, portanto, perfeitamente compreensível. Para Cocco e Cava (2013), os *black-blocks* são “a expressão mais potente do movimento”, tendo a virtude de atrair jovens militantes. Para Bringel (2013), a violência é a forma característica de os *black-blocks* se expressarem, mas é uma, entre outras, das formas pelas quais se expressa o “retorno do conflito”, este sendo uma das características mais importantes do novo ciclo de ação coletiva no Brasil. Santos, W. G. (2013), por sua vez, em posição destoante, considera os *black-blocks* “parasitas dos movimentos sociais”, incapazes de organizar algo construtivo, que se infiltram nas atividades e organizações de construtores sociais para lhes sugar a fama, a energia ou os propósitos.

O certo é que aquelas Jornadas de Junho não foram um fenômeno homogêneo, reunindo grupos tão díspares como esses anarquistas *black-blocks*, neoliberais criminalizadores da política, movimentos sociais organizados, pessoas despolitizadas ansiosas por se engajar, militantes de partidos de esquerda e, conforme detalha Amaral (2016), organizações libertárias de direita financiadas por capital internacional e por frações do empresariado brasileiro. Diferentes grupos tentaram direcionar aquela potência, com claro fracasso da esquerda organizada – vítima de violenta reação

antipartido – e com a significativa, mas não decisiva, vantagem para a direita, insuflada com tendenciosa e constante mobilização via mídia hegemônica – a interpretação aqui tem, portanto, proximidades com a apresentada por Santos. F. (2013). Seguiram-se manifestações de menor porte, em que a direita e a esquerda não mais se misturaram. O caráter das mobilizações reacionárias, ainda que heterogêneas, suscita, entre outros, este debate: há um ressurgimento do fascismo no Brasil?

Desde a redemocratização, a disputa política no Brasil podia ser entendida em uma única clivagem, baseada na disputa socioeconômica, e a incorporação das pautas identitárias pela esquerda ocorria dentro desse mesmo eixo. Paralelamente, havia moderação na questão econômica, um pouco como no modelo de Kitschelt (1994) sobre a “social-democracia”. A direita, mesmo com a participação de setores “atrasados” e oligárquicos, era liderada pelo “moderno” PSDB, partido representante da ideologia liberal, não identificado com o conservadorismo de costumes.

A disputa política no país, no entanto, tornou-se mais complexa a partir do momento em que ao menos dois fenômenos emergiram, fora do modelo mais “clássico” de disputa capital x trabalho: 1) o fortalecimento do voto religioso, entendido como hostil à laicidade do Estado e ultraconservador quanto aos costumes (podendo estar ou não à direita na questão econômica, como fica evidente, por exemplo, pelo apoio da Igreja Universal às políticas sociais até aderir ao golpe de Estado de 2016’); 2) e o estouro, na sociedade, de uma política virulenta contra a esquerda (especialmente, mas não apenas, contra o PT), apoiadora de soluções autoritárias, baseada em ódio, que, conforme será argumentado neste artigo, pode ser entendida como fascista.

A Frente Parlamentar Evangélica tinha em 2016 seu maior contingente, 92, entre deputados e senadores, o que significa muito mais membros do que na legislatura anterior, quando eram 78 deputados e três senadores, o maior número até então. Em 2016, a frente apoiou o golpe de Estado e um de seus membros, o deputado Eduardo Cunha, presidia a Câmara e foi figura central para o processo de *impeachment*. Parlamentares conservadores católicos não fazem parte da FPE, mas votam de modo parecido, o que significa que o peso da política religiosa conservadora é ainda maior. O crescimento da bancada evangélica tem sido contínuo, todavia, segundo Cunha (2015), desde sua origem, em 1986, mesmo nunca tendo “uma pauta progressista, ou de esquerda”, seus representantes também não eram identificados como “conservadores do ponto de vista sociopolítico e econômico”, adotando em bloco posicionamentos reacionários apenas mais recentemente:

Seus projetos raramente interferiam na ordem social: revertiam-se em “práticas da Bíblia”, criação de feriados para concorrer com os católicos, benefícios para templos. O perfil dos partidos aos quais a maioria dos políticos evangélicos estava afiliada refletia isso bem com recorrentes casos de fisiologismo. Mais recentemente é o forte tradicionalismo moral que tem marcado a atuação da Frente Parlamentar Evangélica, que trouxe para si o mandato da defesa da família e da moral cristã contra a plataforma dos movimentos feministas e de homossexuais e dos grupos de

direitos humanos, valendo-se de alianças até mesmo com parlamentares católicos, diálogo historicamente impensável no campo eclesiástico (Cunha, 2015).

Desde o golpe de 2016, pode-se dizer que o Brasil tem um governo autoritário e movido por pautas reacionárias, com um Estado crescentemente violento e descompromissado com os direitos e garantias; mas não é um governo ou um Estado fascista. Na sociedade, no entanto, o fascismo já é perceptível, podendo inclusive tornar-se uma força eleitoral relevante, a julgar pela repercussão pública do nome do deputado federal Jair Bolsonaro, abertamente um defensor da ditadura militar, da tortura, da homofobia e de políticas de segurança pública repressivas.

As fronteiras entre os diferentes grupos conservadores não é tão clara. O candidato do PSDB à Presidência em 2010, José Serra, por exemplo, afastou o partido de sua histórica posição laica ao tentar enfraquecer a adversária Dilma Rousseff associando-a ao aborto e afirmando ser contrário a ele devido a “seus valores cristãos”. Por outro lado, o mencionado Bolsonaro, provável representante do fascismo na eleição presidencial prevista para 2018, é filiado ao Partido Social Cristão, uma das agremiações com mais representantes na Frente Parlamentar Evangélica, e incluiu em seu repertório como modelo de comportamento exemplar, além da heterossexualidade, da disciplina, da virilidade e do não uso de drogas, os valores cristãos.

O peso do fascismo na política parlamentar e sua presença no Estado não são fáceis de se mensurar, pois a adoção de um discurso dessa natureza em geral é pontual e não tão evidente como no caso de Bolsonaro. Sua presença na sociedade, no entanto, tornou-se mais visível nos últimos anos. Nas seções seguintes deste artigo será discutido o que se entende, aqui, por fascismo, e serão apresentados elementos indicativos da fascistização de parte da sociedade brasileira, com ênfase nos protestos golpistas e no discurso do principal nome a canalizar tal posicionamento, o deputado federal Jair Bolsonaro.

O que é o fascismo?

Santos e Szwako (2016: 119) identificam que o fascismo cresce nas classes médias, sendo “alimentado não somente pela crise econômica, mas também pelo Judiciário e por mídias hegemônicas, [e que ele] é realidade que julgamos imprescindível conhecer e combater”. Esse ponto é relevante e será retomado mais adiante, na discussão sobre a propaganda no fascismo. Os autores complementam que “A mobilização verde e amarelo que ganhou as ruas nos meses de março, abril e agosto de 2015 soube se apropriar de um dos principais legados de 2013”, e que “Aos gritos de ‘Fora Dilma’ e ‘Fora PT’, uma massa de verve fascista foi alimentada por movimentos de direita que, como se sabe hoje, foram e são ligados a partidos golpistas e a grupos ultraconservadores estadunidenses.” A leitura até aqui é semelhante à realizada neste artigo, mas destoa na definição que os autores apresentam sobre o que seria o fascismo:

Uma pergunta aqui se impõe: por que denominar de fascista uma multidão tão vasta e heterogênea? Designamos-lhe como tal devido à sua incapacidade de reconhecer como legítima uma pluralidade de interesses e visões de mundo que é constitutiva e, sobretudo, distintiva da democracia em sociedades complexas. Negar tal pluralidade corresponde, nos discursos e protestos conservadores de 2015 analisados alhures, a negar a legitimidade do conflito e da necessária institucionalização dos conflitos – sem a qual não há convivência democrática e civilizada entre diversos e divergentes interesses e visões de mundo (Santos e Szwako, 2016: 119).

Em trabalho anterior, Santos, F. (2013) destacou alguns elementos comuns ao fascismo conforme definição que será trabalhada neste artigo – repulsa pelos partidos, autoritarismo, intolerância, recurso à violência – mas, de modo semelhante a Hannah Arendt, conforme também será abordado mais adiante, parte de definição que não distingue divergências programáticas fundamentais entre visões radicais situadas em espectros ideológicos muito distintos:

Use os termos “fascismo” e “protofascismo” de maneira assumidamente pouco rigorosa. Com eles, quero designar uma atitude política autoritária cuja essência consiste em não reconhecer a pluralidade de interesses e opiniões existentes na sociedade como algo legítimo. A princípio, o alvo da atitude fascista, como na experiência italiana e alemã do período que antecede a Segunda Guerra Mundial, são os partidos e o governo representativo. A pluralidade partidária, baseada no voto popular, é vista como um mal a ser extirpado, posto que baseado na delegação de poder feita de forma equivocada por seres inferiores, o povo. A apologia da democracia direta e da imposição da vontade via manifestações violentas e depredações é o corolário comportamental dessa atitude. Depredações, ataques ao comércio e prédios públicos são as formas mais patológicas de tal comportamento (Santos, F., 2013: 18).

A rejeição a essa definição, portanto, deve-se ao fato de que nem toda negação violenta da pluralidade é fascista. Fascismo tem sim, entre suas características, a violência e a intolerância, porém é mais do que isso. É sustentado neste artigo que o fascismo cresce no Brasil não apenas pela forma cada vez mais conflituosa das relações políticas, mas fundamentalmente por uma questão política substantiva, que inclui como é formulado o discurso. A visão de fascismo aqui adotada remete-se à apresentada em outro trabalho:

O *fascismo* pode ser entendido como uma variação do conservadorismo, especialmente do conservadorismo romântico. Também dá maior peso à comunidade do que ao indivíduo – sendo o movimento fascista a cola de unificação da sociedade desarticulada por liberais e socialistas, que não preservam a tradição – e dá enorme valor à hierarquia: o líder, o *Führer*, o *duce* concentra enormes poderes, a cultura da obediência é fortemente cultivada e os ritos e a simbologia são cruciais. Quer restaurar um passado glorioso, autêntico, fortemente vinculado às tradições do povo, como os conservadores românticos, mas se diferencia deles por uma característica bastante central: identifica um ou mais grupos inimigos (podem ser judeus, islâmicos, negros, imigrantes, ciganos, socialistas etc.) como responsáveis por essa degradação e visa a enfrentá-los violentamente até sua destruição, para que então seja possível o retorno ao passado idealizado (Reis, 2017: 129).

Carone (2002), em sua discussão sobre estudos de frankfurtianos, como Theodor Adorno, sobre o fascismo estadunidense e sua semelhança com outros fascismos, como o nazismo germânico, dá outros passos importantes para se traçar uma definição mais completa do que é o fenômeno, salvaguardadas as diferenças de cada caso e de cada país. Carone (2002: 196) nota que “a discriminação enquanto comportamento político fascista estaria muito mais na dependência da psicologia do discriminador do que das características dos alvos da discriminação”. A definição de inimigos, como bodes-expiatórios irracionalmente apontados como culpados por todos os males, que devem ser destruídos, é, como apontado anteriormente, central, e faz parte da estratégia desumanizá-los:

Mas quem eram os inimigos? Onde se escondiam? Onde conspiravam? Como deviam ser enfrentados? Eles eram apresentados como traidores, vilões, arruaceiros e assassinos. O inimigo não só era identificado com o submundo criminoso mas também como alguém que agia impunemente e sob a proteção política do país. Por conseguinte, o único meio de combatê-los seria o de tomar a lei nas próprias mãos (Carone, 2002: 212).

Entre os inimigos, evidentemente, sempre está a esquerda, mas também toda política organizada institucionalmente, vista como precisando ser rompida. Como mobiliza emocional e não racionalmente os simpatizantes, tende a um forte anti-intelectualismo, a uma rejeição ao acumulado conhecimento acadêmico, que refuta suas teses: “comunistas, esquerdistas, intelectuais antipatrióticos” (Carone, 2002: 204).

Também fundamental em um movimento fascista é o personalismo, o que Losurdo (2004b) destaca como estratégia exitosa de defesa do *status quo* e da despolitização por parte da direita em geral, especialmente pela tradição liberal. No fascismo, o personalismo se dá via idealização de líderes, em discurso repetitivo. Analisando o caso estadunidense, Carone (2002: 211-212) nota que o líder fascista deve ser visto como um homem comum do povo, mas particularmente virtuoso:

De modo diferente dos idealistas que sacrificam o seu conforto em prol de um propósito social nobre, o agitador vem do povo e se apresenta como alguém quase indistinguível da grande massa de cidadãos norte-americanos. Não deixa de frisar nas entrelinhas, no entanto, que é um esposo modelo, um bom e solícito pai para os seus filhos, com problemas financeiros e de saúde, de modo a diminuir a distância e a criar familiaridade e intimidade com os seus ouvintes.

A idealização dos líderes ocorre em contraposição aos *out-groups* sobre os quais recai uma “suspeita paranoica”; enquanto os primeiros são “um homem solitário, espontâneo, corajoso e íntegro”, “inocente perseguido”, “homem carismático” etc, os inimigos são representados como “parasitas da economia”, “homens sem pátria e sem patriotismo”, “conspiradores” (Carone, 2002). O perseguido é apresentado como perseguidor: “O artifício do inocente perseguido serve a um duplo propósito. Primeiro, interpretava o perigo para o líder como um perigo para todos e racionalizar a agressividade sob o disfarce da autodefesa.” (Carone, 2002: 201). O argumento não segue a lógica, importando que atinja psicologicamente o alvo:

Isso quer dizer que a sua linguagem primou mais pelos aspectos psicológicos do que lógicos das asserções. De um ponto de vista meramente lógico ou objetivo elas poderiam ser consideradas absurdas ou pouco consistentes. Seria um engano supor, entretanto, que a falta de lógica de suas asserções fosse devida a uma falta de capacidade intelectual. Na verdade, essa falta de objetividade ou de lógica obedeceu ao primado do subjetivo sobre o objetivo: ele queria mobilizar a sua audiência, isto é, os temores, os rancores, os ressentimentos e os sentimentos de desamparo na vida social. Essas características de um discurso calculado racionalmente para provocar efeitos irracionais são próprias da propaganda fascista e antissemítica em qualquer parte do mundo (Carone, 2002: 204).

Essa audiência seria recrutada, segundo Arendt (1998: 361-362), primordialmente entre as camadas da sociedade que ela denomina “massas”, que, além de numerosas, são desorganizadas politicamente, constituindo “a maioria das pessoas neutras e politicamente indiferentes”. Em sua maioria nunca antes participaram da política e não tiveram a atenção dos partidos tradicionais, que as consideraram “demasiado apáticas ou estúpidas para lhes merecerem a atenção”. O movimento fascista aproveitaria essa brecha para atraí-las. Sua aversão aos partidos tradicionais e à institucionalidade estabelecida, é mencionada também por Arendt (1998: 265) ao tratar da Europa:

Além disso, [os partidos] haviam perdido, sem que percebessem, aqueles simpatizantes neutros que nunca se haviam interessado por política por acharem que os partidos existiam para cuidar dos seus [próprios] interesses. Assim, o primeiro sintoma do colapso do sistema partidário continental [europeu] não foi a deserção dos antigos membros do partido, mas o insucesso em recrutar membros dentre a geração mais jovem e a perda do consentimento e apoio silencioso das massas desorganizadas, que subitamente deixavam de lado a apatia e marchavam para onde vissem oportunidade de expressar sua violenta oposição. [...] as maiorias adormecidas, que existiam por trás de todos os partidos, [foram transformadas] numa grande massa desorganizada e desestruturada de indivíduos furiosos que nada tinham em comum exceto a vaga noção deque as esperanças partidárias eram vãs; que, conseqüentemente, os mais respeitados, eloquentes e representativos membros da comunidade eram uns néscios e que as autoridades constituídas eram não apenas perniciosas mas também obtusas e desonestas.

Bringel (2013) seguramente não vê a situação dos levantes de 2013, em que também muitos jovens tiveram seu “batismo político”, de modo similar ao diagnóstico de Arendt sobre a ascensão de massas suscetíveis ao totalitarismo na Europa do seu tempo. Ainda assim, a descrição que ele faz deixa margem à interpretação de que havia, sim, uma insatisfação difusa de jovens sem experiência política que poderiam, sim, ser seduzidos por soluções fora do sistema político tradicional não necessariamente progressistas, tal como na narrativa de Arendt:

[...] associam sua insatisfação a uma rejeição aos sistemas políticos, aos partidos tradicionais e às formas convencionais de organização política (inclusive a certos movimentos sociais e sindicais hierarquizados e ligados ao aparelho estatal). Querem participar da vida política, mas não encontram canais adequados. Para muitos deles, conselhos, fóruns e espaços institucionalizados não são suficientes e mostraram seus limites nos últimos anos. Antes de criticar os jovens por isso, deveríamos nos

perguntar o que (e por que) não funciona. E aproveitar a oportunidade de ruptura da apatia e queda do muro de silêncio para a conquista de direitos e avanços na transformação social (Bringel, 2013: 46).

Nesse processo, uma das questões-chave enfrentadas pelos atores sociais e políticos que lutam pela emancipação e pela justiça social continua a ser a seguinte: como canalizar a indignação em movimento social transformador? A resposta não é fácil, dada a multiplicidade de perspectivas, significados e possibilidades abertas pelas movimentações recentes. O que talvez, sim, tenha ficado claro, ao reintroduzir a conflitualidade na cena política, são os limites de uma política de “conciliação nacional” a partir da qual o governo, por meio de amplas coalizões, busca agradar a forças e atores antagonísticos em uma sociedade marcadamente desigual (Bringel, 2013: 51).

A preocupação central de Arendt (1998), ao menos na parte final do seu famoso livro “Origens do totalitarismo”, é com o totalitarismo e não como fascismo – e a categoria “totalitarismo”, polissêmica, é empregada por ela com imprecisões históricas e viés ideológico (movido pela guerra fria), forçando semelhanças entre o estalinismo e o nazismo e excluindo casos com vista a fortalecer o argumento (Losurdo, 2004a). A aproximação realizada entre a Alemanha nazista e a União Soviética deliberadamente abre mão do aprofundamento da comparação político-programática entre os dois casos, considerando ambos semelhantes em seu *modus operandi* e consequências.

Ainda assim, com atenção a todos esses problemas de sua argumentação, algumas de suas reflexões oferecem *insights* para pensar em como se disseminou e pode se espalhar a fúria do fascismo, naquele tempo e hoje. A aversão aos partidos estabelecidos não se dá pela crítica aprofundada a qualquer um deles – mas pela rejeição passional a todos, especialmente aos da esquerda – e nem por meio da criação de um projeto inovador consistente, mas pela postura violenta de repúdio e pela busca de um líder que canalize tal sentimento. A propaganda é fundamental na atração e mobilização dessas massas e, renegando a história oficial como uma fraude e apresentando teorias conspiratórias não observáveis, assim as alcançava:

[...] gigantescas mentiras e monstruosas falsidades viessem a transformar-se em fatos incontestes, de que o homem pudesse ter a liberdade de mudar à vontade o seu passado, e de que a diferença entre a verdade e a mentira pudesse deixar de ser objetiva e passasse a ser apenas uma questão de poder e esperteza, de pressão e de repetição infinita (Arendt, 1998: 383).

Características distintivas do caso brasileiro são a provável concentração em camadas mais abastadas da população entre as adesões ao movimento, ao menos neste primeiro instante, talvez por conta da efetiva melhoria de vida proporcionada pelas políticas sociais recentemente implementadas pela esquerda no poder, e a questão da internet e das redes sociais, que descentralizam a propaganda fascista, ainda que tenham suporte irresponsável da mídia hegemônica tradicional, que o alimenta como efeito colateral da perseguição à esquerda.²

O pós-junho de 2013: um resumo das manifestações e do fascismo ali presente

O ressurgimento do fascismo no Brasil³ pode ser identificado de forma mais visível após o enfraquecimento da imagem de Dilma Rousseff e do Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT) com a realização de atos gigantescos em junho de 2013, que caracterizou um momento de súbita manifestação de insatisfação da sociedade com seus governantes. Tratava-se, inicialmente, de atos com pautas prioritariamente progressistas e com manifestantes de perfil heterogêneo. Entretanto, a sucessão de protestos foi dividindo os grupos entre defensores da democracia e militantes de esquerda em um tipo de evento, e reacionários e golpistas em outro, o qual tendeu a predominar nos anos subsequentes, até o golpe de Estado de 2016, quando, inclusive, as manifestações de rua da direita, supostamente movidas pelo repúdio à corrupção, deixaram de ocorrer, evidenciando que o único objetivo dos organizadores era tirar o PT do poder.

O pontapé inicial desse ativismo foi a proposta de aumento da tarifa de ônibus em alguns estados em vinte centavos, que gerou manifestações com números significativos no dia 6 de junho de 2013. Os atos em São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Brasília e Belo Horizonte totalizaram cerca de 85 mil pessoas. Em São Paulo, os policiais reagiram de forma desproporcional ao lançar bombas de gás e *spray* de pimenta nos manifestantes na tentativa de impedi-los de chegar à Avenida Paulista. A força policial tinha o amparo dos grandes veículos de comunicação, que endossavam a necessidade de repressão aos chamados “vândalos” ou “baderneiros”. Como reação, os manifestantes atiraram pedras, picharam ônibus e incendiaram lixo.

Como consequência, o protesto seguinte, do dia 17 de junho de 2013, adicionou à sua pauta a reivindicação por menos violência e repressão policial. Com quase 300 mil pessoas pelo país inteiro, era inevitável que se multiplicassem os cartazes e os pedidos de maiores investimentos na saúde, educação, transporte, que se opunham, simultaneamente, ao investimento feito para a realização da Copa das Confederações de futebol. Os manifestantes também levantavam bandeiras contra o preconceito e reivindicavam maior transparência dos governos. Houve choque entre polícia e manifestantes radicais – os *black-blocks* –, que se expandiu, com a repressão vitimando também os que protestavam pacificamente. No Rio de Janeiro, um grupo tentou invadir a Assembleia Legislativa do Estado (Alerj), jogando pedras, coquetéis molotov, incendiando carros e depredando três agências bancárias.

Já no dia 26 de junho de 2013, 388 cidades do Brasil fizeram história ao juntar cerca de 1,5 milhão de pessoas nas ruas, reivindicando não só as pautas do dia 17 como a não-aprovação da PEC 37 (proposta que daria exclusividade de poder de investigação criminal para as polícias federal e civis, retirando tal prerrogativa do Ministério Público e de outros órgãos), a rejeição ao projeto que propõe tratamento médico para a “cura” da homossexualidade (conhecido como “cura gay”) e a melhoria nas universidades. Houve conflito entre manifestantes e a polícia em boa parte das cidades. Desta vez,

no entanto, o repúdio à política e aos políticos ficou mais claro, com nomes expostos em cartazes, como por exemplo na inscrição “Mais felicidade, menos Feliciano!” (referindo-se a Marco Feliciano, deputado federal do estado de São Paulo e integrante da bancada evangélica), e com os conflitos internos (principalmente em São Paulo) gerados pela rejeição e opressão de manifestantes apartidários a qualquer militante que aparecesse carregando bandeiras de partidos – principalmente do Partido dos Trabalhadores. Esse é o sinal de que, mesmo com propostas iniciais mais universais, a heterogeneidade do movimento começava a ficar evidente pela diversidade de reivindicações. Estas, mesmo em sua grande maioria ligadas principalmente a problemas de responsabilidade estadual e municipal, acabavam por respingar diretamente na presidenta Dilma Rousseff. A Copa das Confederações e as eleições em 2014 reforçavam esse quadro.

No início de 2014, protestos em São Paulo e mais 50 cidades defendiam o direito de se expressar e exibiam o desejo por mais investimento na segurança pública e pelo aumento do número de escolas. Grupos setoriais, como os metalúrgicos e professores, reivindicavam melhores salários, e membros do Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem-Teto (MTST) faziam suas demandas por mais moradias. Houve conflitos entre manifestantes e policiais naquele ato e também nos que aconteceram na semana de 12 a 18 de junho de 2014, quando os presentes se posicionavam contrários à realização da Copa do Mundo, considerando que a alta quantia de dinheiro investido deveria ter sido utilizada em melhorias na saúde, educação e cultura. Cartazes traziam frases como: “Gari vale mais que o Neymar”; “Copa sem o povo, tô na rua de novo”; “Copa para quem?”; “Fifa, go home!”. O grito de ordem “Não vai ter Copa!” sintetizava a insatisfação.

Logo após as eleições, ficara subentendido que a apertada vitória de Dilma Rousseff com 51,64% dos votos significava uma divisão de opiniões da sociedade brasileira e prenunciava um difícil governo para a presidenta. A entrada do 13º ano de governo petista trouxe protestos voltados especificamente contra ele, inflamados pela continuidade da Operação Lava-Jato, com a descoberta e ampla divulgação espetacularizada de cada vez mais casos de corrupção, além da acusação de fraude dos vitoriosos por parte do candidato derrotado na eleição presidencial, Aécio Neves, do PSDB.

No dia 12 de abril de 2015, cerca de 534 mil pessoas em 24 estados e no Distrito Federal manifestaram repúdio aos políticos devido aos casos de desvio de verba pública: era frequente nos cartazes a frase imperativa “Fora CorruPTos!”, relacionando a corrupção à imagem de Dilma e Lula e ao Partido dos Trabalhadores em geral. Reivindicavam como solução a cassação da presidenta, por meio de *impeachment* (mesmo que não houvesse qualquer indício de suposto crime por parte da mandatária) ou a renúncia, para execução de novas eleições.

Tal como no fascismo, a aversão aos partidos estabelecidos se dá sem crítica aprofundada e de modo passional, direcionando-se a todos mas com ênfase contra a esquerda. A fragilidade das bandeiras evidencia a falta de projeto inovador consistente,

é constante a busca de um líder que canalize esse repúdio violento – Bolsonaro e o juiz Sérgio Moro, responsável pela Operação Lava-Jato, aparecem como ídolos e *popstars*, admirados por não pertencerem ao *mainstream* político, visto como corrupto e sem energia para tomar as medidas duras necessárias. A propaganda é fundamental na atração e mobilização dessas massas e, renegando a história oficial como uma fraude e apresentando teorias conspiratórias não observáveis, que não obedecem à lógica mas têm forte apelo emocional, apresentam o PT como organização criminosa, envolvida em terrorismo e em articulações internacionais para implantar o comunismo, além de coordenação de esquemas inéditos de corrupção⁴.

Como Arendt observou, conforme mencionado anteriormente, a rejeição a todos os partidos tradicionais é terreno fértil para o totalitarismo; paralelamente, também está claro que o PT, particularmente, encarnou o papel de *out-group*, de inimigo a ser destruído, passionalmente apontado como culpado por todos os males. O modo de lidar com o suposto responsável pela degradação de um imaginado passado virtuoso é o seu enfrentamento violento, antecipando-se aos supostos riscos que este ofereceria. Como Carone (2002) observou em seu trabalho sobre os frankfurtianos, a agressividade aparece sob o disfarce da autodefesa.

A intolerância se mostrou com um início de conflito contra um ativista, que, utilizando um megafone, denominou-se defensor da democracia; ao ser oprimido e ameaçado pelos presentes, foi logo depois retirado à força pela polícia militar. Com evidente falta de entendimento sobre conceitos políticos, alguns se recusavam a aceitar que o país se tornasse “soviético” ou “bolivariano”, opondo-se ao comunismo, defendendo o liberalismo (em cartazes, diziam: “Menos Marx, mais Mises”; “Liberdade, Fraternidade e Honestidade”) e ressaltando o medo de viver num país governado por “terroristas”: para estes mais extremistas, a solução era a intervenção militar, por vezes qualificada como “constitucional”.

O perfil desses manifestantes, de acordo com a pesquisa do Datafolha, era majoritariamente o de indivíduos do sexo masculino (56% de homens e 44% de mulheres), com uma média de 45 anos⁵ (30% entre 36 a 50 anos e 41% com mais de 51 anos), em sua maioria (77% deles) com Ensino Superior completo, além de renda elevada: 24% entre 5 a 10 salários mínimos (SM), 25% entre 10 e 20 SM e 16% com mais de 20 SM.

Os atos realizados no período não foram todos de repúdio ao governo. No dia 13 de maio de 2015, cerca de 174 mil pessoas nos estados de São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Bahia, Minas Gerais, Paraná, Maranhão, Ceará, Pernambuco, Alagoas, Amazonas, Mato Grosso do Sul, Mato Grosso, Goiânia, Rio Grande do Sul, Sergipe, Santa Catarina, Tocantins, Rio Grande do Norte, Pará e Piauí, além do Distrito Federal, foram às ruas para se posicionar contra o golpe (a ser dado via processo de *impeachment*) e contra o fascismo. Esses protestos contavam com a participação e apoio de partidos como PT, PC do B e PSOL, e de movimentos como CUT, MST e UNE. Apesar de defenderem a permanência do governo de Dilma, também criticavam o ajuste fiscal feito por ela,

reivindicando os direitos dos trabalhadores e as reformas agrária e política. Exaltavam a Petrobras como ferramenta de política estatal e, assim como nas manifestações anteriores, a necessidade de punir os envolvidos na Operação Lava-Jato. Além disso, traziam à mesa pautas pontuais como o plebiscito por uma nova constituinte e a saída de Joaquim Levy do ministério da Fazenda.

Os protestos do dia 15 de março de 2015, que reuniram cerca de 110 mil pessoas principalmente no Rio de Janeiro, em São Paulo e no Distrito Federal, trouxeram pautas semelhantes àquelas de abril. Vestidos de verde e amarelo, os manifestantes se apresentavam dispostos a “salvar” o Brasil da corrupção e/ou do “comunismo” e do “terrorismo”: a saída da presidenta era sua pauta principal, juntamente com a saída do PT em geral. Para alguns, a solução seria o *impeachment*; para outros, a renúncia, ou uma reforma política com a implantação do parlamentarismo, ou até mesmo a intervenção militar (opção apoiada, desta vez, com maior intensidade do que nos protestos anteriores). Reivindicavam também maior investimento na educação e a “meritocracia”. Como Carone (2002) observou, os inimigos apontados pelos fascistas são qualificados frequentemente como “parasitas da economia”.

A intolerância se fazia mais presente nos atos, pois qualquer encontro com pessoas de vermelho ou que faziam alguma referência à defesa de Dilma, Lula, ou PT motivava reação hostil dos participantes da manifestação, que as reprimiam ou ameaçavam. Segundo a pesquisa do Datafolha, o perfil seguia praticamente o mesmo de abril: um ato com uma maior parcela de homens (63%), onde 37% tinham entre 36 a 50 anos; 21% tinham mais de 51 anos; 76% possuíam o ensino superior completo e eram prioritariamente de classe média ou alta (27% ganham de 5 a 10 salários mínimos; 22% ganham de 10 a 20 e 19% recebem mais de 20).

São Paulo, no dia 16 de agosto de 2015, juntou 135 mil pessoas com alguns dos mesmos objetivos de abril e maio. A defesa do liberalismo e da meritocracia estava em toda parte, opondo-se ferrenhamente às políticas sociais institucionalizadas no governo petista. Em função da quantidade de tempo em que o partido estava no poder e das políticas sociais, muitos lá presentes caracterizavam o muito moderado e democrático governo como uma “ditadura comunista”. Existiam aqueles que não concordavam com o *impeachment* por tampouco confiarem em qualquer dos nomes sucessores do Executivo e pediam pela renúncia de Dilma; outros, mais extremistas, acreditavam que apenas as Forças Armadas seriam capazes de acabar com o “terrorismo de Estado implantado pelo PT”. Alguns cartazes demandavam o fim do Foro de São Paulo, que, segundo acreditavam alguns manifestantes, era o meio pelo qual o partido do governo negociava com países como Cuba, Venezuela e Bolívia, mantendo laços que poderiam trazer influências consideradas negativas para o Brasil. Bandeira histórica do PSDB, a implantação do parlamentarismo era defendida por parte dos manifestantes.

Havia também uma grande demanda pela punição de políticos como Eduardo Cunha e Renan Calheiros e até mesmo cartazes que pediam pela pena de morte para

corruptos. Alguns manifestantes cobravam, ainda, mais atitude da oposição partidária ao governo Dilma; outros enalteciam a figura do juiz Sérgio Moro – como dito antes, o deputado Bolsonaro não é o único credenciado a líder do movimento fascista. Pesquisa coordenada por Solano e Ortellado (2015) aponta que o perfil de quem tomou as ruas da capital paulista era: homem (57,3%), branco (73,6%), com idade entre 30 e 60 anos (59,2%), renda familiar superior a R\$ 3.940 reais (70,9%) e alto nível de escolaridade (65,4%).

No início do ano de 2016, em 13 de março, os verde-amarelos se juntaram novamente em pelo menos 250 cidades brasileiras, totalizando cerca de 3,3 milhões de pessoas para manifestar apoio à Lava-Jato, repudiar Lula, Dilma e o PT (“comunistas”, “bandidos”, “corruptos” e “terroristas”, segundo eles; é clara a sintonia com a forma como, segundo Carone, os fascistas identificam seus bodes-expiatórios ou *out-groups*: apresentados como “traidores”, “vilões”, “arruaceiros” e “assassinos”). Sugeriam as mesmas soluções dos atos pró-golpe do ano anterior, com a inclusão de uma nova opção: o retorno à monarquia. Algumas das peculiaridades foram a exaltação do Judiciário pelas prisões executadas⁶, os pedidos por autonomia para investigação pela Polícia Federal e a forte crença de se estar salvando o país da imoralidade. Apesar de serem a favor do processo de *impeachment* em sua grande maioria, no entanto, não havia nenhum elogio ou sequer menção ao então vice-presidente Michel Temer nos cartazes (ainda que também autoritário e conservador, Temer é identificado com a ordem estabelecida e com a política institucional, o que é repudiado por esse movimento).

No dia de 17 de abril de 2016, o mesmo em que a votação do *impeachment* ocorreria na Câmara dos Deputados, dois protestos se deram em diferentes horários no Distrito Federal e nos estados do Acre, Bahia, Paraíba, Pernambuco, Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais, Mato Grosso do Sul e São Paulo: pela manhã, os manifestantes se uniram pela preservação da democracia, usando palavras de ordem como “Não vai ter golpe; vai ter luta!”, defendendo com isso também os direitos do trabalhador. Na manifestação, partidos como PT, PSOL e PC do B e movimentos como a CUT estavam presentes pacificamente; cartazes enalteciam a figura do ex-presidente Lula e da presidenta Dilma como “guerreira da pátria brasileira” (usavam principalmente adesivos com sua imagem de quando foi presa política na ditadura militar iniciada em 1964).

À tarde, houve outro ato, daqueles que estavam a favor do processo de *impeachment* ou de outras formas de exclusão da presidenta, como renúncia e novas eleições, o retorno da monarquia ou a intervenção militar. Assim, a divisão de horários foi feita para que não houvesse conflitos entre os dois grupos. Este último exaltava a figura do juiz Sérgio Moro, das Forças Armadas, de Jair Bolsonaro e de outras figuras defensoras da meritocracia e representantes dos conservadores no Brasil.

Era clara a falta de confiança nos partidos políticos na intolerância ao Partido dos Trabalhadores, aos partidos em geral, e a qualquer manifestante ou símbolo que os

trouxessem a lembrança do considerado “perigo comunista”. Mesmo aqueles não tão extremistas avaliavam mal o governo, principalmente por utilizar como carro-chefe de sua gestão a priorização de políticas sociais. As manifestações que se sucederem depois da votação da Câmara, até a definição do futuro de Dilma, da democracia e do país na votação no Senado, continuaram seguindo as mesmas formas e ideias, até que o golpe fosse efetivado.

Bolsonaro, o candidato a líder fascista

Pesquisa CNT/MDA de fevereiro de 2017 sobre as intenções de voto para presidente em 2018 colocam Bolsonaro como bem colocado em todas as simulações, aparecendo em segundo lugar nas respostas espontâneas não estimuladas e em terceiro ou quarto, mas dentro da margem de erro da disputa pela passagem para o segundo turno, em todas as demais. Desde a redemocratização nos anos 1980 um candidato com discurso tão reacionário e violento não tinha desempenho tão relevante.

O discurso de Bolsonaro, que vem angariando muitos adeptos, é tipicamente fascista: fortemente ancorado no conservadorismo – ênfase no nacionalismo, na família tradicional e na religião –, com centralidade para a hierarquia e para a manutenção da ordem, com o recurso da violência como seu garantidor. Paralelamente, aqueles que combateram a ditadura militar são apontados como “terroristas” (é recorrente a tática fascista de apontar agressores como vítimas e disfarçar a agressão como autodefesa). Em sessão plenária da Câmara dos Deputados de 9 de dezembro de 2014, Bolsonaro (2014a) apontou o suposto caráter criminoso de Dilma Rousseff (repetiu isso várias outras vezes, inclusive no discurso feito no dia da votação do *impeachment*) por ela ter participado da luta armada, tendo atuado no sequestro de uma autoridade da ditadura militar e em saques de banco. Acusou-a ainda de, por meio de relações com Cuba e países como Venezuela e Bolívia, tentar “planificar o ideário esquerdista” e “cubanizar” o país, e permitir assim o tráfico de armas e munições, além de dar isenção de visto a milhares cubanos, iranianos e haitianos, “escória do mundo” composta por presidiários e terroristas. Essas acusações se sucedem em tom indignado sem que se articulem logicamente ou se embasem – como afirmado, o discurso fascista prima por mobilizar a emoção dos seguidores e não por racionalidade. Além disso, o patriotismo fascista tende a apontar os *out-groups* como “homens sem pátria”, como traidores da nação, como defensores de interesses estrangeiros, e isso está marcado no discurso de Bolsonaro.

O discurso da moralidade não apenas rejeita as conquistas e lutas do feminismo e do movimento LGBT como também canaliza a ladainha anticorrupção como contraposição entre o suposto purismo *outsider* representado por ele (mesmo estando em seu sexto mandato parlamentar) e pelos militares que representa, de um lado, e a classe política tradicional, impura e comprometida, de outro: “Quem sou eu na política perto de Serra, Aécio, Alckmin, Marina, Ciro? Ninguém. Sou um deputado que vocês

chamam de baixo clero. Só que não sou uma coisa antes das eleições e outra depois.” (Bolsonaro, 2017).

Como visto, o líder fascista tende a se apresentar como “homem solitário, corajoso e íntegro”, que enfrenta o sistema corrupto e degradado e a ameaça representada pelos *out-groups*. Tende a ser um “homem do povo” e perseguido, e Bolsonaro (2014b) sempre busca usar linguagem direta e informal, sem rodeios ou freios, como alguém que nem faz parte da elite estabelecida, nem se curva a ela. Em entrevista para o site UOL, Bolsonaro (2011) disse que quer “um presidente com autoridade e não um demagogo”.

Também próprias do discurso fascista, a idealização de um passado para o qual se quer voltar e o ódio à esquerda, com sua identificação como culpada pelos males do presente, de modo não racional, está claramente presente no discurso dos seguidores de Bolsonaro. Cartazes com “Deus, Pátria, Família” podiam ser vistos no protesto, bem como um que homenageava o dia oficial do golpe de 1964, dizendo “Marcha da família com Deus pela liberdade! Viva 31 de março! 50 anos”. Valdir, um dos participantes da manifestação do dia 15 de março de 2015, exclamava “Chega de PT e de esquerda no Brasil! Só servem para enganar a população!”. A comparação do grau de corrupção e ordem entre a época da ditadura militar (considerada por eles como a “Revolução de 1964”) e o momento pelo qual passavam era frequente entre os discursos dos integrantes daquele ato. A reportagem da TV Folha dois dias depois desse ato evidencia a passionalidade do antipetismo.

A corrupção não seria só o desvio de verba dos cofres públicos, mas também a da moral: honestidade e conservadorismo de costumes caminhariam juntos, e o PT seria tanto corrupto como hostil aos bons costumes, favorecendo a homossexualidade, a anarquia, a permissividade em relação aos criminosos. Os governos petistas teriam, assim, afastado o Brasil de um passado imaginado virtuoso, em que valores familiares, da disciplina, da segurança e da honestidade teriam vigorado, especialmente durante a ditadura militar.

A defesa dos direitos humanos, a propósito, é associada à desordem. “O partido que levou o país de cabeça para baixo”, nas palavras de um dos manifestantes, utilizaria a prerrogativa de defesa dos direitos humanos para proteger bandidos, estupradores, vagabundos, marginais, sequestradores e corruptos. É dentro desse contexto que eles acreditam na periculosidade do governo petista, que segundo Carlos Metralha, ex-agente do Dops na ditadura militar que compareceu à manifestação, “querem implantar no Brasil o regime comunista, o terrorismo de Estado”. Alexandre Morse, outro manifestante, sugeria a solução: “[...] se os militares fizerem uma limpeza aqui e depois de 90 dias fizerem novas eleições nós vamos ter uma nova chance”.⁷ Como Carone (2002) havia notado, é própria dos fascistas a “suspeita paranoica” que transforma agressores em agredidos e as vítimas em perigo. Bolsonaro (2014b), por exemplo, ao ser perguntado se quer transformar o Brasil em um país “quase como a Alemanha nazista”, ri e responde que não, que era o governo Dilma que queria transformar o

país em “comunismo”, em um “regime cubano”. A intolerância dos fascistas fica clara pelo extremismo presente em seus discursos, como este, de um anônimo, em um dos protestos: “Intervenção Militar já! Acabar com todos os partidos políticos do Brasil, fazer uma limpeza geral nesse país! Eu não sou bandido, não sou maconheiro, não tenho medo do Exército”⁸

É própria do fascismo a ideia de que há interesses hostis à unidade nacional e de que é preciso um líder para reunificar a nação e trazer os bons tempos de volta. Em um dos discursos feitos no carro de som das manifestações, foi possível ouvir uma das acusações ao partido governista, tido como inimigo a ser enfrentado: “O PT há anos vem dividido a nossa sociedade: entre ricos e pobres, negros e brancos. Mas a partir de hoje em diante suas divisões são inúteis, não vão mais separar o povo brasileiro porque estamos demonstrando que somos um só povo, uma só nação!”

Para essas pessoas, programas sociais funcionam como uma tentativa de dividir a sociedade e dar mais privilégios a uns do que a outros, por corromper o ideal de que existe uma igualdade entre os indivíduos. Por isso, em sua visão, os governos Lula e Dilma defendiam políticas que incapacitavam os alunos e os influenciavam negativamente (é o mencionado tema do “parasitismo econômico”). Isso é articulado à ideia de desordem na sociedade, que precisaria de autoridade, e liderança enérgica e não de permissividade:

Hoje mais importante do que o menino saber tabuada é saber se ele vai fazer amor com outro menino no futuro. É o “esculacho” da família brasileira. Um pai não quer chegar em casa e encontrar o filho brincando de boneca por influência da escola. Antontem no Colégio Pedro II do Rio de Janeiro, tradicional, o diretor, que deve ser gay, decidiu que os uniformes agora, que eram de acordo com as cores, agora podem ser à vontade, e ontem já começou a bagunça ontem lá, de menino usando saia. É uma zona! É um “esculacho”! (Bolsonaro, 2016).

Há uma aversão aos debates mais sofisticados da intelectualidade progressista, do conhecimento humanístico e social produzido nas universidades. A defesa do projeto “Escola sem partido”, que entende a educação como algo puramente técnico e acrítico, é consequência disso. O acumulado conhecimento acadêmico, que rejeita suas teses, é antinatural, coisa de “comunistas, esquerdistas, intelectuais antipatrióticos”. A história crítica é chamada por Bolsonaro (2016) de “essa palhaçada da Comissão da Verdade do PT”. Na reflexão de Arendt (1998: 383) sobre totalitarismo, ela afirma:

A finalidade das mais variadas e variáveis interpretações era sempre denunciar a história oficial como uma fraude, expor uma esfera de influências secretas das quais a realidade histórica visível, demonstrável e conhecida era apenas uma fachada externa construída com o fim expresso de enganar o povo.

A suposta defesa do conhecimento, no entanto, ainda que esvaziado de qualquer concepção crítica, é utilizada para criticar políticas de esquerda, voltadas para a redução da pobreza. Com forte discurso pautado na “meritocracia”, na noção de que o sucesso pessoal depende somente do mérito e capacidades do indivíduo, sem influência de

terceiros ou mesmo do acaso, Jair Bolsonaro e seus seguidores encontram nas políticas sociais outro motivo de crítica ao governo petista. Estas sustentariam e multiplicariam um problema, maquiando-o com uma política que, além de insuficiente, geraria dependência e faria com que os beneficiados continuassem votando no governo que os provê. Exemplo disso é o Programa Bolsa-Família, o mais lembrado e criticado pelos manifestantes fascistas e pelo deputado federal, cuja opinião é incisiva sobre o assunto:

O conhecimento é que liberta o homem, não essa “pipoca” de Bolsa-Família, que o pessoal gosta de falar para ganhar voto! [...] Temos que colocar na cabeça do povo que o responsável pelo insucesso dele é ele! É você individualmente que é o responsável pelo seu insucesso, não queiram culpar terceiros, como é ensinado nos currículos escolares. [...] Quanto mais imbecis tiverem no Brasil, com um diploma de burro na mão e de Bolsa Família na outra, melhor é pra manipular esse pessoal pra votar neles. Portanto, o combustível hoje em dia do poder, que é o voto, é a ignorância, a destruição dos valores familiares, é essa zona que está aí (Bolsonaro, 2016).

A mesma lógica de que as políticas implementadas pela esquerda no governo dividem a sociedade e ameaçam os valores brasileiros aparece no caso das leis que priorizam dar mais representação à questão da sexualidade, que Bolsonaro nomeia como “ideologia de gênero”. Em uma entrevista, Bolsonaro (2014b) compara uma vítima de violência por homofobia a um torcedor do Corinthians que apanha na rua por estar vestido com a camisa do time. Segundo o deputado, se o torcedor não pede uma lei específica para a sua proteção, gays também não deveriam pedir: isto significa que não haveria motivo para tratamento diferenciado se os dois passariam pela mesma situação. Bolsonaro acredita que a homossexualidade é um tipo de comportamento imoral que a educação correta, “sem ideologia” e com autoridade, consegue evitar de forma eficaz.

Considerações finais

O Brasil não é mais uma democracia desde o golpe de Estado que tirou prematuramente, sem motivos legítimos, a presidenta eleita popularmente para um mandato de quatro anos, permitindo a ascensão de uma ditadura civil⁹, que impõe em ritmo acelerado uma política extremamente antipopular e reacionária. Isso não faz do governo um regime fascista. O fascismo, entretanto, espalha-se pela sociedade e foi importante na soma de forças para que houvesse base social para respaldar a articulação golpista – a qual, no entanto, foi vertical. O próprio Michel Temer, que assumiu ilegalmente (a despeito da inaceitável chancela por parte do Supremo Tribunal Federal) a Presidência, é repudiado pelos fascistas¹⁰, em função de se distanciar da identidade idealizada: há inúmeras denúncias de corrupção contra ele e é uma das figuras mais paradigmáticas do *mainstream* da política tradicional brasileira.

Existe nos anseios da sociedade o espaço para soluções autoritárias de viés personalista e antissistêmico, e a junção de manipulação midiática antiesquerdista e

antipetista com a inabilidade dos governos petistas de construir hegemonia, no sentido gramsciano do termo e não meramente eleitoral¹¹, dá a elas um teor profundamente conservador. A criminalização da política e particularmente da esquerda, o descrédito da representação, o incompetente trabalho dos partidos estabelecidos de levar adiante seus deveres de formação política e mobilização para a participação, e a profunda espetacularização e mediatização dos escândalos são elementos que, somados, permitem que o ovo da serpente fascista tenha sido chocado ainda sem um líder pré-determinado para liderar as massas encantadas rumo ao avanço projeto reacionário.

Há, no entanto, figuras públicas qualificadas para encarnar o papel. As eleições municipais de 2016 mostraram não apenas um fracasso da esquerda como um todo, e do PT em particular, mas também a recorrência do discurso por parte dos candidatos de não serem políticos tradicionais. Dois outros nomes, no entanto, podem ser apontados como os mais promissores para assumir tal papel: o juiz de primeira instância e comandante da Operação Lava-Jato Sérgio Moro e o deputado federal representante dos militares Jair Bolsonaro. Ambos se qualificam por seu antiesquerdismo, criminalização da política, conservadorismo, personalismo, e autoimputado papel de cruzado contra o sistema. Bolsonaro, no entanto, assume de forma muito mais explícita e completa o discurso fascista, além de já estar envolvido na disputa eleitoral, de já ter se lançado pré-candidato a presidente e de estar bem cotado nas pesquisas.

A política brasileira, até pela sinalização dada no rompimento do pacto democrático na destituição de Dilma Rousseff, está menos institucionalizada e, portanto, aberta à influência de mais variáveis. A disputa entre a esquerda moderada e a direita liberal e laica, que levava a deslocamentos não abruptos nas políticas públicas definidas a partir de um jogo repleto de atores de veto, também não corresponde mais à conjuntura nacional. Esta se configura crescentemente como um Estado de exceção e em que outros grupos adquirem maior relevância: a política religiosa e o fascismo. Mesmo se alcançada uma não garantida redemocratização, estes atores não poderão ser ignorados. A esquerda, *out-group* preferencial dos fascistas brasileiros, além do risco de sofrer agressões e perseguições, tem que lidar com o desafio de disputar uma narrativa e de traçar estratégias que lhe permitam crescer. Hoje, encolhida, vê uma ditadura civil de direita aprovando um amplo conjunto de cortes de direitos, o fascismo se espalhando, e a política religiosa ameaçando o Estado laico.

Notas

¹ O golpe jurídico-parlamentar-midiático, movido por meio de processo de *impeachment* sem crime de responsabilidade, foi discutido em outros trabalhos, antes e depois de sua concretização (Reis, 2015 e 2016).

² A grande mídia, inicialmente contrária às primeiras manifestações de maior vulto de 2013 contra o aumento das passagens de ônibus, mudou o discurso ao perceber potencial para atraí-la para pautas reacionárias. Sua cobertura favorável e permanente dos atos pró-golpe foi fundamental para o expressivo comparecimento. Tal mudança de postura é explorada por Santos, F. (2013). Bolsonaro, por sua vez, tem amplo espaço na mídia hegemônica para defender seu revisionismo histórico, pouco afeito à lógica mas com forte apelo emocional.

³ Nunca deixou de existir, é claro, mas desde a decadência do integralismo o fascismo não assumia tal relevância na política nacional.

⁴ A participação de membros do PT em esquemas de corrupção é óbvia, tal como ocorre em todos os demais partidos com acesso aos postos de poder, mas o protagonismo imputado a ele nas práticas ilícitas destoa da lógica e das evidências, visto que outras agremiações partidárias estão envolvidas em maior número de acusações, de condenações, de cassações e em maior valor especulado de desvios de dinheiro público e subornos. A cobertura enviesada da mídia hegemônica tem papel central nessa imagem pública.

⁵ Bastante diferente do perfil dos manifestantes de 2013, jovens em sua maioria (Bringel, 2013).

⁶ O Judiciário tem atuado flexibilizando as leis, abusando de conduções coercitivas sem necessidade e prisões preventivas de longa duração sem julgamento, aplicando e banalizando a teoria do domínio do fato (contrariando a concepção de que todos são inocentes até prova em contrário), conduzindo investigações para punir culpados escolhidos “por convicção” e não para descobrir os culpados por meio de provas. Esse processo está ligado à criminalização da política e a uma relação simbiótica com a mídia, mas também a uma perseguição enviesada do grupo que esteve no governo federal nas presidências petistas.

⁷ Em ato contra governo, manifestantes explicam por que foram às ruas. *TV Folha*, 17 de mar de 2015. Disponível em: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JBrxiBpCVQ>>

⁸ #15M - Na cola da turma da intervenção. *Revista Trip*, 16 de março de 2015. Disponível em: <<https://www.facebook.com/revistatrip/videos/10152760919021238>>.

⁹ A definição do governo que ascendeu a partir do golpe jurídico-parlamentar de 2016 como uma ditadura não é pacífica nem na academia, nem fora dela. Mesmo nos movimentos e partidos de esquerda há resistência ao uso do termo, preferindo-se eufemismos como “governo golpista” e “ilegítimo”. Entende-se aqui, no entanto, que o termo “ditadura” é apropriado, e insiste-se na relevância de sua utilização, dado que se trata de governo que se originou de golpe contra a democracia (mesmo que com a cumplicidade do próprio Judiciário e participação central do Poder Legislativo), para, entre outros objetivos, implementar uma agenda profundamente impopular, de inviável de apoio nas urnas, que havia sido derrotada em seguidas eleições. Ademais, a degradação dos direitos e garantias vai continuamente se agravando, conforme foi denunciado já em Reis (2015). Assim como a ditadura militar inaugurada no golpe de 1964 só encontrou seu auge de repressão anos depois, a partir da promulgação do Ato Institucional nº 5, a ditadura civil ora vigente tem aumentado seu caráter de Estado de exceção e não se pode prever quão longe avançará.

¹⁰ Sua impopularidade atingiu 62% em fevereiro de 2017, segundo pesquisa de opinião do Instituto MDA, e isso se explica tanto por suas políticas contrárias aos direitos adquiridos e pelas suspeitas de corrupção, como por ser associado pela esquerda ao golpe e ao neoliberalismo e, pela direita, ao governo deposto (por mais que tenha atuado ativamente para derrubá-lo).

¹¹ Nem mesmo uma hegemonia meramente eleitoral foi construída, visto que os setores conservadores permaneceram amplamente majoritários no Congresso Nacional, conseguindo facilmente as maiorias qualificadas necessárias para aprovar o *impeachment* irregular.

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Between Opportunism and Limitation: the resurgence of populism and the right-wing populist 'Alternative for Germany' (AfD)

Entre Oportunismo e Limitação: o ressurgimento do populismo e o populismo de direita da 'Alternativa para a Alemanha' (AfD)

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Abstract

The article provides first an overview of the strands of current research on populism and the German newcomer party, the Alternative für Deutschland (AfD). Building upon this, it will be demonstrated how the AfD constitutes a right-wing populist party, but also how its ideology connects to ideational-historical currents that have been influential in the Federal Republic of Germany. Finally, we elaborate the underlying thesis that the AfD comprises a party that is oriented primarily toward re-adjusting and re-setting borders. Accordingly, the party manages to successfully politicize the cleavage between supporters of more openness and supporters of stronger delimitation.

Keywords: AfD, populism, right-wing populism, political conflict, borders.

Resumo

O artigo fornece inicialmente uma visão geral das vertentes da pesquisa atual sobre o populismo e o novo partido alemão, a Alternativa para Alemanha (AfD). Com base nisso, será demonstrado como a AfD constitui um partido populista de direita, mas também como sua ideologia se conecta com correntes ideacional-históricas que foram influentes na República Federal da Alemanha. Finalmente, elaboramos a tese subjacente de que a AfD é composta por um partido que se orienta principalmente para o reajuste e restabelecimento das fronteiras. Consequentemente, o partido consegue politizar com êxito a clivagem entre partidários de mais abertura e partidários de uma delimitação mais forte.

Palavras-chave: AfD, Populismo, populismo de direita, conflito político e fronteiras.

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Introduction: the populist backdrop and the emergence of the AfD

Political systems across Europe and the Americas have been facing a growing resurgence of populism. Elections in the last year alone – whether in the electoral primaries in the USA and the astonishing success of Donald Trump, the victory of the ‘Brexit’-campaign in the United Kingdom, or the impressive results for the newcomer party Podemos in the Spanish national elections – exemplify not only the significance of the widespread populist wave in current politics. More fundamentally, they also attest to political developments that have actually been in the making for quite some time now. This may apply even more so with regard to right-wing populism, which has come to pose a veritable ‘problem child’ for research on parties and party systems in transition as much as on modern democracy in general. While the Left is meanwhile no stranger to populist movements (indicated for instance by the successes of Podemos in Spain, Syriza in Greece, Beppe Grillo and the Five Star Movement in Italy, or even Hugo Chavez in Venezuela), the proliferation of right-wing populist parties in particular and, coupled with this, of (re-)nationalistic, nativist and anti-immigration as well as anti-establishment, anti-globalist and anti-pluralist sentiments in numerous countries invite a host of concerns. Indeed, these trends have increasingly flamed debate in politics and society as much as in academia and especially political science. At the same time, populism continues to occupy an ambiguous place in multiple ways, as there is ultimately a profound lack of consensus on ‘what to make of’ populism (see e.g. Decker et al. 2015). In sum, the normative-analytical perspectives range from a ‘danger for democracy’ (see e.g. Müller 2016) intensifying the erosion of political trust, liberal and plural values and stability on the one hand, to a ‘useful corrective’ or even a ‘radical democratic articulation of the people’ (see e.g. Laclau 2005), stimulating established parties and institutions to adapt to new or neglected citizen demands and identities on the other, as well as a host of nuanced and differentiated views in between (see e.g. Kaltwasser 2012). Yet, uncertainties are identifiable already on the rather descriptive-analytical side as well. The determinants of populism, whether populism comprises a proper ideology or not, or what constitutes populism at all, not to mention the often difficult distinction toward other political ideational groupings (e.g. ‘EU-sceptic’, nationalist, regionalist and especially right-wing extremist groups and parties) have frequently been contested issues of definition and analysis. It is not least against this backdrop that the study of the emergence and development of the German *Alternative für Deutschland* (‘Alternative for Germany’, AfD) represents a complex endeavor.

For one, it is only of fairly recent, and with the AfD in particular, that right-wing populism has come to amount to a significant political force in the German party system. In most European countries, right-wing populism has been on the rise for many years. The list of countries with successful parties challenging the ‘establishment’ from the right has meanwhile expanded substantially within the last decade, many of

which have even managed to gain not only sizeable shares of seats in parliaments, but even government office in several cases. These trends seem to have been intensified in the wake of the Euro- and financial crisis triggered in 2008/09 in the European Union. Germany on the other hand long appeared to make up a special case, not least since it had been literally surrounded by countries with more or less strong right-wing parties (e.g. the Front National in France, the Vlaams Blok (later Vlaams Belang) in Belgium, the Lijst Pim Fortuyn and then the Partij voor de Vrijheid in the Netherlands, the Schweizerische Volkspartei in Switzerland, the Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs in Austria, Fidesz and Jobbik in Hungary, Prawo i Sprawiedliwość in Poland, Forza Italia and Lega Nord in Italy or the Dansk Folkparti in Denmark, just to name a few). In Germany by contrast, the occasional successes of right-wing populist or nationalist parties at state (*Länder*) and local level (e.g. the Partei Rechtsstaatlicher Offensive in Hamburg, Die Republikaner in Baden-Württemberg, or the Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands in a few eastern *Länder*) constituted more exceptions confirming this rule. Those electoral successes were mostly temporary and, for over five decades since the founding, consistently failed to materialize into the electoral support needed (5% of the vote) to gain entrance in the *Bundestag*, the federal parliament. Given these circumstances, Germany even had the appearance of an “Elysian field” in this regard (Decker 2003), where despite having comparable levels of attitudes and (re-)sentiments favorable to right-wing populism and extremism, perhaps the legacy of the National-Socialist past must have been so effective as to deter significant shares of voters from electing such parties.

As of current, there is a great deal of reason to expect that this will change with the next *Bundestag* election in the fall of 2017 due to the popularity of the AfD. Judging by national surveys so far, the party could receive between 10 and 15 percent of the vote and would thus be represented in the federal parliament. Moreover, the state and local elections would appear to underline the more sustainable success of the AfD, having garnered for instance in all *Länder* elections that took place in 2016 double-digit shares of the vote (15% in Baden-Württemberg; ca. 13% in Rhineland-Palatinate; and 24% in Saxony-Anhalt, the second-largest percentage of the vote there; see e.g. Spiegel 2016). Given these political developments, in addition to the general public, politics and media, political scientists have been increasingly addressing the questions of how to explain the success of the AfD and what political significance it has.

Among party researchers, there was at first considerable dispute as to whether the Alternative for Germany party (AfD), founded in 2013, constituted a right-wing populist party at all (see e.g. Lewandowsky 2015). While this would appear trivial by now, the question was quite valid for a time since the AfD in its founding stage focused almost exclusively on ordo-liberal standpoints, to a large extent in critical reaction to Germany's leadership in the (unpopular) bailout policies during the Euro-crisis.¹ The party also demonstrated a rather reserved, and explicitly serious political style, nearly without any xenophobic overtones in their campaign. Moreover, their image was

dominated by a group of liberal economics professors who comprised the leadership level of the party. However, the AfD has shifted considerably, not only with regard to its party program, but also its personnel and political style increasingly toward right-wing populism (Häusler 2016; see also with a stronger focus on its electorate, Decker, Kiess und Brähler 2016). The debate on how to categorize the AfD may not be over, but it is at present being classified within party, right-wing extremism and populism research almost unanimously as right-wing populist (Bebnowski 2015, 2016; Ceyhan 2016; Decker 2016).

At the same time, it is important to note that there are a series of common issues and ideologies that demonstrate an affinity to right-wing populism. However, it does not coincide with a distinct set of political standpoints, a clearly definable ideological program or even a certain world view. Accordingly, analyses of the AfD have referred to different ideological-programmatic currents that can be identified within the AfD and that connect more or less with right-wing populism. They include foremost the ideologies of conservatism, nationalism and ordo-liberalism. In addition, there are thematic issues that have been discussed in AfD-related research as characteristic for the party, such as opposition to the Euro and deepened European integration, anti-Islamism and rejection of a liberal immigration and asylum policy, antagonism toward gender mainstreaming efforts and other gender-policy reforms as well as critique of liberal family and societal policies.

Of particular interest and debate is likewise the question of the causes for the emergence and growth of right-wing populism and the AfD in particular. A large number of reasons have been asserted that may have favored or triggered the development of the AfD. These explanatory factors indicate a significant role of opportunity structures resulting on account of the transformation of the German party system. These changes include the increase in the formation of 'Grand Coalitions' (between the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and the Social-democratic Party of Germany (SPD) as the traditional largest, 'catch-all' parties on the left and right side of the party spectrum respectively), the convergence in policies and party programs among the established parties, especially the liberalization of the CDU as well as the SPD's turn to the 'new middle' (akin to the British Labour Party's 'third way' reforms). Another factor is provided by the transition of the Free Democratic Party (FDP), the established liberal party, toward a focus on economic and financial liberalism, which it largely failed to translate into any significant such policy after returning to government in coalition with the CDU (2009-2013), thus during the apex of the Euro and financial crisis. Further opportunity structures affecting the party system in a manner conducive to new, challenger parties have been the series of crises or events perceived as crises in recent years (Euro- and financial crisis, the 'refugee' crisis, radical Islamism, etc.) as well as deeper societal processes of change (e.g. globalization, individualization, the coinciding uncertainty of traditional ways of living, medialization of politics, etc.). From social and political discourse, a growing perception of a fundamental crisis of political

representation, reflected for instance in the concept of 'post democracy' (Crouch 2004), can even be concluded, which has likewise opened an effective window of opportunity for the AfD (as with other populist movements).

More specifically for the AfD, one significant factor may also be its organizational and personnel resources that the party had at its disposal from the outset. During its founding phase, the party surely benefitted from a large number of defecting political strategists, politicians, and party members from the established parties, most of all from the CDU but also the FDP, as well as support from right-wing networks such as the *Zivile Koalition*, to which Beatrix von Storch, a leading AfD-politician, belongs. In addition, a number of significant changes in the public discourse in Germany play into the overall opportunity framework favorable to the AfD, such as the notorious 'Sarrazin-Debate' (triggered by a widely read and controversially discussed book by Thilo Sarrazin 'predicting' how demographic developments, most of all due to immigrants, will lead to the downfall of Germany), post-democracy debates and the proliferating critique of political parties. More generally, several further trends in public discourse have surely played role such as an intensified antagonism toward 'political correctness' and seemingly growing support and popularity for 'tell-it-like-it-is' political and societal figures. In addition, and for Germany of particular relevance, has been the gradual process of a 'relaxation' with regard to the Nazi past, along with a growing confidence and acceptance of national identity. Together, these factors have been assessed to serve as a sort of catalyzer for heightening the attractiveness of (as well as diminishing the long-held taboo against) right-wing populism in Germany (Decker 2015a; Nestler and Rohgalf 2014).

For party research, inquiry into the electoral structure of the AfD has likewise become relevant. For instance, key questions include who the AfD voters are and whether they extend beyond a group of protest voters or whether the AfD is gaining a more solid voter base and thus can establish itself accordingly in the German party system. That the latter applies is not improbable, as the majority of AfD voters demonstrate culturally conservative attitudes while also exhibiting an intense disaffection with the established parties. That implies that they are relatively homogenous with respect to two issues, cultural conservatism and critique of parties. Both features belong to the core of the AfD's program and make up perhaps its unique, if a defining feature (Schwarzbözl and Fatke 2016).

In parallel, academic research and discussion on the AfD needs to be viewed in context of current research on populism in general. In light of the rise of right-wing and, to a comparatively smaller extent, left-wing populism in Europe, research has grown commensurately on the phenomenon of populism and has worked intensely, among other things, on capturing it conceptually and theoretically. The conceptual discussion on the term and nature of populism has even been renewed of recent (Mudde 2004; Müller 2016; Priester 2012). However, it becomes evident that the term populism remains a contested concept, which provides a name to a significant phenomenon on

the one hand and helps to conceptualize a number of current political tendencies. But it appears still to be strongly loaded with normative attitudes on part of the researchers on the other hand and is highly politically charged in the public as well as academic discussions. There is likewise dissent among researchers on the definitive traits of populism. Where there is consent though concerns the reference points of populism: it is characterized by a positive reference to 'the people' as a collective subject as well as a negative reference to 'the elite' and 'the establishment'. Yet there is analytical uncertainty or disagreement as to whether populism constitutes a political form (such as with a particular 'type' of party) in its own right or rather involves certain contents (such as issues) that typify various movements, parties and politicians as populist (see e.g. Puhle 2011). One common thesis postulates a certain form of identity politics as the distinguishing feature of populism, which thrives upon constructions of 'us against them' and obstructs the effective articulation and representation of concrete interests through grand narratives of identities that overarch interest differences (Steinert 1999). It is safe to presume that certain issues and ideologies are more prone or lend themselves more easily to this type of politicization than others, for instance issues like nation, cultural identity and religion.

Furthermore, research is confronted, perhaps as of recent more than ever, with the problematic relationship between populism and democracy and questions of which effects populist movements, parties and politicians have for the political culture of a democracy. Again, the guiding question can be summarized as one between 'corrective' or rather 'danger' to democracy. Cross-cutting this dualism though is another pertinent question of whether populism represents rather a purely symbolic 'simulation' of democratic empowerment of the people, whether useful or harmful. Depending on the particular diagnosis provided, the respective academic contributions differ considerably in their proposals for dealing with populism. They vary with regard to views on which types of reactions to the populist challenge in democracy may be acceptable, legitimate and effective (see e.g. Blühdorn 2016; Decker 2006; Jörke and Selk 2015; Münkler 2011). In addition to the approach to problem diagnosis, in many cases the political position and own democratic theoretical perspective of the researchers are reflected clearly in the different analyses. This is exemplified for instance in Chantal Mouffe's arguments for a left-wing populism, which she asserts would help revitalize democracy, politicize larger political debates and foster effective political mobilization against neo-liberalism (Mouffe 2016a, 2016b). Indeed, a great deal, and seemingly most, contributions to the discussion on populism presume explicitly or implicitly a certain ideal of democracy and arrive accordingly at different assessments of the phenomenon.

Questions on the causes and reasons behind the resurgence of populism in the USA, in Europe and in Latin America are raised in nearly all current research on populism. There has been particular focus also on why populism has experienced such a sizeable renaissance in Europe in the last decade, reflected in the increase of related

parties and movements. As for the most recent years, the effects of the Euro-crisis in Europe came to the forefront of research interest as they have contributed to, among other things, the increased significance of populism (see e.g. Kriesi and Pappas 2015). Regarding Latin America and Asia, several scholars argue that a particular form of populism can be found there, which is admittedly characterized by an illiberal political program, but is less exclusive, in contrast to western and northern European right-wing populism, and rather much more oriented to inclusion. Such populism focuses namely on the inclusion of disadvantaged and marginalized minorities or societal groups (Mofitt 2015; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2013).

At the same time, current research on populism has brought forth an important, general finding that can prove insightful for understanding left-wing parties in western and northern Europe but also the success of Donald Trump in the United States. As illustrated above, right-wing populism in Europe has come to be characterized by a combination of what Frank Decker terms the “programmatically-thematic winning formula” of right-wing populism (Decker 2012: 22); i.e. right-wing populist parties resort increasingly to the welfare state in economic matters and take at the same time a conservative-nationalist position on cultural issues, while presenting themselves as critics of established parties and the political elite. As a result, they manage to appeal to a relatively large group of voters that may be referred to as ‘dissatisfied left-conservatives’. Characteristic of this group is that they are dissatisfied with how the political system performs, prefer economically a leftist policy friendly to state intervention and redistribution, but hold conservative to reactionary values on the cultural and socio-political dimension (Lefkofridi, Wagner and Willmann 2014). Socio-structurally, this group tends to belong to the lower middle income class and lower strata of society, e.g. laborers, lower-level employees and the small-scale business self-employed. Put simply, this suggests that right-wing populist parties tend to develop into parties of the ‘little people’, and that their claims to bring ‘the people back in’ can ring with large sections of society, not least in times of uncertainty. Along these lines, a common thesis in research refers to the ‘losers of globalization’ (see e.g. Spier 2010), which encompasses not only socio-economic losses due to heightened competition, outsourcing and similar, but also perceived cultural losses through the coinciding transition of society. In turn, this assortment of findings bears no less relevance to understanding the popularity and position of the AfD in the German party system.

Theses and analytical approach

While the previous review of the research state of the art is far from exhaustive, it does provide an overview of the main strands of current research on populism. The following builds upon first research on the AfD. The meanwhile conventional classification of the AfD as right-wing populist will not be disputed, but we develop theses that go beyond the usual characterization of this party. As mentioned above,

especially after its initial phase, the AfD has been depicted in the academic discussion for the most part as a party that combines right-wing populist strategies of mobilization with nationalistic, conservative and even reactionary to right-wing extremist as well as neo-liberal standpoints. This descriptive analysis is by no means incorrect, especially with a view to the personnel and the programmatic orientation of the party, but it misses the political significance of the AfD. As will be argued in the following, the party should be construed as a party of limitation. The theme of limitation – which can refer e.g. to borders, boundaries, restriction – provides the AfD with a unique feature, which connects to the emergence of a new (or renewed) societal cleavage that is being polarized by the AfD. In light of its electorate and party program, the AfD cannot qualify at present as a right-wing party of the lesser privileged.²

Thus, after revising the terms of populism and right-wing populism, it should become clear that the AfD is aptly characterized as right-wing populist in related party research. However, the ideational-historical basis and references of the AfD tend to be widely overlooked so far. When taking them into consideration, it becomes possible to locate the AfD more comprehensively in the ideational political history of Germany's federal republic. As will be argued, it represents less a 'foreign body' in the political system, but rather connects to political-ideological traditions and frames of reference that were long present and continue to be so. The opposite impression, namely that its party program and political orientation lack tradition in the Federal Republic of Germany, is only possible on account of the changes to the political culture and party system of the past two decades that have opened up a political 'space' for a new party to occupy. Looking more closely at ideational historical currents of the past that were even influential in the German Federal Republic can reveal how to locate the AfD in a more continuous line of political-ideological thinking. In the final section then, the thesis will be elaborated on how the AfD, programmatically and thematically, resorts above all to the readjustment and re-drawing of borders and limits and thus distinguishes itself from the established parties in the political system. Why their positioning is successful electorally becomes comprehensible when considering the socio-cultural transformation of Germany and the coinciding emergence of a new political cleavage: a cleavage running between supporters of 'limitation' and supporters of 'opening'.

Party program and political standpoints of the AfD

In politicizing these issues, the AfD resorts often to a narrative that is typical for right-wing populism. Without repeating in depth the public rhetoric of AfD party leaders or the campaigns and public statements of prominent party members, media reporting on the party or the parliamentary work of the AfD-party groups in Länder parliaments (see e.g. Bebnowski 2015; Decker 2015b), the political significance of the party's critique of the political elite in the party program needs to be illustrated. A further reference point of critique of central importance to the party in this context

concerns its depiction of threat to the collective identity of the German people. The program of the AfD commences with a sharp criticism of the conditions of the German political system. This involves foremost critique of the performance of representative democracy and the political parties in the Federal Republic.

Hence, a characteristic *topos* of populism becomes immediately salient, namely the corrupt political elite. The charge by the AfD is that the Federal Republic of Germany has disempowered the people while political power has been monopolized by the elite. They claim the existence of a 'political class of professional politicians' whose main concerns amount to interests in maintaining power, their status and material wellbeing, developing into nothing less than a "political cartel" that obstructs the people from having part in political decision making (AfD 2016: 8). Based on this diagnosis, the AfD deny the legitimacy of the representatives of the German people. Accordingly, the party claims in its program that the representatives in parliaments have forfeited their "mandates of the citizens". Furthermore, the political elites, who are identified in the program above all as the heads of parties, have rendered the state its prey; the veritable "omnipotence" of the parties and the "exploitation of the state" "threaten our democracy" (AfD 2016: 11). By combining the *topos* of corruption with critique of parties, the AfD taps into not only a common theme of right-wing populism, but also even longer-standing neo-republican notions of critique of corruption and the violation of popular will (see e.g. Sparling 2016).

The program section on "Culture, Language and Identity" is also quite revealing, again not least since affinities or analogies to right-wing populism can be identified especially with regard to these issues. Here the AfD refers to Germany as one of the "great European cultural nations" whose identity is primarily 'determined by culture' (AfD 2016: 46). They demand moreover a "German mainline culture" (*Leitkultur*), insinuating a guiding cultural framework or a 'canon' of norms, values and behaviors that all must adhere to. To this end, they call for cultural political measures to strengthen this mainline culture, which they also justify as necessary steps to counteracting threats to German culture and thus German identity. These threats abound, especially due to the political elites and the "ideology of multiculturalism" they propagate, which puts not only national identity at risk, but also disturbs the public peace. According to the AfD program, the elites and their undermining of German culture pose a "serious threat to social peace and the persistence of the nation as a cultural unit" (AfD 2016: 47). Moreover, a threat to domestic security stems from the very presence and especially expansion of Muslim immigrants, who bear for the AfD "a great danger for our state, our society and our system of values" (AfD 2016: 49).

Indeed, this short series of excerpts from the party program alone clearly indicate the preponderance of right-wing typical political thinking, which is not difficult to detect or infer, but rather can be found directly in its official party program. On account of their political standpoints and, moreover, their success, the German party system may move closer to its European neighbors, where right-wing parties have meanwhile

established themselves as a durable part of party competition. In turn, with the AfD, the once commonly held notion of Germany as political system and political culture that ensures the failure of right-wing populist and extremist parties is no longer tenable. However, when taking a closer look at ideational-historical development, the lack of a successful right-wing party for decades may obscure more than reveal about actual partisan dynamics and right-wing populist thinking there.

The AfD and the ideational-historical context

As already suggested above, the ideology of the AfD can be located in the history of political thought in the Federal Republic of Germany. While many commentators and especially political opponents have meanwhile referred to the AfD as an unprecedented political group and even a foreign body in the political culture of Germany, this line of argumentation is misleading, at least with regard to the programmatic-ideological standpoints of the party.

For instance, the party's program places a markedly strong emphasis on direct democracy. They call for the introduction of referendums at federal level and praise the Swiss system of direct democracy as a remedy to the problems of representative democracy and the dominance of parties in the political system. However, the party fails to provide a deep conceptual basis for their demands for more direct democracy, nor are there any specific, differentiated institutional proposals for implementing their demands. While concepts of direct democracy usually demonstrate some grounding in democratic theories or concepts (Rousseau, participatory democracy, socialist or communist council theories), the AfD program remains rather agnostic in this regard. Instead, the AfD would appear to demonstrate more of a 'democracy pathos' or popular emotionalism, as illustrated in its critique of the European Union or its public election campaigns in general. The guiding political ideologies and theories for the party lie elsewhere.

Ideologically, the AfD has its roots in ordo-liberalism, Christian conservatism, (a particular strand of) statism and nationalism. Subsequently, the AfD is characterized by an orientation to the past, i.e. the party looks to the past for its proposals for solutions to societal problems, political ideals and goals. Moreover, a great deal of the ideological standpoints of the AfD can be matched with historical strands of political thinking that were not only at home in Germany, but, as with ordo-liberalism, were even developed there. Christian conservatism as well as nationalism and statism, much like ordo-liberalism, represent ideologies that have been influential in Germany's federal republic, especially in its early phase (Croner 1975; Dahrendorf 1965; Habermas 1980; Hoffmann 1996; Lenk 1989; Schäfer and Nedelmann 1967; Schmitz 2009).

Firstly, ordo-liberalism comprises a theoretical-ideological current that was founded by German political economists, sociologists and philosophers, in part still during the era of National Socialism, and which had a great deal of influence on the

economic order after the founding of the German Federal Republic. The concept of Social Market Economy, which served as an immensely influential idea in designing the economic order, was developed by Alfred Müller-Armack, an important theoretician of the ordo-liberal school (see e.g. Müller-Armack 1966). Incidentally, the party program of the AfD makes explicit reference to the concept of social market and economy and the theory of ordo-liberalism, while virtually all of its economic policy demands can be attributed to ordo-liberal ideology (see e.g. AfD 2016: 66ff). This ideology makes up a specifically German variant of neo-liberalism. Like the latter, ordo-liberalism emphasizes market-economic “competition as process of discovery” (von Hayek 1969) and the rule-of-law and constitutional limitation of state power.

However, ordo-liberalism sees an inherent tendency in the market to destroy property and competition, especially as a result of the emergence and consolidation of cartels and oligopolies. Therefore, according to ordo-liberal theory, the state must take on the task of protecting the institutions of market-economic capitalism from their own self-destruction. Accordingly, state intervention into the market is permissible and necessary when it serves competition and does not disturb the connection between economic activity and economic risk and liability. In addition, ordo-liberalism prescribes socio-political measures of redistribution in order to prevent material poverty, but also to serve the realization of desirable goals which the market alone cannot fulfill. Thus, the scale of socio-political redistribution deemed justifiable and necessary by ordo-liberalism extends well beyond the degree usually conceded by neo-liberalism. Furthermore, ordo-liberalism is bound to a much stronger degree with a conservative ideal of society.

Again, the economic policy standpoints of the AfD comply substantially with this ideological strand. But, the party program AfD does exhibit two notions that stem less from ordo-liberalism, but rather from the political liberalism in the tradition of John Locke: namely the concepts of rule of law and separation of powers. In its program, the AfD calls for a restoration of separation of powers as they view the separation of powers in their current form in the political system of Germany as only partially maintained or safeguarded. This deficiency stems from, among other things, especially the blending of executive and legislative functions (although, incidentally, a more diffused and less strict delineation of executive and legislative actors is fundamentally characteristic of modern parliamentary democracy). Moreover, their demand builds upon the idea of a stricter legal restriction upon the executive to the formal equality of the citizens of the state.

Secondly, the AfD bases its ideology on Christian conservatism. Christianity takes the place of an essential part of the German mainline culture for the AfD. The dimension of Christian conservatism though is reflected particularly in its fairly skeptical view of humankind exhibited in the party program, which rejects reform projects of societal engineering and the ‘improvement of humans’ and postulates marriage and family as the ‘germ of civil society’ (AfD 2016: 40; though it is interesting to note the German word

bürgerlich used in the original text can mean 'civil', but also 'bourgeois'). The foundation of this ideology is the family-oriented subsidiarity principle, which prescribes the state to remain outside of the sphere of child raising and to respect the authority of parents over their children, particularly with regard to their goals for socialization and upbringing. This coincides with the notion of a 'natural' division of labor among the sexes by which both the man and woman are primary figures for children, but the woman in particular bears a crucial role during the early years of childhood. Thus, an ideal family consists of a heterosexual marriage between man and woman in which domestic child raising is the main responsibility of the woman while the man pursues a profession. However, these anti-egalitarian standpoints are somewhat contradicted by the AfD by their declared commitment to equal rights among the sexes. Still, they view the main task of the welfare state above all in promoting the upbringing of children by women through adequate socio-political measures. Another significant standpoint grounded in Christian conservatism is the idea of 'protecting the life' of embryos. While the AfD does not explicitly call for prohibiting abortion, they are open with their disapproval of it and propose instead a "culture of welcoming the new- and unborn" (AfD 2016: 44).

Thirdly, the AfD program has reference to the ideology of statism. This line of political thought envisions state sovereignty as endowed with the primacy of politics. Security and order comprise the highest goals of the state, with state interest taking precedent over the basic rights of citizens when necessary and allowing for repressive measures to resolve societal problems. In Germany, this ideology had influence especially through its connection to thought on the rule of law, which evolved out of the peculiar history of nation-state building in Germany. In contrast to founding legacies for instance in the French Republic or the United States of America, state unification in Germany in the late 19th century did not institutionalize the linkage between law and liberty, but rather gave priority to 'unity' and 'law' over 'liberty'. In addition to 'hard on crime' demands for strengthening the police and justice system with more legal and personnel resources, the connection of the AfD to this ideology becomes most apparent in its diagnosis of societal problems. In the party program and a number of its campaign statements, the AfD laments the intensified decline of domestic security in Germany. In the program, a primacy of repressive security policy is illustrated in its demand for a 'security policy liberation' that makes 'protection of citizens' a priority again, which 'other matters must be subordinated to' (AfD 2016: 24).

Fourthly, the AfD ideology exhibits several features of ideological nationalism. At the center of this ideology is the view that a political community is not constituted and integrated by common political and legal principles alone, but rather by national, cultural or ethnic bonds of the citizens. Of course this ideology has been utmost influential in German history. Cultural nationalism in particular comprises a pivotal dimension of the AfD party program and positions. According to the party, the bonds of citizens do not derive from a common ethnic lineage as with ethno-nationalism,

but rather a common language, a shared historical memory and experience as well as culturally grounded ways of life. The AfD summarizes these components into the phrase of a 'German mainline culture,' which they attribute to Christianity, humanism and Roman law on the one hand, as well as the German language and history on the other. The 'German mainline culture' and German identity are depicted as seriously endangered by, above all, immigration to Germany, multiculturalism and its acceptance by the political elite, and the admission of asylum seekers to the Federal Republic.

Finally, an ideological-political constellation becomes identifiable, which does not adhere to one main current of political ideology, but, taken together, rather comprises several strands of ideological thinking. Nonetheless, the AfD can still clearly be categorized to the family of right-wing populists. Moreover, the exploration of these various ideological bases in an historical-ideational context reveals how the AfD poses much less a 'foreign' body to the political system of Germany, and rather builds upon and links to a number of political orientations that long had credence – and representation – in the German party system, not least the Christian conservative CDU or the (ordo-)liberal Free Democratic Party. A specificity or distinguishing feature, and perhaps 'novum,' of the AfD, on the other hand, may constitute the combination of these basic ideological strands into a guiding theme of limitation.

The AfD as a party of limitations

Prior to the founding of the AfD, a number of researchers on party change and populism analyzed the development of a new, emerging cleavage in western European political systems. Among other factors, this development has coincided with transformation processes of the global era. For understanding right-wing populism and the AfD, the significance of this new cleavage is substantial, if not pivotal. The term cleavage refers to structurally embedded socio-cultural and economic differences. According to the original concept, i.e. constructed in particular view of party systems (Lipset/Rokkan 1967), they developed out of modernization and concomitant processes, such as secularization (church versus state), industrialization (capital versus labor) as well as urbanization (city/urban/industrial versus land/rural/agricultural) and, often coerced, centralization (center versus periphery). These lines of conflict, emerging out of socio-structural transformation, have served as wells of mobilization for the contrasting differences and reflected in corresponding parties (e.g. socialist parties on the labor side, liberal parties favoring secularism, Christian conservatives becoming politicized by the dislocation of church from state, farmers' parties reacting to their neglect under the predominance of industrial and business interests, regional parties forming against the overreach of the state center, etc.). Thus, parties – among other socio-political actors – contributed to politicizing the various conflicts of interest, ideology and identity, and tended to articulate and represent one pole of the cleavage (as with 'labor' versus 'capital,' perhaps the most profound and enduring cleavage for

modern party democracy). In turn, through co-decision in political institutions, these conflicts could likewise be pacified when parties managed to form compromises and accommodate variable interests.

While mass parties with cohesive ideological programs as well as solid electorates and large membership bases were characteristic for party systems well into second-half of the 20th century, a transformation to catch-all parties set in on the one hand with looser ideological programs and less embedded in socio-structural groups of society. The significance of the cleavages for the identity of the parties declined in turn, as well as for citizens themselves, although these cleavages are still consequential for the societal structuring of political space (Kriesi 2007: 215ff.) According to Kriesi et al., a new cleavage has developed in line with the advanced processes of globalization and Europeanization, which have coincided with weakening nation-state sovereignty and engendering greater permeability to national societies for currents of communication, migration as well as goods, services and capital. The new cleavage revolves around supporters of more 'opening' and deepened political integration, and the supporters of 'closing' and delimitation, referred to as the "demarcation-integration conflict" (Kriesi et al. 2012). Correlating to the emergence of this new conflict in western democracies is a wider process of 'denationalization' (Zürn 1998). The process of advancing modernization since the epochal change in the world order since the fall of Soviet Empire has not of course led to the dissolution of nation-state borders. But they are being shifted across, above or beyond the state, in parts through supra- and transnationalization processes or through the construction and further integration of new political organizations and institutions.

These developments have not remained without their consequences for citizens in the states involved. On the one hand, more and more people enjoy a growing form of free mobility, for instance in work on the labor market or in leisure with tourism. They also benefit from a higher problem-solving capacity of denationalized political regimes. These changes have resulted on account of the limited capacity of nation-states that has become increasingly apparent in light of global and trans-national challenges and the intensified global interdependence. As such, intergovernmental, trans- and supranational regimes constitute a response to increased needs for cooperation and coordination to cope with growing interdependencies beyond the state.

Denationalization has provoked a host of consequences on the other hand that are perceived, if not experienced by large numbers of citizens as problematic. Through a transferal of representation and decision-making practices beyond the national context, denationalization leads to a weakening or overwhelming of those nation-state institutions, arenas and resources that are essential to democratic decision making, representation and accountability. This may apply above all to the national parliaments, parties, the broader public which is by and large bound in language and media to a national society, but also the horizons for making sense of and understanding politics and government on part of common citizens (Grevén 2007;

Möller 2015; Wilke 2014). Consequently, national political systems and societies face an increasing incongruence between those who are affected by political decisions and those who make them. A further implication is change in the nation-state societies, as waves of migration increase and the political culture of the affected states becomes likewise more and more denationalized; i.e. the citizenry in many cases (aside from more traditional 'immigration' and 'settler societies' like the USA, Canada or Australia) can no longer be described as an exclusive community bound by lineage, heritage and culture, but rather a multicultural society, whose citizens are bound to one another by their membership in a common political system.

In addition to processes of denationalization, changes to the political cultural have particular significance for the landscape of political contestation in Germany and affect the expansion of a 'demarcation-integration conflict'. On the whole, Germany's federal republic has experienced a socio-political shift toward more liberalization, among other things, in the course of the path-breaking participation in federal government (1998-2005) of the left-liberal, ecological party of the Greens and as a result of a societal, post-material value change. This may be observed in the growing acceptance of alternative identities and lifestyles, not least with regard to homosexuals, the acknowledgement of multiculturalism, as well as widespread demands in public discourse and numerous political actors for improved support for integration and a 'welcome culture' for refugees and asylum seekers. The changes are likewise reflected in revisions to legislation such as the law easing the process to becoming a citizen or in public gender equality and anti-discrimination measures. The changes in the realm of public opinions and citizen attitudes toward more liberality is likewise present or observable in the everyday lives of citizens, their increased acceptance of minorities and tolerance, but also a general depreciation for traditional, petite-bourgeois and working class lifestyles.

Consequently, the political system and culture in Germany has changed in a manner conducive to the emergence of the 'demarcation-integration conflict', which the AfD has managed to politicize effectively. Their election campaign strategies for one are geared toward (re)drawing borders and limits, illustrated by a number of campaign slogans and demands: to introduce a (much lower) limit on the number of eligible asylum seekers or to enhance the protection of the territory of the German state through a renewed border police (i.e. paramount to rescinding the Schengen Agreement in the EU which abrogated regular border controls among the signatory states). Furthermore, the party program and especially its orientation to the ideologies illustrated above can be construed together as an attempt to propagate symbolically and politically implement a renewed delimitation of the Federal Republic's political space.

In economic policies, the AfD demonstrates an analogous theme derived from ordo-liberal theory and political liberalism in its demand to redraw the lines between state functions in accordance with classic separation of powers and to reestablish

the boundaries between economic activity and risk or liability. Accordingly, the AfD from the outset vehemently criticized the bailout programs responding to the Euro crisis. A guiding justification to their opposition referred to the fundamental problem of a state bailout, since this dissolves the connection between economic activity and entrepreneurial risk and induces a socialization of debts toward a common liability in the EU. Therefore, the party continues to call for a (re)limitation of common liability in the Eurozone.

Regarding the issues of migration and asylum, a focus on drawing and readjusting borders becomes especially salient with the AfD. It takes a stance of limiting citizenship to the Germany's 'majority society' committed to the 'German mainline culture'. This is linked with the demand to cease with admissions of refugees and immigrants. Concerning labor market immigration, the party proposes to limit migration on the basis of utilitarian criteria, i.e., based on domestic labor market needs for specialists and similar. At the same time, the AfD calls for dismantling the European Union to a large extent and returning competences to the national level, abolishing the common currency of the Euro as well as the Schengen system, i.e. a return to exclusively national boundaries of the political space.



In cultural and identity politics, the political standpoints of the AfD correspond again clearly to the guiding idea of limitation. First of all is its symbolic delimitation of German identity strictly to all those who may count as German in the cultural national sense. Parallel to this is its rejection of 'constitutional patriotism' which is not based on a common culture, but rather recognition and affective relationship to the constitution as central feature of citizen identity. In addition, their endorsement of traditional gender identities and the heterosexual family goes hand in hand with their rejection of gender mainstreaming and sex education in schools promoting tolerance and acceptance of more diversity.

Conclusion

Parties and party systems face challenges of transformation across democratic countries, while the respective research in social and especially political science has grown commensurately. Among the numerous factors to explain the emergence, persistence as well as change in parties, the concept of cleavages has long provided a pivotal analytical frame. This applies no less to the rise of right-wing populism in Europe. While the classic cleavages (e.g. between center and periphery, between urban and rural, between church and state, and especially between capital and labor) have lost or diminished in structuring and mobilizing capacity for party politics, the concept nonetheless can be analytically informative, not least when allowing for the emergence of new or transformed cleavages. With regard to right-wing populism in Europa, Decker et al. for instance argue that party systems in democratic states are affected primarily by two basic cleavages, a 'socio-economic distributive' one and a 'socio-culture value conflict', whereas the new right-wing parties represent above all a phenomenon of the latter, i.e. value politics (Decker, Hennigsen and Jakobsen 2015: 15). Certainly, this proposition can apply to the AfD as well, though it requires qualification.

First, the two types of cleavage cannot always be clearly distinguished from one another. For instance, the issue of immigration policy, which is particularly significant for the AfD and its political mobilization, is on the one hand an expression of a socio-cultural value conflict as immigration policy pertains to the issue of which groups of foreigners should have the opportunity to immigrate and based on which values should the right to membership in the community be allotted. On the other hand, immigration policy also has a socio-economic distributive dimension and is expression of socio-economic conflicts as immigration policy is likewise a form of labor policy. It influences who may immigrate into the domestic labor market and who may not. Secondly, the current success of the AfD cannot be solely attributed to its cultural conservative values oriented to limitation and restriction. Equally, if not more responsible for the success of the party has been their ability to adopt the 'programmatic and electoral winning formula of European right-wing populists'. As phrased concisely by Decker

et al., the right-wing populists benefit on economic-political issues from the 'fears of downward mobility' that affect ever larger parts of the middle classes in the course of 'accelerated modernization'; in the cultural dimension, they appeal to needs for a 'sense of belonging and identity' that many perceive as becoming lost in the 'supposed value arbitrariness' of multiethnic societies; and politically, they raise the issue of a 'growing gap between the governors and the governed' (Decker, Hennigsen and Jakobsen 2015: 21), all of which, though along with other factors, have contributed to diminishing trust in conventional political institutions and even representative democracy.

In summary, the *Alternative für Deutschland* easily fits into this conceptualization of right-wing populism. However, one substantial difference is the economic position of the AfD in its party program. Aside from family policy, it actually strives for a considerable retrenchment of the welfare state, which incidentally would also affect the middle class severely. Thus, in light of their electorate, it would seem safe to expect that the AfD will shift economically toward the middle of the road in the near future. In doing so, they would only catch up with other right-wing populist parties in Europe that have already taken this path.

Notes

¹ The party's name alludes to the critique of the policy of the German government, particularly Chancellor Angela Merkel, who during the high point of the Euro-crisis referred to the bailouts for troubled Euro-zone countries as 'without alternative' (*alternativlos*) for the survival of the EU. The core platform of the AfD involved currency reform, including concern for the southern European countries in the EU becoming crippled by the Euro, and a return to the German Mark, accompanied by a number of fiscal conservative policies such as debt reduction.

² This is underlined by the circumstance that the number of dissatisfied 'left conservatives' in Germany is comparably low; see Lefkofridi, Wagner and Willmann 2014: 71.

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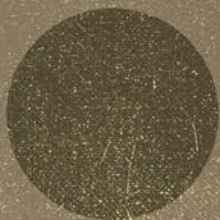
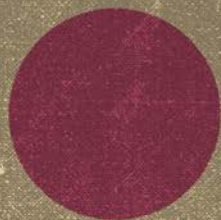
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Political Conservatism in Russia

Conservadorismo Político na Rússia

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Abstract

In this paper I discuss the conservative turn that took place in Russia in the last 15 years comparing it to the recent experience of Hungary and Poland. I show that to a large extent this backlash is of a socioeconomic nature and reflects the people's frustration with the downsides of the economic liberalization. Moreover, the depth of the original social transformation determined a society's ability to resist to the conservative trend. In Russia where the modernization processes were the shallowest, the old political elites could regain power sooner and roll back the society deeper. I also overview different conservative schools of thought in Russia and show Putin manipulated this ideology to strengthen his hold on power.

Keywords: conservatism, right populism, Eurasianism, sovereign democracy

Resumo

Neste artigo discuto o giro conservador que teve lugar na Rússia nos últimos 15 anos, comparando-o com a experiência recente da Hungria e da Polônia. Mostro que, em grande parte, esta reação é de natureza socioeconômica e reflete a frustração das pessoas com as desvantagens da liberalização econômica. Além disso, a profundidade da transformação social original determinou a capacidade de uma sociedade para resistir à tendência conservadora. Na Rússia, onde os processos de modernização eram os mais superficiais, as antigas elites políticas podiam recuperar o poder mais cedo e reverter a sociedade mais profundamente. Também vejo diferentes escolas de pensamento conservadoras na Rússia e mostro que Putin manipulou essa ideologia para fortalecer seu domínio sobre o poder.

Palavras-chave: Conservadorismo, Populismo de direita, Eurasianismo, Soberania Democrática

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Introduction

Since the mid-2010 the Freedom House reports the increasing number of the countries in the world experienced a serious decline in political freedoms. Eastern Europe is one of the regions with a decline in number of political freedoms in such countries as Hungary and Russia. Recently Poland joined the group, following the victory of the right-wing party Law and Justice (PiS) in the 2015 parliamentary elections.¹ A number of disturbing similarities exists between Russia's recent political style, Hungarian and Polish leadership: the use of the Eurosceptic rhetoric (Müller 2016), illiberal tendencies including the attempts to destroy the system of checks and balances (Gostyńska-Jakubowska 2016). There is also an ideological sympathy between the leadership of these countries: the links between Vladimir Putin and Hungary's Viktor Orbán are known; in 2011 the PiS leader Jarosław Kaczyński declared that "one day we will see Budapest in Warsaw (Gostyńska-Jakubowska 2016).

Hence though Russia was the first country in the region to embrace this illiberal trend, it was not unique. The checks and balances on president's authority were destroyed in the early 2000s after Vladimir Putin accession to power followed by his ideological embrace of the conservative trend. Yet, Russia has gone furthest along this track: unlike other countries Russia's system (which was never perfectly democratic) has transformed into a full-fledged electoral autocracy. Russia may also be purposefully contributing to the illiberal trends in other countries by funding populist parties and leaders.² Yet as I argue Russia's path is the part of the same trajectory recently followed by other countries.

What explains the recent trend in these countries? In this paper I look at the explanations for the recent conservative trend in Russia in comparison to Poland and Hungary by focusing on the conservative demand and supply side. First, I look at the specific social prerequisites that made this illiberal trend possible. Second I analyze the specific incentives of the Russian elites that chose to use and manipulate the available social preconditions.

Definitions

The term conservatism is often associated to a wide range of ideological positions, including traditionalism, orthodoxy, nationalism, paternalism, right-wing politics etc. The variation of approaches to conservatism largely depends on the definition used, hence it is important to define the issue first.

Different approaches to conservatism can be broadly split into the ideological and the situational ones. The ideological approaches (starting with Burke's critic of the French Revolution) are associated to ideological movements that oppose modernism, liberalism and/or socialism in an attempt to return to the "good old times" and stress the importance of tradition (in the Mannheimian sense) (Mannheim 1953; Bloor 1997).

Under this approach, conservatism is understood as initial reaction to the political and social change, a reaction which later evolved into a separate ideology, a distinct mode of thought, its own independent reflexive doctrine with an emphasize on specific values, traditions and institutions (such as importance of the moral order and hierarchy). What makes political arguments conservative (contrary to orthodoxy and traditionalism) is the critic of progressive and/or liberal arguments using “the enlightened grounds of the search for human happiness, based on the use of reason” (Muller 1997).

By contrast, Huntington (1957) understood conservatism as fundamentally a positional ideology that emerges as an outcome of distinct historical situations when a fundamental challenge to the established institutions forces supporters of such institutions to employ the conservative ideology in their defense. Therefore, to Huntington conservatism as a set of ideas designed to justify *any* established social order, “no matter where or when it exists, against any fundamental challenge to its nature or being, no matter from what quarter rather than an inherent theory in defense of particular values or institutions” (Huntington 1957). Under this approach conservatism is primarily a set of parallel ideological reactions to similar social situations, a passionate affirmation of the value of existing institutions, a defense of tradition that exists without tradition, which appears when “challenging and defending social groups stand in a particular relation to each other” (Huntington 1957: 456). In this sense conservatism is highly reactionary in nature, without any unifying ideological grounds.

For the purposes of this work I will use Huntington’s situational interpretation of conservatism, which will allow me to explain the fundamentally changeable and instrumental application of conservatism by the Russian leadership. In my view, the conservative turn in Russia represents an attempt by the Russian elites and some groups of the Russian society to resist the social transformation that began in the late 1980s – early 1990s. In this sense, conservatism in today’s Russia is fundamentally instrumental in nature (despite its relies on some philosophical tradition). Such approach allows to explain the inconsistency and fragmentation in today’s Russian conservative tradition.

Demand Side: Social Fatigue from Transformation

The emergence of a conservative trend in Russia. Hungary and Poland (I label them as the “right” due to their active use of the nationalist rhetoric) is alarming. What explains similar patterns in the countries as diverse, with distinct national traditions and history? In the late 1980s-90s the Eastern European countries were engaged in the parallel processes of democratization (from autocracy to democracy) and marketization (from planned to market economy).³ The magnitude of these process which meant restructuring of the core principles of the organization of the society was particularly painful and dramatic for most post-Communist states.

The radical transformation of societies usually leads to a reaction. However, the size of the reaction depends upon particular structures of respective societies, particularly the number and organization of the so-called reforms losers (Hellman 1998). In more industrialized countries, which were more integrated in the European markets to begin with, the transformation may have provoked less resistance. In more rural societies, whose economies were more dependent on the Soviet Union, the reforms led to a bigger shock and stronger resistance from certain societal groups.

The concentration of the modernization losers and their respective size, however, varied from country to country. Horowitz (2000) who compares the market transitions in Poland, Hungary and Czech Republic notes that while the concentrated interest groups losing from market reform – particularly heavily subsidized sectors such as agriculture and inefficient heavy industry – were largest in Poland and smallest in the Czech Republic. In Poland such interest groups were also most well-organized, and least well-organized in the Czech Republic. Eventually in both Poland and Hungary the agricultural sector and state sector industries were forced to fend for themselves. In Hungary the socioeconomic cost of the market reforms for different groups was in some respects exaggerated by the gradualist approach chosen by the ruling elites (Bartlett. 1997). The outcome of the transition in these two countries was the emergence of resentful and a relatively well organized groups, which lost most in the result of the transformation and hence were most vulnerable to the populist slogans. As result of these structural disparities both Hungary and Poland lost a significant amount of employment between the start of transformation and late 1990s (Dallago and Rosefelde 2016). Later the less developed eastern and north-eastern regions with highest unemployment levels of both countries ended up constituting the main support of the populist leaders utilizing the conservative agenda.⁴

In Russia the reforms turned out even more painful due to structural imbalances in different sectors of post-Soviet economy and less significant integration into the European markets by the start of the transformation (comparing to Poland and Hungary). Russia's manufacturing sector was particularly uncompetitive internationally and oriented toward domestic consumption. Person and Landry (2016) show that as people were socialized into the new economic and political system after the Soviet collapse, their patterns of political participation were set by the economic conditions around them, not just their own individual economic situations and the effect of early transition economics turned out to be very durable. The severity of local economic shocks in the early 1990s exerted an influence on orientations toward political participation nearly 20 years later (Person and Landry 2016).

One of the common findings in political science that the anti-modernization oriented parties tend to rely on so-called "modernization losers" – the groups of the population who suffered most from the modernization processes (Loch and Norocel 2016). Hence the fact that the conservative turn occurred in the countries with larger

segments of the population particularly hurt by the modernization doesn't seem random.

The same group of modernization losers constitutes one of the most reliable segment of Vladimir Putin's support – a bureaucratic class, pensioners and state employees. In addition, “modernization losers” in Russia are the residents of small, medium and single-industry towns (Loch and Norocel 2016) - the so-called “second Russia” as described by the sociologist Natalia Zubarevitch, which typically votes for Putin, since it appreciates most his policies of creating a strong paternalistic state, large-scale social protection, and “the stability, availability of work and wages”. This groups also remembers the 1990s best and most likely to reject the liberal ideas.⁵ Similar voters of smaller and middle-size towns of depressed regions in Poland and Hungary (traditional, conservative, traditionally oriented regions) historically vote for PiS and Fidesz respectively (Berglund 2013).

In all three countries with the “conservative” trend we observe the same dynamics: the larger share of the transformation losers, and a gradual increase of the social nostalgia for the pre-reform period precede the arrival of a soon-to-be conservative leader. Was the frustration with the reforms spread in those countries prior to the arrival of the populist leaders? A ERBD survey of 28 post-socialist countries (Denisova; Eller; Frye; and Zhuravskaya 2007)⁶ sheds some light on this dynamic. During the survey respondents were asked to choose from four possible answers to the question of how, in their opinion, their country had to deal with privatized property. The option “leave everything unchanged”, which reflects the choice of people truly satisfied with the privatization reforms, was chosen by a minority of citizens in each country (with a maximum of 45% of respondents in Estonia). In Russia, Poland, and Hungary, however, among the lowest numbers in Eastern Europe - 20 and less percent of respondents – chose this option. According to a different survey in 2009 (one year prior to Fidesz becoming the ruling party in the country) the number of Hungarians who approved of the market reforms that took place in the country, was one of the lowest in the Eastern Europe.⁷ In 2013 (two years before PiS won the parliamentary elections) 60% of Polish respondents believed that post-Communist transformation came at particularly high price for Poland (Karolewski and Benedikter 2016). This suggests that a higher dissatisfaction with transition manifested already in the second half of the 2000s. The later conservative political turn in these countries was just a logical continuation of this trend. Hence Fidesz and PiS taking power can be interpreted as a certain modernization fatigue in these countries.

Putin's policies in Russia may also be reflective of the accumulated frustration to the transformation processes of the 1990s. Prior to Putin's taking power the social surveys of the late 1990s revealed the reforms fatigue of the Russian society. Alexey Levinson, a sociologist from Russia's Levada-Center, points out that by the end of the 1990s “the share of those who fully and unconditionally embraced the market reforms was quite small. Only later some growth was detected, but it turned out to be quite unstable.

Symmetrically, the share of citizens who did not accept the reforms surpassed three quarters of the population by the end of Boris Eltsin's presidency.⁸ The end of the 1990s also marks the peak of Russian's nostalgia for the Soviet Union – by the year of 2000 the number of the respondents nostalgic of the Soviet Union reached 75% (the level which was not overcome until now, the period of intensified propaganda about the “dashing 1990s”).⁹ Given this dynamics of the public mood one can assume that a certain extent of a rollback was to be expected in Russia regardless of what particular elite type was to take power in the 2000s. Arguably, however, the Russian elites took it to some other extreme due to their own political agenda (see below).

In this sense Polish, Hungarian and Russian trajectory may be part of the common process. The accumulated frustration of certain social groups with the results of the political and economic transition in the early 1990s, created some demand for a more anti-liberal conservative change in the Eastern European societies. The respective size of those groups may reflect the timing when the conservative political agenda began to be implemented by the politicians (more anti-modernization oriented groups in Russia determined an earlier rollback). Transformation losers, groups of population particularly hurt by the economic transitions, more susceptible to the populist anti-liberal rhetoric, were coopted by the political leaders under the conservative rhetoric. This is partly pronounced through the common reference to the allegedly bad experiences of the 1990s, the so-called “dashing 1990s” (Pomerantsev¹⁰ by the Putin elites; and in the anti-liberal rhetoric of Victor Orban and Jaroslav Katchinsky. The rejection of the devastating liberalism is complemented by the promises of higher role of state in the economy, increased social protection and redistribution to compensate for the “unfairness” of the neoliberal period.

The political elites of these countries provide a similar response to a similar social demand. From the ideological perspective it means some combination of nationalism, Euroscepticism and accent on the country's own “unique path”. The emphasis on the unique values and traditions of a given country by the respective political leaders comes along with an increasing rhetorical aversion towards the broadly defined “west” (particularly the European Union, or the United States or both). The reform fatigue accompanied by the rising discontent against the so-called “west”, because the western countries and institutions (IMF, World Bank, western NGOs etc.) are blamed for imposing the “alien western traditions” that are incompatible with the cultural authenticity of the countries in question.

Hence the recent strengthening of the conservative trend among the countries of the Eastern Europe largely represents a reaction to the painful transformation processes of the 1990s, and politicization of this agenda by the political elites. To respond to the existing social demand for more protection against the market and frustration with democracy, the conservative political leaders propose higher redistribution and other populist economic policies accompanied by nationalization of major rent-generating industries (oil and gas in the Russian case).

The similar conservative trend currently experienced in three countries is due to the comparable social dynamics undergone by Russia, Poland and Hungary. Yet specific response and formulation of conservative ideas is unique to each country, and has to do with the situational (in Huntington's sense) nature of this response. As discussed above, rather than being a distinct ideology conservatism is usually used by the political elites in an attempt to protect certain institutions in light of the disruptive social changes, and ultimately to retain their hold on power.

The Supply Side: The Response of the Elites

Due to the dual nature of the transition in Eastern Europe frustration with the economic reforms spread over the attitudes of the population towards the political institutions and democracy as well. The skepticism about the functioning of democratic system and the economic development of these countries was politicized and used by the ruling elites to achieve their political goals.

This is why the conservative political elites usually combine the emphasize on a country's "unique path" with rejection of political liberalism of the western European type. The malfunctioning western-type democracy was countered with the "sovereign democracy" in the Russian case, or the "illiberal democracy" in Hungarian case (Simon 2014). Together with anti-democratic rhetoric the leadership in these countries took specific actions to enhance the role of the executive authorities, destroy checks and balances and contain independent institutions.

The dual nature of the political transformation influenced the fact that the market reforms are perceived in these countries as the "integration in the west" and often guided by the western institutions (the IMF, World Bank). Hence, the reaction to those processes also combines anti-market and anti-democratic trends with Euroscepticism. This also to a large extent explains the anti-western rhetoric by the Russian elites and Euroscepticism of the Hungarian and Polish elites.

At the same time, in most cases the political elites attempted to come up or reemphasize their own "traditional values" contrasted to the "western values". However, the cultural specificity of each country adjust the specific way in which conservatism, traditional values and institutions are understood. In Polish case this is a pre-Communist Polish conservatism, emphasis on the Catholic church and traditional family values. In Hungary – traditional "European" values of a nation, family and religion.¹¹ In Russia's case the authorities are attempting to combine some sort of a "traditional" hybrid from the combination of the ideological elements of the Russian empire, Russian Orthodox Church and the Soviet Union (a Russian world combined with post-Soviet revanchism and Eastern Orthodoxy). Below I focus more specifically on the conservative brand which was elaborated and implemented in Russia.

Historical Evolution of the Russian Conservatism

The contemporary Kremlin's conservatism was for the first time officially announced in 2009 when the ruling United Russia party that passed a document that specified "Russia's conservatism" as its official ideology.¹² However, the general trend towards embracing these values started at least since Putin taking power in 2000.

The historical evolution of the conservative tradition in Russia proves the initial approach of this paper to conservatism as fundamentally a reaction to massive societal changes. The initial conservative tradition evolved in the Russian Empire as reaction to the French Revolution of the late 18th century. Writings of the early Russian conservatives – Slavophiles (Alexey Khomyakov, Ivan Kireyevsky, Iury Samarin, Ivan and Konstantin Aksakov) of the first half of 19th century were focused on the importance of preservation of the unique Russian values (particularly religion) and largely had a romantic orientation topical of the time.¹³

During the first half of the 19th century Russia faced social and national unrest, which led to the Decembrist revolt in St Petersburg in 1825, in which tsarist officers staged a rebellion asking to introduce a constitutional monarchy in Russia. Abroad the Polish population in the western provinces of Russia staged a rebellion in 1831. To strengthen the authority of the tsar Nicholas I's education minister Sergey Uvarov came up in 1833 the idea of the "official nationality" of the Russian empire combining a triad of "Orthodoxy, Autocracy and Nationality" (later used by the Kremlin at the first part of Putin's rule, which added a more mythological aspect to the Slavophile ideas and "appealed to the system's core constituencies – Orthodox Russians and the rural peasant population – to rally around the tsar" (Hill and Gaddy 2013).

The liberal reforms of the 1860s by the Tsar Alexander II (including the long-awaited abolition of serfdom) gave rise to another type of Russian conservatives – the so-called statesmen (Konstantin Pobedonostsev, Lev Tikhomirov) who emphasized the fundamental role of the state in the Russian tradition. Nikolay Danilevsky became famous in 1869-71 following the publication of his milestone work "Rossia I Evropa", in which he developed a theory of cultural-historical types arguing that Slavic ethos and Russia formed a new cultural unit.

Since its origin the Russian conservatism emerged as a philosophical movement challenging both democratic and socialist doctrines, appealing for the authorities to avoid the radical change of the social relationships and enforce tradition on the basis of monarchy and Eastern Orthodoxy. It particularly strengthened following the murder of Russia's liberal reformer tsar Alexander II (which seemed to confirm the conservative ideas that the liberal reforms were unfit for Russia and only could only provoke the chaos and disintegration of the country). Another common topic of Russia's conservatism at the time is the western threat to Russian tradition and political independence, and the inapplicability of the European forms of governance for the unique Russian culture.

The second wave of conservatism emerged in the emigrant circles as a result to the 1917 Revolution in Russia and a radical transformation of the society. Three major subgroups constituted the emigrant thought – the works by Ivan Ilyin, the works by Ivan Solonevich and the Eurasians (Piotr Savitsky, Nikolay Trubetskoy, George Vernadsky, George Florovsky, Lev Karsavin and others). Ivan Ilyin argues that the particular forms of organization and functioning of the state is impossible to understand without understanding the “unique soul” of every nation. Hence to Ilyin different state forms belong to different nations and it’s ridiculous to expect the democratic form of governance to belong to each and every country ignoring their traditions and culture. A free democratic form of governance is only applicable to a mature developed rule-abiding nation, otherwise it may destroy a society. Ilyin is particularly focused on Russia’s messianic role in world history, preservation and restoration of Russia’s historical borders and Orthodoxy, and its protection from the aggression from the western countries that aim to “partition” it.¹⁴

Ivan Solonevich (1891-1953) focused on the idea of people’s monarchy – unique features of the national spirit, history and geography shape particular political institutions in every nation. Hence Russia’s nationhood, statehood and culture are fundamentally different from Europe and Asia, and create the original Russia’s nationalism along with Russian monarchy, church and nation. To Solonevich the loss of Russia’s unique national and state traditions led to the disaster – the Revolution of 1917.

Eurasians, who largely drew from the earlier works of Slavophiles, focused on Russia’s imperial ambitions of dominating the center of the Eurasian geographical continent. This is why Eurasians were the only ones among the Russian emigres to embrace the establishment of the Soviet system, which augmented Russia’s power and territory, and could ultimately transform into a Eurasian power. They also stressed the origin of the 1917 Revolution as a result of a split between the Russian society and the elites, and the loss of the cultural idea of nation-state. In their view, socialism provided a release for the accumulated social discontent. Hence Eurasians view the victory of Bolsheviks as some historical necessity, and even historical justice.

The third wave of conservatism emerged as an ideological reaction to the transformation and ultimate collapse of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s and the liberal political and economic reforms of the early 1990s. Due to the country’s repeatedly interrupted philosophical tradition, the third wave of the conservatism combined incongruent blurred and eclectic ideas and movements with a focus on the idea of the unchanging, eternal values of Russia. To a large extent this trend was a reaction of some groups of the Russian society to the loss of the “ancient” Soviet order, their concern for stability, preservation of tradition, and aversion to the anarchy. Since the emergence of the third wave conservatism this movement opposed Russia’s liberals, and embraced instead the values of anti-individualism, collectivism, anti-westernism and anti-globalism. The most prominent representatives of the “third wave” of conservatism include writers Valentin Rasputin, Alexander Prokhanov, Vadim Kozhin,

Alexander Solzhenitsyn, mathematician Ilya Shafarevich, philosophers Alexander Zinoviev, publicist Sergey Kara-Murza, a number of Russian Orthodox priests. A school of neo-Eurasianists, included theorists such as Elgiz Pozdnykov, Alexander Dugin, Natalya Narochnitskaya and Alexander Panarin. As pointed out by Marlene Laruelle, since early 1990s the neo-Eurasianists were primarily looking to compensate for the Soviet collapse, offering a way of thinking about the suddenly fragmented post-Soviet space as a unity without referencing Communism (Laruelle 2015). However, the work of scholars like Alexander Solzhenitsyn was particularly focused on pre-Soviet Russia, the preservation of the traditions of the Russian Empire. Others put special emphasis on the works of the philosophers of the past, including Ivan Ilyin, and Ivan Solonevich among the most cited authors.

In light of the dual democratic and market transition of Russia in the early 1990s, the third wave conservatives focus on the critic of the western political structures and democracy, discuss the threats the imposition of the western model represents for the Russian nation. To the extent that Russia in these theories is portrayed as being under some kind of threat from exploitation by the western countries, these ideas remind of the Latin American dependency theory. According to contemporary conservatives the imposition of the western political and economic model benefits the western proprietors of the “financial mechanism” that operates the total dictatorship in the west and aims to subordinate the rest of the world. Another common narrative is the fundamental role of the Eastern Orthodox tradition for formation of the unique Russian statehood, economy and spirit. Hence this branch of thought is eagerly opposed to the western religious proselytism, promotion of non-traditional religious cults. Often brought up is the Eurasian idea of the exclusivity of a “Slavo-Turkic” super-ethnos which allegedly lives in the geopolitical space of Eurasia and spiritually surpasses the west that have exhausted its potential by now. In general, the emphasis on Russia’s cultural opposition to the west and the inevitable soon collapse of the United States¹⁵ is particularly strong among the new conservatives. Alexander Dugin writes about a constitutive cleavage of Atlanticism/Eurasianism, which divides Europe into the pro-American Atlanticist group and the Eurasian Heartland. Alexander Prokhanov and Mikhail Yuriev emphasize on need for the restoration of the Russia’s empire, which could also include other territories along with the post-Soviet space.

Putin’s Application of the Russian Conservatism

It is unclear to what extent Vladimir Putin’s thinking was influenced by conservative ideas upon his becoming the President of Russia for the first time. By various accounts he was not alien to such lines of thought. During the years of his KGB training Putin was likely exposed to the conservative thinkers, such as Eurasians popular in Russia’s security circles even in the Soviet period.¹⁶ Putin may have also come under the influence of the Russian émigré circles in Germany during his residence there, in

particular the National Alliance of Russian Solidarists, where Putin could have been exposed to the ideas of Russia's conservative thinkers.

The influence of conservatism on Putin's thinking, however, was straightforward almost immediately after Putin's coming to power. As early as in his 1999 policy manifesto "Russia at the Millennium" Putin proposed 'grounding' or 'domesticating' substantive principles of the liberal ideology for the purposes of arriving at a (typically conservative) 'organic synthesis' (Prozorov 2004): "We can hope for the future if we can organically synthesize the universal principles of market economy and democracy with the Russian reality" (Putin 1999). In his article Putin stressed that universal norms of democracy were not Russian and have even damaged Russia's political development. Putin also immediately openly reembraced Russian Orthodoxy and the Orthodox Church, stressing "the importance of rediscovering his Orthodox faith" (Hill and Gaddy 2013). Putin's interest in Ilyin and his writings became apparent since 2005 through Putin's continuing references to Ilyin in his national addresses in 2005, 2006, and 2007. In 2005 Ilyin's remains were reburied at the necropolis of Donetsk monastery (the decision unlikely to have been made without the President's participation).

Yet initially the conservative trend wasn't as pronounced largely due to existence of liberal groups, legacy of the presidency of Boris Yeltsin within Putin's closest circles. Several most influential ideological schools in Russia influenced the policy-making following the collapse of the USSR (Zevelev 2014). Initially the liberal westernizers under Boris Yeltsin's rule made most foreign policy decisions. However, by the end-1990s their influence diminished and made way for the realist-statists. Founded by Yevgeny Primakov, the realist-statists is the group who became disappointed with the western approach to Russia in the 1990s (in light of Kosovo bombings and NATO's eastern expansion) and may be described as part of the Russian conservative tradition. These are defensive realists who support restoring Russia's status as an influential global player in a multipolar world, strengthening its spheres of influence in the post-Soviet space and reducing the U.S. global dominance. Russian statistes consecutively accumulated power during the first years of Putin's rule. Mid-2000s, when Putin was finally able to get rid of the most influential liberal players from Yeltsin times, coincide with the increasing influence of the Russian statistes in the Kremlin, who sought to secure Russia's full sovereignty by blocking foreign attempts to interfere in Russia's internal affairs from the U.S. seen as promoter of regime change and "colored revolutions" (Hill and Gaddy 2013) by increasing Russia's influence abroad initially through soft-power approaches.

Around 2007 the Kremlin, increasingly disappointed with the west and more and more influenced by the realist-statist thinking, launched a new initiative, designed to promote abroad Russia's soft-power and values that would challenge the standard Western tradition. The initiative was to be achieved through several instruments created by the Kremlin. First, the state's control of the country's major television networks and launching new media networks abroad (Russia Today was launched in

2005), which would spread a uniform Russia's interpretation of the events at foreign audiences. Second, several newly launched NGOs would familiarize the foreign expert communities with the Russia's culture and policies, such as the Russian World Foundation launched in 2007 and designed to spread the Russian language and culture under the supervision of a conservative political scientist Vyacheslav Nikonov, or the Institute for Democracy and Cooperation with offices in New York and Paris, headed by conservative politician Natalia Narochitskaya.

In the domestic politics the process culminated in the reformulation of Uvarov's doctrine as "sovereign democracy" – a term first championed by Deputy Chief of Staff Vladimir Surkov, as a response to the increasing western concerns regarding human right violations in Russia. The idea of sovereign democracy stresses Russia's independence of the west, and communicates the idea of Russia's strong and powerful state with some references to the tsarist autocracy (Hill and Gaddy 2013). Putin's continuous emphasis on the historical role of the Russian Orthodox Church for the country fit in that picture. In 2006 Russia's first deputy prime minister Sergei Ivanov published an article elaborating that idea. While in line with Russia's conservative tradition he presented the current world as a competition between different value systems, Ivanov specifically drew on Count Sergei Uvarov's famous triad of "Orthodoxy, Autocracy, Nationality" (Aslund 2008) to argue that the "new triad of Russian national values is sovereign democracy, strong economy, and military power" (Ivanov 2006).

With President Medvedev in 2009-2011 Russian liberal school became slightly more noticeable again. Yet the fundamental change in the doctrine came with Putin's third term in 2012, yet again as a reaction to the big societal changes. The 2011-2012 street protests once again indicated the failure of the liberal approach: the Kremlin's concerns about the west trying to create a Color revolution in Russia along with a decision to contain the liberal protest resulted in a fundamental change of the approach. Most of the 2000s despite occasional flirting with different ideologies (Vladislav Surkov's attempts to elaborate the concept of the national idea and a "sovereign democracy"), the Kremlin avoided integrating specific ideological policies into its domestic policies: there was little need for it, since the majority of the Russians were satisfied with the economic growth and increasing opportunities. Yet the 2008 crisis and resulting growth decline has created the increasing people's frustration with the country's direction, which together with a shock from Putin's announcement about his return to power in September 2011 and unprecedented falsifications of the 2011 election contributed to the outburst of protest at the end of the year.¹⁷ The Kremlin felt threatened. In light of the presidential elections upcoming in May 2012, the Kremlin used the available conservative ideas to create with a more coherent and pronounced state ideology to justify its tougher anti-wester stance and prosecution of the dissent. Shortly after the protests escalated in December 2011 in light of the rigged parliamentary elections and the ruling United Russia received one of its worst results in history, Vyacheslav Volodin replaced Vlaslav Surkov at the position of the first deputy

chief of President Vladimir Putin's staff. The first deputy chief of staff is responsible for managing the internal affairs and known as "the Kremlin's political strategist". Volodin replaced Surkov's flirting with conservative ideas into a blunt but effective promotion of conservatism on all levels. It is at this point that the Kremlin implemented a more radical conservative shift of its domestic and foreign policies.

The new approach had two goals: contain the domestic protest and substitute the state legitimacy previously ensured by continuous economic growth with a new legitimacy coming from the conservative ideology; counteract the alleged western attempts to change the regime with ensuring Putin's hold on power. The promotion of conservative ideology began to be implemented on a larger scale. On the government level, the Kremlin by offering volumes of Russian conservative philosophers to the regional governors and other policy-makers in Russia and organized a series of the educative seminars on Russian conservative thought in the Kremlin. In January 2013 mandatory teaching of religion in public schools was introduced in Russia.

The change is quite clearly pronounced in a set of Putin's own pre-electoral articles published prior to 2012 presidential election, where he specifically outlines such components of the new conservative trend as the importance of Russia's distinctive civilization, honor, values and spirituality, and a need to resist the outside attempts to destroy Russia's traditional cultural and political track. In these articles Putin actively quotes from Ilyin and Berdiaev, and emphasizes Russia's cultural distinctiveness: "This is what Ivan Ilyin wrote about Russia's special character: "The core, the fabric of this great civilization are the Russian people, the Russian culture. It is this core that different provocateurs and our opponents try to destroy while discussing "the Russians' right to self-determination".¹⁸ The distinctiveness of Russia is used to justify the inapplicability of the western political institutions (aka democracy, power alternation), and ultimately Putin's stay in power.

When it comes to the international politics, Putin's articles echo Ilyin's speculations on the attempts by the western powers and NATO to undermine Russia's sovereignty. "Regional and local wars flash before our eyes. There emerge new areas of instability and artificially heated, controlled chaos. Deliberate attempts are made to provoke such conflicts in the immediate vicinity of Russia's borders and allies."¹⁹ Now compare that quote to Ivan Ilyin's quote: "Lets immediately accept that Russia's partitioning prepared by the international backstage has absolutely no reason behind, or real spiritual or political considerations besides revolutionary demagoguery, absurd fear of a unified Russia and inveterate enmity towards the Russian monarchy and the Eastern Orthodoxy. We know that Western nations don't understand and don't tolerate Russian identity... They are going to divide the united Russian 'broom' into twigs to break these twigs one by one and rekindle with them the fading light of their civilization. They need to partition Russia to equate it with the West, and thus destroy it: a plan of hatred and lust for power ..."²⁰ .

On the policy level Putin's return in 2012 and appointment of Volodin at the position of the internal strategist coincided with a harsh attack against the "western" NGOs, independent non-profits and media outlets, perceived as "the agents of the foreign influence" with an ultimate goal of destroying the regime. In July 2012 Russia's State Duma (known to be passing the laws crafted in the presidential Administration) passed a Foreign Agents law, which obliges the non-profit organizations that receive foreign donations and engage in "political activity" to register and declare themselves as foreign agents. 2011 also marked the launch of the Eurasian Union project, which Putin advertised as the project aimed at reintegrating the post-Soviet space under its leadership is Russia's "natural" geopolitical destiny; but also engage in criticism of liberal principles and call on Europe to remember its "true" (conservative) values (Laruelle 2015). Marlene Laruelle stresses that this project accelerated the previous trend of rehabilitating Russia's Soviet and imperial past, in the hope that citizens' pride in their country and its legacy would be replicated as support for the regime (Laruelle 2015).

Yet the ultimate affirmation of the conservative trend came in 2014 following the Euromaidan Revolution in Ukraine. The events in Ukraine scared the Kremlin, as a direct indicator of the threat of the Color revolutions approaching the Russian borders. The decision to annex Crimea, gave the Kremlin a pretext for (using Zevelev's terms) a "securitization of the national identity" (Zevelev 2014). While Russian conservatism always had an element of Russia's imperialism in it, the specific incorporation of these ideas into the Kremlin policy-making did not take place until mid-2010s. Until the Russian-Ukrainian war the discussions of the new Russian national identity were not integrated into Russia's foreign policy. The revolution in Ukraine allowed (and from the Kremlin's perspective even forced) Russia to securitize the question of identity; that is, to make it one of the issues critical for the survival of the Russian nation and statehood.

In March 2014, Putin's press secretary Dmitry Peskov called the Russian President a guarantor of security for the Russian world (Russkyi Mir). From now on the concept of the Russkyi Mir was reinterpreted not just a popularization of Russia's culture and language, but as the shift from the nation-state level to the larger than as nation-state community becomes. This change in the Kremlin's official perception of its zones of responsibility justified the annexation of Crimea, war in Ukraine and became very pronounced on the policy level. The Ukrainian events coincided with the strengthening of the positions in the Kremlin policy-making circles (dominated by the realist-statesmen at the time) of the group of neo-imperialist (including the neo-Eurasian Alexander Dugin), who emphasized the need to reestablish the Russia's positions in the world and to create a buffer zone of post-Soviet protectorates along Russia's new borders (Zevelev 2014). The Russian world concept, which integrated the neo-Eurasianist concepts, pictured Russia as not limited by its national borders, as a certain hybrid of a Russian empire and a Soviet Union. Around the same time the Kremlin also coined the term "Novorossia" to describe the allegedly Russians-populated territories located outside of the national

Russian borders in Ukraine (the term itself is a completely artificial construct created for purely instrumental reasons²¹).

Mikhail Yuriev's book was rumored to be very popular in Putin's close circles around that time, pictures this neo-imperial image of Russia. In a utopian fantasy "The Third Empire: Russia that Ought to Be" Yuriev describes how 2054 world order was established, and the process has a striking resemblance with the 2014 Ukrainian events. It begins with a Recovery period of 2000-12, when the Great Russia starts its resurgence under the rule of Vladimir II the Restorer. Importantly the First Expansion that leads to reunification of significant territory occurs when Eastern and Southern Ukrainian regions rebel against west-organized Orange revolution (supported by western Ukraine). To help the revolting Ukrainians (that want to rejoin Russia) Vladimir II offers to include their Eastern territories into Russia. He then passes a referendum on those territories, and replaces the Russian Federation with the Russian Union (refer to the Custom Union) that also includes Belarus, Prednestrovie, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Yuriev's book was published in 2006 (prior to the Georgian war and the de-facto annexation of South Ossetia and Abkhazia) weirdly predicted the events that followed, which suggests that it had a good grasp on the thinking in the Kremlin policy-making circles (Snegovaya 2014).

Although the Ruskyi Mir concept along with the collapse of the Novorossia project eventually failed and is currently put on hold, it had a serious impact on the evolution of the conservative trends in Russia. The war in Ukraine coincided in tougher prosecution of any dissent and opposition in Russia portrayed by the state propaganda as the western accomplices aiming to destroy the country, increase in state propaganda levels on the main state-controlled TV channels, and the emergence of a group of ultra-conservative Russian deputies (including Irina Yarovaya, Elena Mizulina, Vitaly Milonov) with a set of anti-liberal bills, many of them became laws. These legislative initiatives included among others Milonov's controversial legislation banning the vaguely defined "promotion of non-traditional sexual relations"; Mizulina's 2012 Internet Restriction Bill; 2013 Anti-Magnitsky bill denying Americans the right to adopt Russian children; 2013 prohibits the distribution of "propaganda of nontraditional sexual relations; 2014 bill preventing women from entering higher education before giving birth; Yarovaya's laws imposing harsh new restrictions on religious groups and internet providers etc.)

Generally, domestically such policies have been a success. The use of the conservative ideology and annexation of Crimea bumped up Putin's ratings, Portraying the Russian opposition leaders as west-funded traitors destroyed the popular support for the opposition, which culminated in its complete failure to win any legislative seats in the last parliamentary elections in September 2016. The new Duma elected in 2016 features an even larger group of ultra-conservative politicians, including a TV host Peter Tolstoy, a Stalin-admirer Elena Yampolskaya, a writer Sergei Shargunov, which suggests that the conservative track in Russia's domestic policies will continue.

However, it is unclear to what extent the foreign policy of the Kremlin has been a success as well. Through aggressive rhetoric and anti-western stance in Ukraine and Syria Putin disrupted the relationships with the west, while the western sanctions on Russia damaged Russia's economy, which represents a risk for Putin's rule in the future. Yet until recently the confrontation with the west allowed him to position himself as a strong leader in the eyes of the Russian people, hence providing a boost to his popularity. If the ultimate goal of conservatism is to preserve existing institutions and the elites hold on power, so far the goal was achieved.

Conclusion

In this paper I discuss the conservative turn that took place in Russia in the last 15 years. I provide the bottom-up and the top-down explanations to this phenomenon.

Russian dynamics does not look that surprising and unique when compared with similar trajectories of other Eastern European countries. Such conservative reaction looks like an expected response to the political and economic transitions the post-Communist societies underwent in the 1990s. Some Latin American countries (primarily, the Andes – Bolivia, Colombia, Venezuela) went through a similar process of the so-called Crisis of Democratic Representation following the implementation of neoliberal economic and political reforms in the 1980s due to similar causes (Mainwaring; Bejarano; and Leongómez 2006).

However, the reactionary response in all three countries of interest started in different period (in Russia before all) and had a similarly varied depth of socio-political reaction. The extent of the reaction (and its chance to roll back into a non-democratic system) likely is partly defined by the depth of the original transformation of the society. Poland, among the most modernized of the analyzed cases, the rollback process has just started, and will likely be the least profound (as recently illustrated by successful popular ban on the abortion law). By contrast, in Russia where the modernization processes were the most superficial and faced the strongest social resistance, the old political elites could regain power sooner and roll back the society deeper. The hope remains that along with other countries at similar development stages Russia will be able to return to modernization track.

Notes

¹ Rightwing Law and Justice Party Wins Election. Guardian, October 27, 2015. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/oct/27/poland-law-justice-party-wins-235-seats-can-govern-alone>

² http://www.politicalcapital.hu/wp-content/uploads/PC_Study_Russian_Influence_Slovakia_ENG.pdf;
Marlene Laruelle Lóránt Györi Péter Krekó Dóra Haller Rudy Reichstadt "From Paris To Vladivostok". The Kremlin connections of the French far-right// http://www.politicalcapital.hu/wp-content/uploads/PC_Study_Russian_Influence_France_ENG.pdf; Marching Towards Eurasia. The Kremlin connections of the Slovak far-right Péter Krekó Lóránt Györi Daniel Milo Juraj Marušiák János Széky Anita Lencsés// http://www.politicalcapital.hu/wp-content/uploads/PC_Study_Russian_Influence_Slovakia_ENG.pdf

³ In fact the transition also involved a separate process of nation state-building, which I omit for the purposes of this paper./

⁴ Снеговая М. Правый поворот: такой ли уж особый у России путь? 28 апрел, 2016// <http://www.rbc.ru/opinions/politics/28/04/2016/5721f97b9a79471753dacefc>

⁵ Наталья Зубаревич. Четыре России и новая политическая реальность. Polit.ru, 17 января 2016// http://polit.ru/article/2016/01/17/four_russians/

⁶ Ростислав Капелюшников. Собственность без легитимности? 27 марта 2008, polit.ru// <http://polit.ru/article/2008/03/27/sobstv/>

⁷ End of Communism Cheered but Now with More Reservations. Pew Research Center, November 2, 2009// <http://www.pewglobal.org/2009/11/02/end-of-communism-cheered-but-now-with-more-reservations/>

⁸ Левинсон А.Г. Общественное мнение о реформах начала 1990-х годов. История новой России, <http://www.ru-90.ru/node/1129>

⁹ Почему почти 60 процентов россиян «глубоко сожалеет» о распаде СССР. Иносмй, 24.12.2009// <http://inosmi.ru/social/20091224/157182941.html>

¹⁰ Peter Pomerantsev: Putin is a media fiction. He is the first president entirely created through media. (Mymedia, 25.09.2015)// http://mymedia.org.ua/en/articles/media/pomerantsev_presentatsiya_knigi.html

¹¹ Orbán, in UK speech, calls for return to traditional European value. Politics.hu, October 10th, 2013 // <http://www.politics.hu/20131010/orban-calls-for-traditional-values-to-meet-modern-challenges/>

¹² "Российский консерватизм" стал официальной идеологией "Единой России". (RIA новости, 21.11.2009)// <https://ria.ru/politics/20091121/194856090.html>

¹³ А.В. Репников. Консервативная модель переустройства России. Доклад на научном семинаре «Россия в условиях трансформаций». См.:Вестник Фонда развития политического центра, июнь 2000, № 2 (23). Россия в условиях трансформаций. Историко-политологический семинар. Материалы. Вып. 2. М., 2000. С.4-28.

¹⁴ Ivan Ilyin's 1950 piece "What Does Russia's Partitioning Mean to the World?"

¹⁵ Александр Дугин. Основы геополитики. Москва, Арктогея,2000// <http://arctogaia.com/public/osnovygeo/geop4-7.htm>

¹⁶ История России XX век. Эпоха сталинизма (1923–1953), том II, под ред.А.Б.Зубова.- Москва, Издательство «Э». 2016

¹⁷ Волков Д. Лекция «Основания политического порядка и возможность демократических перемен в России», 01 ноября 2015 (прочитанна 19 февраля 2015 в рамках Открытого гражданского лектория Сахаровского центра), <http://polit.ru/article/2015/11/01/foundation/>

¹⁸ Владимир Путин. "Россия: национальный вопрос" (Независимая газета, 23.01.2012)

¹⁹ Владимир Путин. «Быть сильными: гарантии национальной безопасности для России» (Российская газета, 20.02.2012)

²⁰ Ivan Ilyin: "What Does Russia's Partitioning Mean to the World?"; "Our Tasks",1950

²¹ <http://www.vedomosti.ru/newspaper/articles/2014/05/19/sozdanie-novoj-politicheskoy-realnosti>

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Neo-Liberalism and the Rise of Right-Wing Conservatism in India

Neoliberalismo e Ascensão do Conservadorismo de Direita na Índia

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Abstract

This paper assesses the origins and the consequences of the decisive right wing shift in Indian politics ushered in by the 2014 elections. Tracing this to long-term but not linearly developing tendencies in Indian politics, the paper relates these with the distinctive nature and history of capitalist development in India, particularly the sharply polarizing growth and accumulation regime of the neo-liberal era and the crisis it now confronts. Asserting that the electoral success of the Narendra Modi-led BJP was based on it being the political agent of not change but of a reassertion by India's economic elite, the paper explains the challenge of managing sharply contradictory interests that this places in the path of the consolidation of the new regime.

Keywords: India, Conservatism, Capitalism, Neo-Liberalism, BJP

Resumo

Este artigo avalia as origens e as consequências do giro à direita na política indiana inaugurada pelas eleições de 2014. Rastreamo isso no longo prazo, mas sem desenvolver linearmente as tendências na política indiana, o artigo articula tais movimentos com a natureza e história distintas do desenvolvimento capitalista na Índia, particularmente o regime de crescimento e acumulação fortemente polarizante da era neoliberal e a crise que agora confronta. Ao afirmar que o sucesso eleitoral do BJP, liderado por Narendra Modi, se baseava em ser o agente político de não mudança, mas de uma reafirmação da elite econômica da Índia, o artigo explica o desafio de administrar interesses marcadamente contraditórios que isso coloca no caminho da consolidação do novo regime.

Palavras-chave: Índia, Conservadorismo, Capitalismo, Neoliberalismo, BJP

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Introduction

The immediate context for examining the rise of right-wing conservatism in India is of course the resounding victory of the Narendra Modi led Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its allies in the 2014 countrywide general elections in India. The BJP alone crossed the half-way mark in terms of parliamentary seats won, and this was the first time in the eight elections after 1984 that any single party had managed to achieve this. In other words, unlike what was the case when Atal Behari Vajpayee of the BJP was Prime Minister (1998-2004) the survival of the coalition government this time is not reliant on support of other political parties who do not necessarily adhere to the *Hindutva* ideology of the BJP¹. Narendra Modi, in whose name much of the campaign was conducted, was also a leader with an extreme hard-line reputation, somewhat in contrast to the image of Vajpayee who was the only other BJP leader to have become Prime Minister. Modi in fact was the Chief Minister of the state of Gujarat during Vajpayee's tenure as PM. It was under his administration that at least a thousand people and perhaps closer to double that number, an overwhelming majority of them Muslims, died in what has been described as the Gujarat Genocide of 2002².

While 2014 does appear to be a crucial turning point in India's political history insofar as it initiated the rule of the most right-wing government India has seen since independence, it does so only because of something that appears somewhat paradoxical at first sight. India is a country that is said to live in several centuries at the same time – where features of a modern economy, polity and society and their corresponding institutions happily co-exist with an overwhelming presence of others that are more associated with pre-modern times. It could therefore be considered somewhat surprising that explicitly conservative political formations have not dominated the Indian political scene for most of the period since the country's independence from colonial rule in 1947.

This paper tries to explain the above paradox and in that background, assesses the origins and the consequences of the recent decisive right wing shift in Indian politics.

The 2014 Electoral Verdict in Perspective: Looking Beyond the Seats

India has been a constitutional republic based on universal adult franchise since her independence. In having elected governments throughout this period and no phase of military dictatorship, she stands out in sharp contrast to many developing countries. Since the first general elections in 1952, thirteen rounds of elections have taken place to elect members to the Lok Sabha, the lower house of the Indian Parliament, apart from the elections to the numerous state (provincial) legislatures³. If one looks at the voting patterns in Indian parliamentary elections over more than six decades, the victory of Modi could be seen to reflect both continuity as well as change –

in some sense the outcome of a gradual but non-linear development of long-term tendencies in Indian politics.

Voting percentages in Indian general elections clearly tended to increase over the first few elections and then tended to stay above the 55 per cent mark from the 1960s. While there were fluctuations from election to election, no election before saw the level reached in 2014. The sharp spike compared to the previous (2009) election indicated that the Modi victory in part was based on the BJP being able to attract some new voters in this election. In contrast to this was the fact that among those who voted, the victors in 2014 had the narrowest popular support that any elected government has had in all elections. No party or alliance with a parliamentary majority in India has ever received 50 per cent of the vote. The closest anyone came to that mark was the Indian National Congress in 1984, benefitting from the 'sympathy wave' generated by the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi just before the elections. However, at 282 seats with barely 31 per cent of the vote, the Modi-led BJP's victory has depended on the first-past-the-post system more than any previous victor. The extent of popular support that it got thus tends to get exaggerated when one concentrates only on the number of parliamentary seats won.

While the Indian National Congress (INC), or Congress for short, was the repeated victor in all elections till 1977, and has been a ruling party on five occasions afterwards too, there was always a substantial non-Congress vote which was dispersed among different political formations including regional ones. What could be called conservative political formations also secured a significant support at the national level on several occasions. The BJP and its precursor the Bharatiya Jan Sangh (BJS) have been the steady representative of this political tendency, though the Swatantra (Freedom) Party also briefly made its mark in the 1960s only to fade away thereafter. The support secured by conservative forces achieved a certain stability by the end of the 1980s – in terms of the BJP's support staying around or above a floor level close to one-fifth of the vote since the elections in 1991. This emergence of the BJP coincided with a decisive and long-term decline in the Congress' support base.

The BJP's steady support in the last two and a half decades, however, did not prevent it too from becoming a victim of a trend of governments being repeatedly voted out of power that has been a marked feature of this period. While it won in 1998 and 1999, it lost out in 2004 and fared even worse in 2009. The 2014 result, therefore, reflected to an extent a significant revival of the electoral fortunes of the BJP. That it would not suffer a reversal because of the continuation of the same trend that helped it win earlier and this time is not something, therefore, that can be said with certainty at this point of time.

One of the features of the BJP's support base has been its relative geographical concentration, having a pattern that has not changed very dramatically over the last two decades. Even in 2014, the improvement in its electoral performance was most marked in in regions where it has traditionally been strong. In other words, it has still

not been possible for the BJP to replicate the kind of nationwide support that the Congress had earlier managed to secure.

To summarize what emerges, the decline of the support for the Congress and the rise of the BJP have been two interrelated tendencies in Indian politics that had been visible for some time. However, the rise of the BJP has not yet resulted in it occupying the kind of stable dominant position that the Congress had for so long. Therefore, while there is no doubt that victory of Narendra Modi makes the 2014 elections an important landmark in Indian politics, it cannot yet be characterized as a seismic change from the long-term patterns and trends in this sphere. Given the government it gave rise to, it was a result with a potential for bringing about extremely significant long-term changes in Indian politics. However, what would be the direction of that change may not yet be a certainty.

The Colonial Origins of Indian Capitalism and its Implications

Capitalism development in India has a distinct history and the political developments that have accompanied cannot be quite understood without it. This distinctiveness starts from the very origins of Indian capitalism in the second half of the 19th century when India was under colonial rule and Britain's most important colonial asset. Indian society's unification within a single political and administrative structure with a centralized state, and the creation of social classes with a 'national' character, was itself a consequence of colonialism. But the Indian nation that emerged from it, with its corresponding 'national economy', bore the stamp of its colonial history. It was one of the poorest economies of the world in terms of per capita income, unequally positioned in the international economic order and was beset with its own internal contradictions.

While colonialism had produced disruptive effects on the economy of the Indian sub-continent and squeezed out a surplus from it over a long time, neither colonialism or the limited development of capitalist production that it engendered involved a fundamental transformation of its social and economic structure. From the standpoint of the development of Indian society, colonialism proved to be essentially a conservative force. It introduced 'modern' elements into the economy but its interests were also served by preserving and maintaining the pre-existing structures (Ranadive 1979).

The agrarian economy in particular, to which even at independence three quarters of the workforce was tied and which generated more than half the GDP, experienced little 'modernization' over the two centuries of colonial rule. It remained a peasant agriculture where family labour was supplemented by hired labour of landless agricultural workers and from which a hierarchy of rentier landed interests extracted a substantial surplus. Small-scale cultivation was the norm and the methods and

techniques of production remained more or less the same as before the advent of colonialism (Patnaik 1999).

A very limited modern factory emerged and grew from the mid-19th century, its expansion being never enough to completely cancel out the destruction that India's traditional artisanal manufacturing experienced over the 19th century because of manufactured imports from Britain after the Industrial Revolution. At India's independence, still dominated by relatively technologically unsophisticated light industries, modern manufacturing accounted for only 8 per cent of the economy's aggregate output and less than 2 per cent of employment. Even the surviving traditional manufacturing sector was larger in size. The development of the factory sector, however, did call forth a limited development of the industrial capitalist and working classes, the former having both a foreign as well as native components (Ray 1994). The limited development was both in a quantitative as well as a qualitative sense – apart from them being numerically very small segments of Indian society, each of them was underdeveloped in their own ways. The character of the native industrial capitalist class strongly reflected its mercantile roots while the working class continued to have strong links with the countryside.

The sustenance of the institutions of caste and patriarchy was the result of the nature of the transformation, or the lack of it, produced by colonialism. British rule to an extent undermined the basis and modified the context of the hierarchical division of society into castes composed of patriarchal families, based on endogamy and hereditary caste occupation, and its accompanying ideology. So too did the social and political movements that grew out of that changing context⁴. Yet these changes had their limitations as typified by the reinforcing or the survival of pre-capitalist relations in agriculture, and even the fact that an overwhelming number of Indian capitalists emerged from merchant castes or communities. Caste, with patriarchy as its accompaniment, continued to play an important role in the social, political, and economic life of India in ways that even reinforced them.

If independent India was bequeathed a backward economy and society by colonialism, it also came into being as a nation characterized by tremendous religious, linguistic and cultural diversity. The partition at independence between India and Pakistan of course changed the composition of the population such that those who identified themselves as being adherents of a religion, Hinduism, whose origins are in the sub-continent and are traced back to its ancient civilization became the overwhelming majority (around 80 per cent presently). The sub-continent, however, had also been the region of the world which became home to the largest Islamic population. Even after the partition of India in 1947 and then Bangladesh's separation from Pakistan in 1971 – the three countries of the sub-continent follow Indonesia in the list of countries in the world with the largest Muslim populations. In India they have always constituted the largest religious minority group, accounting for 14% of the population presently. There are also other significant minority populations following

religions that emerged in the sub-continent (e.g. Sikhism, Buddhism, Jainism) or came to it from other parts of the world (e.g. Christianity or Zoroastrianism). Partition's impact on the variety of languages and cultures in India was much less marked – hundreds of languages are in use in India and least ten of them have currently more than 30 million speakers each. The Indian nation was therefore composed of multiple nationalities, and within each there were further sub-groups. In addition to this, across the India were numerous tribal communities whose members made up around 7.5 per cent of the population at independence.

Much of the post-independence Indian political spectrum took shape during the colonial period, as the development of India's national movement or freedom struggle took place in a context where the society that was pitted against foreign rule was both diverse and was characterized by the operation of varying and even contradictory interests. The transformation of the anti-colonial struggle into a mass movement had to confront the inequalities and unequal relations that characterized Indian society even as the politicization generated by the movement also pushed those contradictions to the surface (Desai 2002). The growth of an Indian nationalism also involved the awakening of the multiple national sentiments of India's linguistic groups to serve as its foundation. On the other hand, the divisive potential of India's diversity and of revivalism was also ruthlessly stoked and exploited by the British rulers as part of the policy of *divide et impera* – most importantly by the promotion of religious community based conflict that eventually resulted in partition accompanying Indian independence.

An array of political forces from Left to Right and organizations representing different interests emerged in this complex background – some more regionally concentrated and others of a national nature. Communal formations like the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha came into being in the early part of the 20th century, and the former eventually championed the cause of creating a separate Pakistan. The Justice Party which later became the Dravidar Kazhgam (precursor of the Dravidian parties which have continued to dominate Tamil Nadu's politics till date) was also formed in 1917 as a challenge to high-caste domination. The Hindu nationalist Rashtriya Swayamsewka Sangh (RSS) came into being by 1925 – though it stayed away from the national movement and floated its political front, the Jan Sangh, only in 1951. The Communist Party was also founded in the 1920s. It was the Indian National Congress though which managed to emerge as the major political expression of Indian nationalism. The Congress itself was an umbrella organization that accommodated within itself a variety of tendencies (some of whom, like the Congress Socialist Party, were to separate from it immediately after independence). It managed to attract support across the divides that characterized Indian society. It was also the political formation towards which Indian capitalists graduated in the run up to independence. These processes, however, ensured that the Congress was at best reformist in relation to the iniquities embedded in India's society, incapable of being the political

instrument of any radical transformation. This was to make the transformative impact of the transfer of power in 1947 on Indian society less significant than it might have been. Yes, independence did mean an important discontinuity in the history of Indian capitalist development insofar as it made it possible for the state to be now used more effectively than earlier to promote national capitalist development. It, however, left largely untouched the socio-economic structure inherited from British rule.

Indian Independence: Continuity and Change

With the adoption of the Constitution by the Constituent Assembly in 1949, and the declaration of India as a republic on 26 January 1950, the formal structure of rule in independent India was put in place. Its key elements were a federal system of government with cabinets and elected legislatures at the central and state (province) level, with a division of powers between them. This was followed by the linguistic reorganization of states. The constitutional framework of Government that came into being had its antecedents in the 'constitutional reforms' brought about by the erstwhile British rulers. However, emerging as it did in the background of a national movement in which diverse classes participated, the constitution of independent India did make significant departures from the previous constitutional structure. It severed the direct political ties with Britain, and eliminated the many special powers that had been exercised by the non-elected bureaucracy. It also extended the electorate to include the entire adult population, and replaced the system of representation by 'classes and interests' with one of territorial representation. The administrative apparatus of Government, the police force and the army of independent India were, however, inherited from British rule as they were (Bettelheim 1977).

The equality of all citizens and a secular state were formally enshrined in the Constitution and many of the traditional forms of discrimination were outlawed along with the legitimization of affirmative action. These, however, existed in an uneasy relationship with the underlying realities of Indian society which were yet to be transformed.

The institutional framework for capitalist accumulation was also put in place in the years after independence (Das Gupta 2016). The intermingling of the worlds of business and politics during India's national movement had already created some of the background and setting for the negotiation on and operation of this framework. The actual outcomes, which were much more favourable to capital than labour, were indicative of what was to prove to be a persistent feature of the Indian state – an extremely weak capacity to discipline private capital (Chibber 2004). This only reinforced the tendencies that came instinctively to a capitalist class with strong roots in mercantile activity – the reliance on acquisition of technology rather than its development and the proclivity to seek and use state patronage not just for collective but even individual benefits.

One of the significant expressions of the conservative nature of Indian capitalism was the inability of the post-independence state to reform the agrarian structure in any significant way other than eliminating a top layer of rentiers. It allowed itself to be thwarted by powerful landed interests who continued to enjoy significant political power. As such, there was no substantive undoing of what was called the “built-in- depressor” in India’s agrarian structure (Thorner 1956) – the tendency for most of the surplus to concentrate in the hands of a landed minority removed from production, producing both iniquity and the maintenance of low productivity. Indeed, like the colonial state before it, the state in independent India too kept large agrarian incomes outside even the ambit of taxation. Unlike under colonialism, however, there were attempts after independence to bring about capitalist development and improvements in agriculture through a combination of other measures (e.g. the green revolution strategy) (Patnaik 1994, Rao 1994). These did ease the agrarian barrier to capitalist industrialization but failed to decisively eliminate it.

Notwithstanding what was put in the constitution, and in some ways because of some parts of it, even independence did not mean the unleashing of any process fundamentally undermining caste and patriarchy. These were not only integral to the agrarian structure and the organization of the rural economy which was left undisturbed, the operation of an agrarian barrier to industrialization also meant that the opportunities of escape from these through class, occupational and location mobility also remained limited. These consequences were epitomized by the fact that India remained largely rural and agrarian even after independence. Landlessness, however, tended to increase over time even as new rural elites emerged out of the state’s attempts at promoting agricultural development. The former meant a continuous process of swelling of labour reserves which served to maintain a systemic tendency towards maintaining a cheap labour economy characterized by informality and casualization – and institutions like caste thrived in this too. The coexistence, of the basis for social conservatism and its deep entrenchment, with the instabilities and unevenness associated with capitalist development, came to characterize Indian reality after independence.

The Capitalist Class, the State and Indian Democracy under Dirigisme

As mentioned earlier, an integral feature of capitalism in India has been the substantial reliance of private capital, not only collectively but also individually, on state support to its development. After independence, the strategy of ‘planned economic development’ under conditions of ‘relative autonomy’ provided the overarching framework of such support and on the whole received the support of capitalists (Das Gupta 2016). State economic policy was to be subsequently marked by periodic

changes as a result of frequent adjustments in response to, or forced by, contingent circumstances. However, the core of the strategy was maintained till the 1980s.

Import-substituting industrialization did provide a background for a significant development, of Indian big business. Private corporate capital's relative share in the economy did not increase significantly except in the initial years of the period. It also became more confined to manufacturing activities as it was squeezed out by the public sector from other spheres like banking and finance, mining, transport and communication, electricity, etc. As the manufacturing sector became more diversified, however, Indian business groups moved from a situation of being confined to a few traditional industries like the textiles into others such as steel and steel products, chemicals, cement, automobiles and automobile products, industrial and other machinery and consumer electronics. The state supported development of the financial system the backward and forward linkages of public investment were extremely crucial to this advance of private capital as was the state's role in the agrarian economy.

The extent and the effectiveness of the state support to industrialization and social development were, however, also undermined by the nature of the state-business interaction. What has been pejoratively called the "license-permit raj" was in reality the routine abuse, manipulation, and circumvention of the system of controls to their advantage by big business firms with the assistance of the discretionary decision-makers in the state apparatus. This became an entrenched part of business behaviour and the clientelism, corruption and cronyism associated with it became more pronounced with time (Goyal 1979, Kochanek 1987, Virmani 2004). Private capital also successfully beat the revenue mobilization effort thereby limiting the state's ability to expand public expenditures.

It would, however, be a bit of a caricature to represent the Indian state before liberalization as being entirely captive to powerful private interests. Indeed it was not even the case that a fixed and exclusive set of favoured business firms remained the beneficiaries of state patronage throughout. This is what created the possibility for new constituents in India's business elite to emerge (Mazumdar 2011). The general setting of an interventionist economic policy regime also provided a context for significant autonomous state action. For instance, the period of the most intense economic difficulties, from the mid-1960s to the late 1970s, also saw the high tide of What were the implications of the political system of independent India in shaping the interaction between the state and the economy, specifically the fact that the State had to operate within the framework of representative democracy? A common theme that explicitly or implicitly lay behind often very diverse viewpoints is the notion of the constraints on the state imposed by democracy. This constraint has been seen, if one were to put it in somewhat simple terms, in either limiting the ability of the State to do 'wrong', or do 'right'. Those who took the former view were appreciative of the iniquities characterizing the Indian economic and social structure and their

implications for political power, but stressed the parallel factor of legitimation (Chakravarty 1987). The latter commonly expressed itself in the notion of the State being unable to pursue any 'rational' economic programme because it is constantly subject to the pressure of demands from diverse interest-groups and lobbies, demands which it has to accommodate given the nature of the political system. Another view that falls somewhere in between the previous two but tilts towards the latter is one based on the perception of the existence of two twin tendencies, that of 'political awakening' and of 'political decay' (Mason 1992). Political awakening, the increased self-assertion and political participation of a variety of social groups, it was argued, led to increased demands on state resources. This, coupled with political decay, or the increasing 'inability of political institutions to respond creatively or adequately' to such self-assertion by different groups, made the country more difficult to govern. In the sphere of State economic policy, this was seen as the root cause behind the rise of economic populism and the inability to bring about necessary reforms because of the operation of vested interests' (Joshi and Little 1994).

The so-called political decay was, however, not something that simply happened due to exogenous reasons. The underlying socio-economic structure and the constrained dynamics it gave rise to shaped also the way the institutions of Indian democracy worked. The structure itself was fundamentally incapable of eliminating the conflict of interests and aspirations without a transformation even though it induced them to be expressed. It also bears remembering that populism or making concessions was not the only way in which the Indian State responded to the demands made from it. The very period in which such 'populism' grew and the idea that the state had to deliver a range of benefits to citizens, particularly the poor, took root – when Indira Gandhi came to lead the Congress – also saw the imposition of the Emergency (1975-77). Moreover, if the fiscal constraints faced by the state kept the expenditures on providing such benefits in check, the state in India generally also was far more authoritarian in character than would be obvious from simply the frequency of elections or changes of government.

However, elections did take place and this did mean that governments could change – the Emergency and the subsequent elections were the clear sign that the political stranglehold the Congress had managed to maintain after independence in the face of recurrent challenges was beginning to come undone. Behind this was its increasing inability to manage the contradictions and the cleavages of Indian society even while promoting a process of capitalist development. By the end of the 1980s this became even more clearly established. In a complex society like India's, the accompaniment of the regionally uneven decline of the Congress was the emergence of a more fractured polity whose different strands grew partially in mutual interaction with each other and ushered in the era of coalition governments. The rise of the BJP based on a Hindu consolidation was one expression of this, aided in part by the gravitation of traditional and new elites towards it. Parallely, however, there was also

the emergence of political formations rooted in the different segments of middle and lower castes in some parts of the country and of other regional formations. Even as these significant shifts in India's political landscape were taking shape, India made its decisive turn towards economic liberalization following the foreign exchange crisis of 1991.

The Neo-Liberal Turn of Indian Capitalism and Right-Wing Politics

While widespread dissatisfaction with the actual results of post-independence development was a fact and underlay the decline of the Congress, there had been no process making for this range of discontents to coalesce into a new consensus in favour of liberalization. Indeed, it was the minority Indian National Congress government rather than any new political formation, which led the initial march into liberalization. In the immediately preceding elections, it was not the wave of economic liberalization that was to follow which occupied centre-stage. Instead, implementation of the recommendations of the Mandal Commission (caste-based reservation or affirmative action) by the previous government and the Ram Janambhoomi-Babri Masjid (Temple vs. Mosque) dispute, and then the assassination of the former Prime Minister mid-way through the elections, dominated the election related discourse. The changeover in the policy regime was as sudden as it was far reaching. It was a top-down process with actors within the Indian policy making elite and in international financial institutions initially crafting the policy shift (Sengupta 2008).

The transition to liberalization had very important implications for Indian democracy. It has meant not an elimination of the state's role but a shrinkage in the scope for autonomous state action and consequently a greater leverage of private capital over the state. The 'retreat of the state' itself required the state to assume a new role, of overseeing that process and the opening up of the economy, and of regulating the many sectors in which it ceded its space to private capital. The 'retreat' was thus a necessarily qualified one which made it as amenable to manipulation by private interests as the old control regime was thereby setting the stage for corruption, cronyism and clientelism on an even larger scale. In a deeper structural manner, the retreat of the state and the opening up of the economy and the attendant fiscal restrictions have constrained the state – making the inducement and encouragement of private investment through various incentives the main way of influencing the economy's growth process. Thus every phase of upturn in the aggregative economic performance generates a reluctance to do anything that might adversely affect the 'animal spirits' and the 'state of confidence' of the private investor. Every downturn generates a tendency for measures to revive these. The placing of the private sector in such a privileged position has in turn made the adoption of a friendly attitude towards it a part of the general culture of state functioning in India. At the same time, large

business firms which have established themselves in key sectors have increased their clout and thus influence on regulatory policy in them. The state's ability to discipline private capital has consequently been further eroded and a permissive attitude towards capitalist lawlessness has also been a perceptible feature of this period. The stranglehold of capital over the state has, however, meant that other segments of Indian society have found it far more difficult to claim the state's attention.

Once initiated, since it also gave rise to a highly polarizing growth, the emergence of any subsequent social consensus on it was also next to impossible. The pattern of that growth makes it easy to understand why Indian big business and sections of the middle class have come to champion the liberalization process (Pedersen 2007, Kohli 2009). Outside of these social segments, however, liberalization has not proved to be popular for equally understandable reasons. One reflection of the popular dissatisfaction with the results of economic policy has been the high level of political instability characterizing this period to which reference has been made at the beginning. The recurrent changes in government, however, did not disturb the onward march of the liberalization process for the structural reasons described earlier. It did, however, present the BJP with its first opportunity to lead a coalition government towards the end of the 1990s.

The BJP's economic philosophy had even before liberalization been more right-wing and pro-private enterprise than was the norm in Indian politics. As such, as the leading component of the National Democratic Alliance Government between 1998 and 2004, it had no difficulty in identifying itself with the liberalization agenda even more strongly than previous governments. The culmination of this was the 'India Shining' campaign in 2004⁵. The election results that followed surprised media commentators as it went against what opinion polls had generally projected.

The decisive rejection of the BJP's slogan in 2004 and the further slide the party experienced in 2009 appeared to mark an important shift in Indian politics by bringing some attention back to India's poor. The reason for this appearance lay in the new discourse and specific policy measures initiated by the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) led by the Congress after 2004. Apart from slogans like 'Inclusive Growth' the introduction of measures like a National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGA) during its first term were seen as symptomatic of the shift and were credited with ensuring the UPA's re-election in 2009. Towards the end of its second term the UPA also legislated a Food Security Act. Despite these, however, the 2014 verdict happened.

Neither the 2004 nor the 2014 elections actually produced any significant shift in the economic policy paradigm – instead there was a marked continuity. A key indicator of the continuity has been adherence to fiscal conservatism. The UPA 1 Government in fact notified the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act passed by its predecessor NDA Government. What changed was that the UPA came to power in 2004 just as Indian economy had moved into a phase of extremely rapid growth

while the 2014 elections took place at a time when the crisis of the neo-liberal growth trajectory had already deeply set in.

Throughout its ten-year rule, the UPA kept the Central Government Expenditure to GDP ratio below the level at the end of the previous government's term and the fiscal deficit-GDP ratio was consistently brought down till 2007-08. However, revenues swelled mainly on account of corporate taxes and income-taxes and the tax-GDP ratio improved, a reflection of the fact that profits grew rapidly while wages stagnated and inequality increased. This made it possible for public expenditure growth to be also eventually stepped up without compromising the objective of keeping the fiscal deficit within bounds. This expenditure growth persisted for a while after the eruption of the global crisis because of the fiscal stimulus but this was accompanied by a significant fall in the tax-GDP ratio. The consequent rise in the fiscal deficit induced a retreat to fiscal consolidation by the time the second decade of the current century began.

The fiscal consolidation which marked the last three years of the UPA-2 Government prioritized curbing of government expenditure over tax mobilisation resulting in a stagnation of real public expenditure. This aggravated the growth and investment slowdown which in turn intensified the revenue constraints. The expenditure heads that bore the brunt of the austerity measures were: agriculture and rural development; fertilizer and food subsidies; and social services (like health and education). The expenditure on rural development (which includes the MGNREGA) was even in nominal terms lower in the years thereafter than in 2008-09! This is the background in which the UPA's 'Inclusive growth' slogan failed to cut, not surprisingly, much ice with the electorate in 2014 and it suffered a massive defeat. A series of corruption scandals only added to popular discontent.



The success of the Narendra Modi-led BJP in the 2014 was made possible because it was the political agent of not change but of a reassertion by India's economic elite. The economic crisis created a situation where those on both sides of the process of increasing economic divergence were dissatisfied with the UPA but for different reasons. Corporate interests were increasingly desperate for a return to the days of rapid profit growth and from their perspective this required government capable of taking decisive measures to carry forward the liberal reforms agenda even if it meant administering the 'bitter pill'. A more authoritarian regime than what the Congress had been able to or could deliver was thus desirable from their point of view. The near unanimous support that the Modi led-BJP consequently received from Indian big business and sections of the middle class tied to the corporate sector was no doubt an important factor in shaping the electoral verdict. Its result was a command over financial resources and media projection that no other formation was able to match. This was of course not sufficient to win the election but this support of the business elite helped the BJP in expanding its support by tapping more successfully than others the discontent that existed in the larger populace.

The Narendra Modi led-BJP's electoral success has, however, placed before it the same challenge that undid the Congress – namely, managing the myriad contradictory interests even as it facilitates a process of capitalist accumulation. This challenge has been made even more daunting by the context of the crisis and the fact that the BJP's political influence is still far from being all encompassing. Indeed, those contradictions and the politics they have given rise to over time itself constitutes a barrier to the expansion of the BJP's popular support. Substantively on the economic front little has changed in the two and a half years of the Modi-government. There is an increase in the level of aggressiveness with which neo-liberalism is being pursued but this has not produced any dramatic revival. On the other hand, pushing these beyond a point requires a significant adjustment of the social equilibrium that has not been easy to politically achieve – though there are recurrent efforts within which one could also place the recent demonetization decision. While increasing authoritarianism in one form or the other and the even greater effective erosion of India's democracy is taking place, it is far from certain that this has already secured the current regime's grip on power and enhanced the chances of its survival beyond the next elections.

Indicators of Voting Trends in Indian Elections

Year =>	1951	1957	1962	1967	1971	1977	1980	1984
Voter Turnout (%)	44.87	45.44	55.42	61.04	55.27	60.49	56.92	63.56
Total Seats	489	494	494	520	518	542	542	514
INC	364	371	361	283	352	154	353	404
	44.99	47.78	44.72	40.78	43.68	34.52	42.69	49.1
BJP/BJP	3	4	14	35	22		31*	2
	3.06	5.97	6.44	9.31	7.35		18.97*	7.74
Other National Party	12	19	18	44	16	295	41	10
	10.59	10.41	7.89	8.67	10.43	41.32	9.39	6.89
	Socialist	Praja Socialist	Swatantra	Swatantra	Congress (O)	Bharatiya Lok Dal	JNP (Secular)	JNP
Year =>	1989	1991	1996	1998	1999	2004	2009	2014
Voter Turnout (%)	61.95	56.73	57.94	61.97	59.99	58.07	58.21	66.44
Total Seats	529	521	543	543	543	543	543	543
INC	197	232	140	141	114	145	206	44
	39.53	36.26	28.8	25.82	28.3	26.53	28.55	19.52
BJP/BJP	85	120	161	182	182	138	116	282
	11.36	20.11	20.29	25.59	23.75	22.16	18.8	31.34
Other National Party	143	59	46	32	33	43	21	0
	17.79	11.84	8.08	5.16	5.4	5.66	6.17	4.19
	Janata Dal	Janata Dal	Janata Dal	CPM	CPM	CPM	BSP	BSP
INC = Indian National Congress; BJS/BJP = Bharatiya Jan Sangh/Bharatiya Janata Party; JNP = Janata Party; CPM = Communist Party of India (Marxist) and BSP = Bahujan Samaj Party								
Indicates Winning Party								
1977	BJS was one of the constituents of the Janata Party (BLD) - which also included the Socialist parties and the Congress (O).							
*1980	BJS was still one of the constituents of the Janata Party but which had by then split.							
1989	The Janata Dal formed the government with the outside support of the BJP and the Left.							
1996	Eventually the United Front coalition of non-Congress and non-BJP parties formed the government with outside support of the Congress.							
1998, 1999, 2014	BJP was the leading constituent of the National Democratic Alliance coalition government.							
2004, 2009	INC was the leading constituent of the United Progressive Alliance coalition government.							

Notes

¹ For the BJP's self-description of its ideology, see: http://www.bjp.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=369:hindutva-the-great-nationalist-ideology&Itemid=501

² See Brass (2004) for a 'neutral' description

³ As of now the Indian Union has 29 states and seven Union Territories.

⁴ Desai (2002), Ch. 14, pp. 227-245 provides a synoptic view of the various forces contributing to the undermining of the caste system. But one can say with the benefit of hindsight that the presumption of a somewhat linear trend of its decline was overly exaggerated.

⁵ This was an advertising campaign in the run up to the general elections. It backfired because it projected an image of India that was in sharp contrast to the lived reality of a large number of Indians.

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