

Populism for Poprebel: a brief introduction.

Jan Kubik (with input by Marta Kotwas, UCL SSEES)

Digital ethnography skunkworks (with Edgeryders), Brussels, July 16-17, 2019

Woods and Kishor (2014: 2) observe that there are three general methodological dimensions of populism: (1) the nature of the data, (2) the location and (3) the time of the data.

The authors also note that populism is a 'relational' concept, meaning that it is defined in relation to other concepts.

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Populist polarization, autocracy, revolution, and democracy

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Norris and Inglehart (2016:2) observe that there are three groups of explanations of the electoral fortunes of populists. Explanations tend to focus on:

- The demand-side of public opinion (we are here)
- The supply-side of party strategies
- The constitutional arrangements governing the rules of the electoral game

They test two theses:

- economic inequality thesis
- **cultural backlash thesis (massive literature on the anger and disappointment with various aspects of globalization and "modernity") - we are here.**

Our (hypo)thesis:

- The rise of (right wing) populism is a form of the **delayed** and **constructed** cultural backlash.
- Cultural dimension of populism's rise tends to be studied from the demand side. Most sub-studies in Poprebel look at **supply** side. Particularly at what may be called "cultures of populism" constructed by various political and cultural entrepreneurs.
- In this sub-project we stick to the **demand** side, but use an innovative methodology: digital ethnography.

Dominant in the literature: two methods of studying cultural **demand thesis**: surveys and community studies

Surveys: Inglehart and Norris 2016,
Diane Mutz, 2017

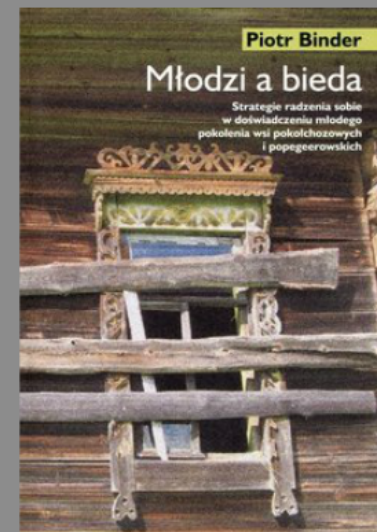
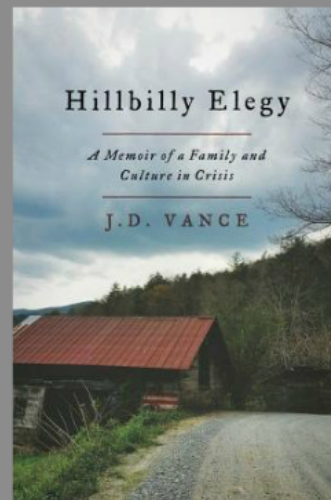
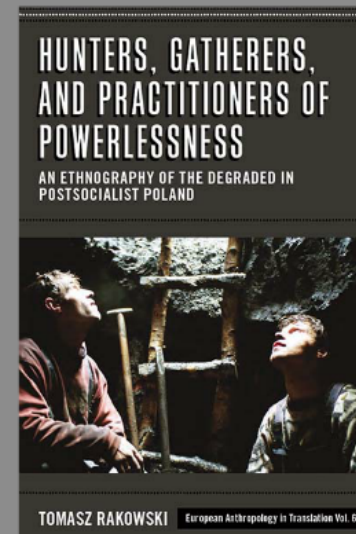
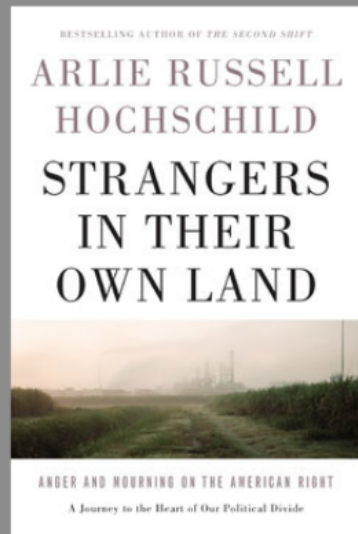
Community studies:



Mutz:

Trump's support was **not** driven by personal economic hardship or by prospective personal economic concerns.

It was driven by the **sense of threat** either to the domestic **social status** of an individual's ingroup or the global status of the country as whole.



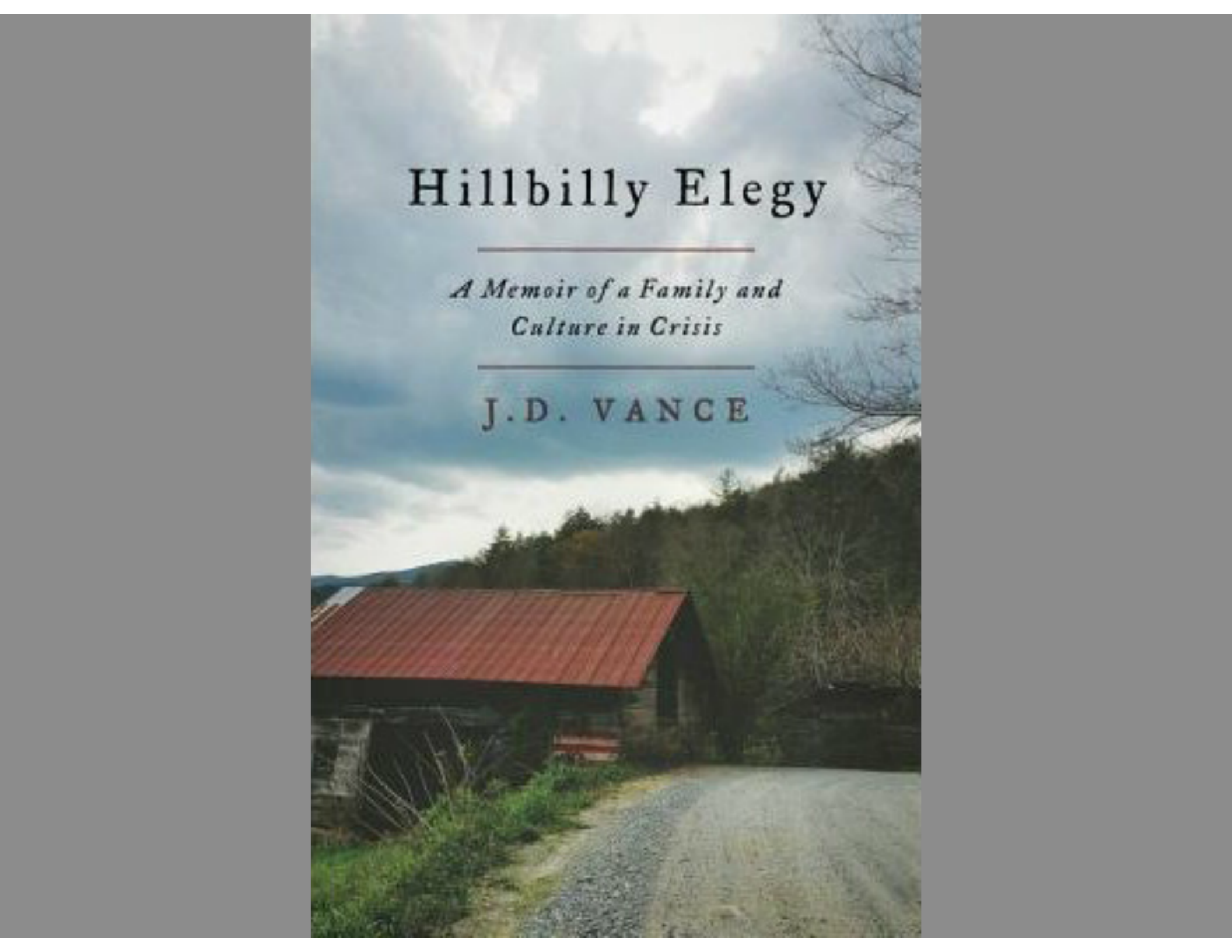
BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF *THE SECOND SHIFT*

ARLIE RUSSELL
HOCHSCHILD
STRANGERS
IN THEIR
OWN LAND



ANGER AND MOURNING ON THE AMERICAN RIGHT

A Journey to the Heart of Our Political Divide

The background of the book cover is a photograph of a rural landscape. In the foreground, a gravel driveway leads towards a small, dark wooden building with a prominent red metal roof. The building is partially obscured by green bushes and a wooden fence. In the background, there are rolling hills covered in dense green trees under a sky filled with large, white, fluffy clouds.

Hillbilly Elegy

*A Memoir of a Family and
Culture in Crisis*

J. D. VANCE

HUNTERS, GATHERERS, AND PRACTITIONERS OF POWERLESSNESS

AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF THE DEGRADED IN
POSTSOCIALIST POLAND



TOMASZ RAKOWSKI

European Anthropology in Translation Vol. 6

Piotr Binder

Młodzi a bieda

Strategie radzenia sobie
w doświadczeniu młodego
pokolenia wsi pokolchozowych
i popegeerowskich



Pop-edge approach

Departure:

- Demand side of populism
- Engage people in talking about their problems and see if "populism" pops up

But first clarify:

- Definition of populism
- Varieties of populism: **thin versus thick**

Varieties of populism: ideational approach

Populism is, first of all, a form of (thin) ideology:

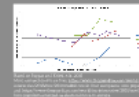
- Necessary features of the phenomenon
- **Thin** versus **thick**

Thin populism (Mudde 2007; Kriesi and Pappas 2015:4):

- Binarism: "people" and "elites" as separate and mutually exclusive sets
- Antagonism: between the two sets
- Idea of popular sovereignty (substance of democracy trumps procedures)
- Manichean outlook: the essential feature of social/human reality is the struggle of the forces of good and evil

Thick: right wing populism:

- **thin populism** +
 - nativism (nationalism)
 - personalistic authoritarianism (anti-institutionalism)
 - religion (?)



"Ideational approach" to populism (preliminary typology (Kubik)):

Thin versions:

- **Urbane populism**. Principal goal: combating corruption (Babiš and ANO in the Czech Republic).
- **Folk populism**. Principal goal: protection of the nation/people. (Meciar and HZDS, and several other populisms in Slovakia).
- **Thin (left-leaning) populism**. Principal goal: economic protection of "people." (Fico and SMER-SD in Slovakia).

Thick versions:

- **Comprehensive political populism**. Principal goal: illiberal democracy (Orban and Fidesz).
- **Extreme right wing populism** (fascism?). Principal goal: aggressive defense of "the purity" of national substance (Kotleba's **People's Party – Our Slovakia**, Jobbik in Hungary, **National Movement** (part of the Kukiz'15 coalition in the Parliament after 2015) in Poland).
- **Messianic/religious populism**. Principal goal: civilizational transformation (Kaczyński and PiS in Poland).

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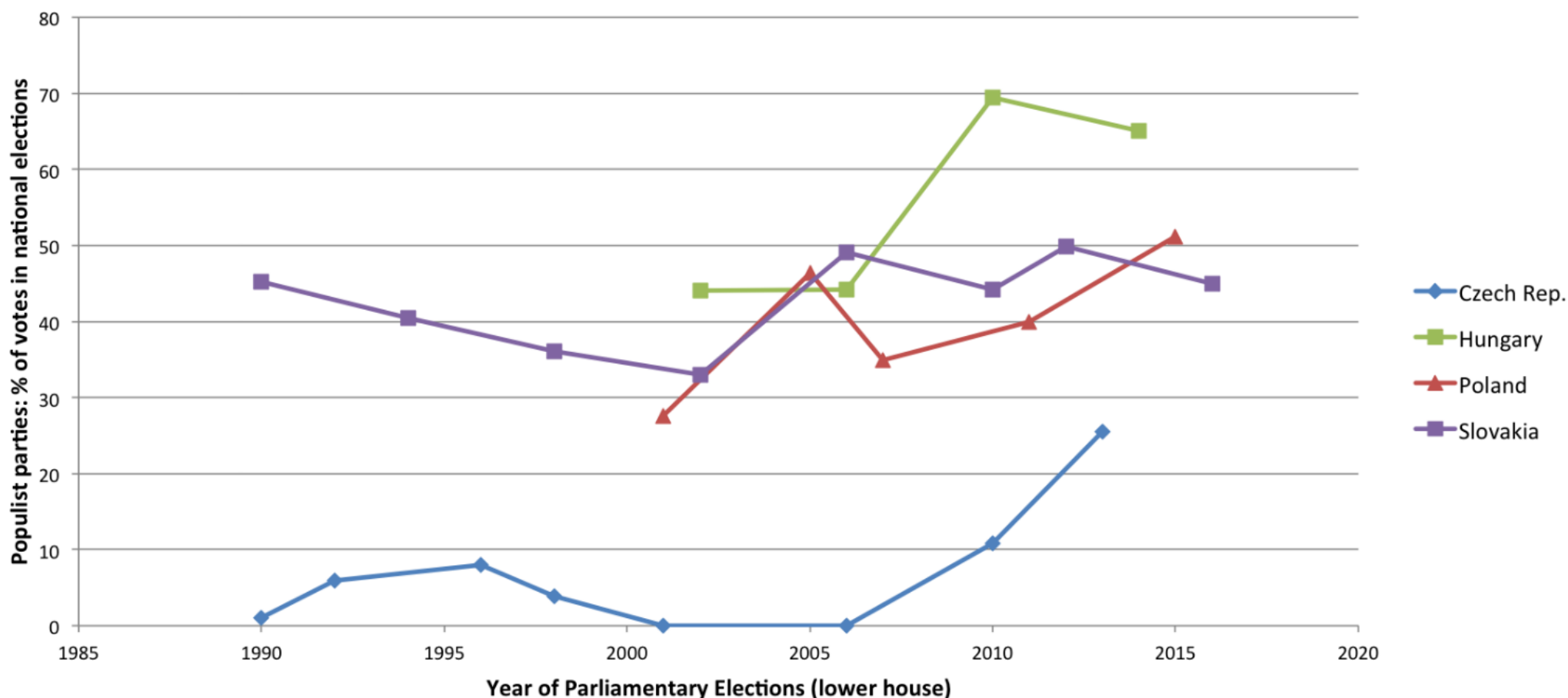
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The Rise of Populism in Central Europe



Based on Pappas and Kriesi, eds., 2015

More comprehensive picture: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/ng-interactive/2018/nov/20/revealed-one-in-four-europeans-vote-populist>
and <https://www.theguardian.com/world/ng-interactive/2018/nov/20/>





Marian Kotleba until recently wore an outfit inspired by the Nazi-sponsored Slovak State

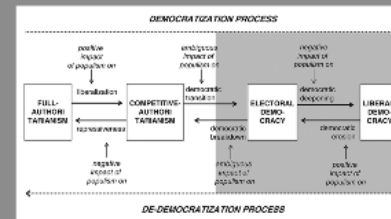




Populist polarization, autocracy, revolution, and democracy

Political, social, and cultural **polarization** that always accompanies the rise of populism has different impact on:

- non-democracy (positive?)
- revolution (necessary for success?)
- democracy (negative?)

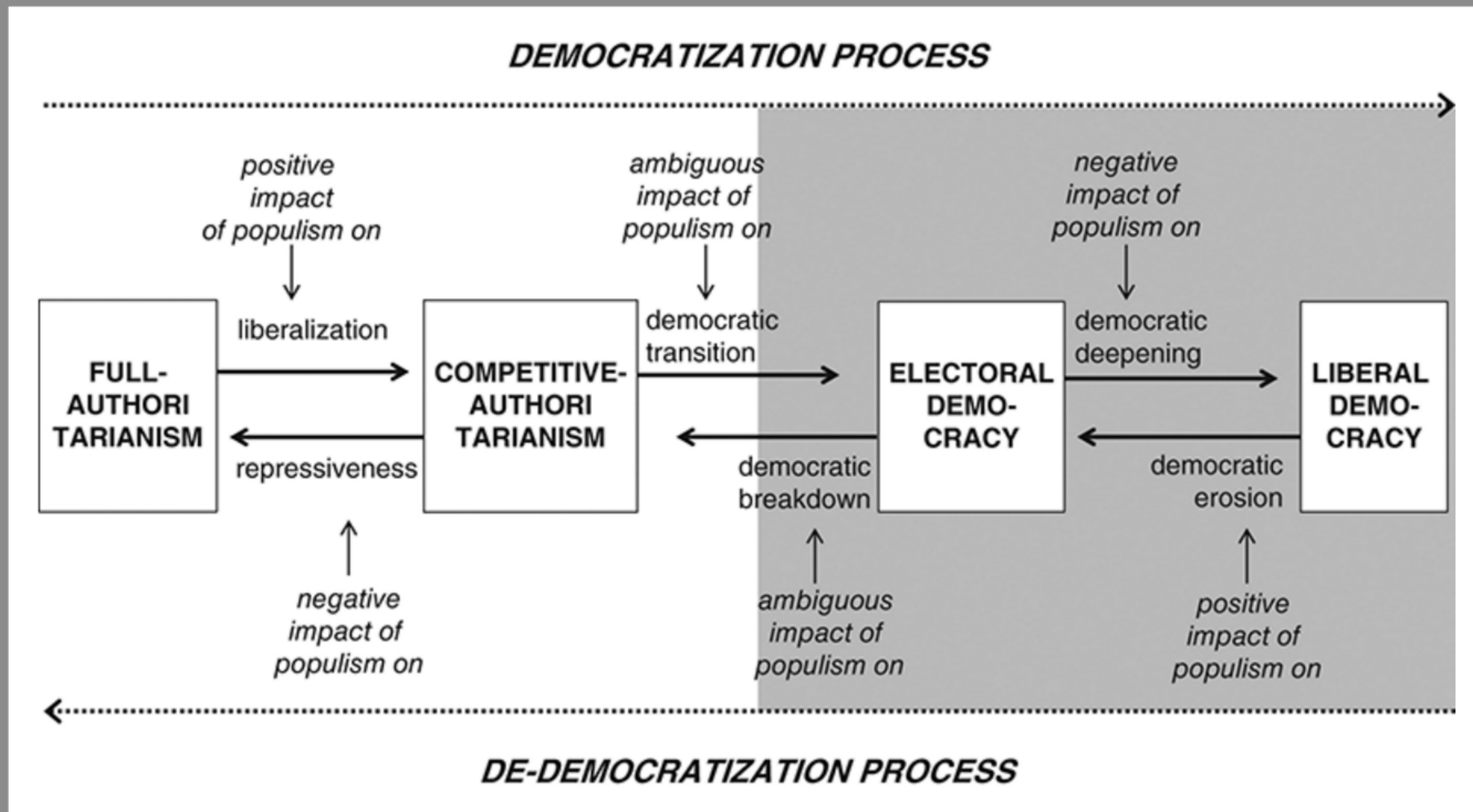


From: Kaltwasser and Mudde, Populism, A Very Short Introduction, 2017.

Why is populism a problem in democracy?

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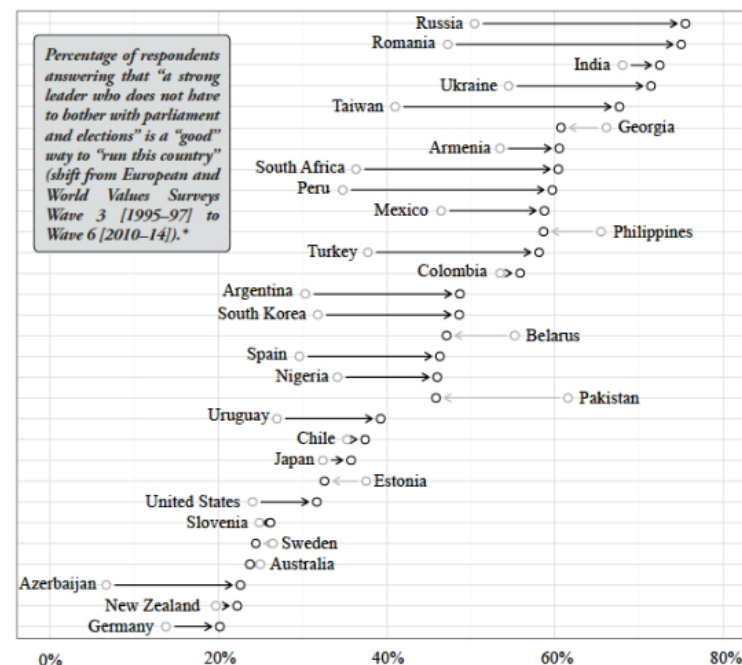
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Why is populism a problem in democracy?

Roberto Stefan Foa and Yascha Mounk

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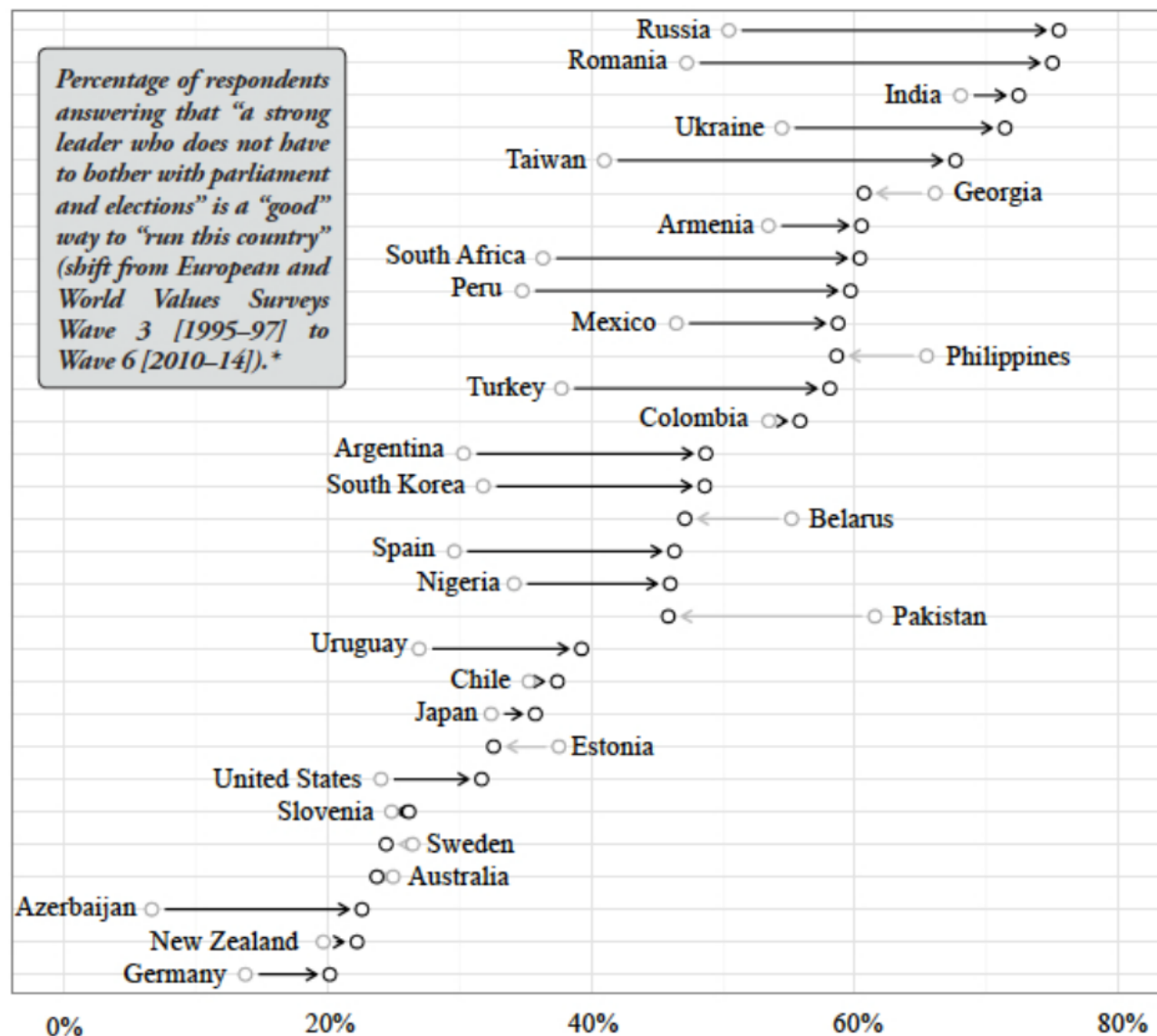
FIGURE 2—GLOBAL RISE IN SHARE OF CITIZENS WISHING FOR A STRONG LEADER “WHO DOES NOT HAVE TO BOTHER WITH ELECTIONS”



Source: European and World Values Surveys.

*Sample contains all countries included in both Wave 3 (1995–97) and Wave 6 (2010–14) of the surveys, and in which respondents were asked whether “having a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections” would be a “fairly good” or “very good” way to “run this country.”

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