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Far-right parties are currently gaining momentum & exerting parliamentary influence in diverse countries such as the UK, Hungary, the USA, Austria, Sweden, Germany, & Denmark.

Far-right terrorism has increased dramatically.

We ignore this at our

Far-right recruitment discourse offers an affective script of feeling angry, insulted, & ashamed, as well as courageous, proud, & hopeful.

Research shows how affective–discursive practices are employed to create gateways to radicalization and ideologically motivated violence.

Within fascism, the myth of #palingenesis, that is “national rebirth from the ashes,” is continual and key to the motivation of political action & violence: 'heroism' is the “psychological recompense for fascist political activism.”

The language of the Nazi regime had an emotional impact; fascist & far-right rhetoric rely heavily on affective performative work.

The collective Nazi mind comprised hatred of women, fear of sexuality, & a desire for homosocial belonging, as well as a lust for ritual violence.

Ruth Wodak describes fear as fueling the political success of the far right, whereas others identify desire for male comradeship & the urge to “express anger and frustration at mainstream society” as key emotional gateways for neo-Nazi recruits.

The myth of palingenesis (national rebirth from the ashes) is recontextualized within various current neo-Nazi movements.

For example, the Nordic Resistance Movement (Nordiska Motståndsrörelsen) recontextualizes the myth in propaganda texts and leaflets targeting new members.

Contemporary fascism not only profits from negative affects (to move people, emotionally), but, importantly, also nurtures “worthy” emotions that, in the literature on discourse, politics, & affect, tend to be associated with “good” ideologies.

This script resonates with the emotional appeals in historical Nazism, but is also a common appeal in diverse social, political, & religious movements, revealing the attractiveness of the contemporary extreme right & the affective mechanisms involved in political radicalization.

Griffin (1993) delaminates it as “a genus of political ideology whose mythic core in its various permutations is a palingenetic form of populist ultra-nationalism.”

This helps understand the appeal & growth of Populist Nationalism here in the UK & elsewhere.

Fascism aims to rebuild the nation & save its people & the presumed race from some imminent collapse & threat.

#Palingenesis means “rebirth from the ashes” therefore urges a revolutionary overthrow of the social system that is regarded as the threat against “our nation & race.”

Such ultra-nationalist scapegoating motivates lethal and mass violence for fascists; in order for the utopia become real, the current system must disappear.

In a scrutiny of British fascism, Richardson characterizes fascist discourse as follows:

". . .extremely heightened, almost apocalyptical. Britain (and/or the West, Civilisation, the White Race, the World etc) faces dire threat, & only through the steely determination of the (White) Nationalist can disaster be averted."

"It is always almost-too-late, the last chance, the verge of collapse–and, equally and simultaneously, it is always the new dawn, the last push, the final battle."

ALWAYS.

Can you see how this fits what's happening in the USA yet?

With the intention of treating fascism as a contemporary ideology, the first step towards critical analysis is to reflect upon how 'national rebirth' is interpreted in different strands of modern fascist discourse.

Seeing shades of the Brexit debate yet? New 'Global Britain'?

The author of this research compells us to be alert to representations of the imminent collapse & threat (the 'White Replacement' discourse), & by representations of the 'new dawn'.

Across Europe, the same Far-Right discourse emerges (these are real examples):

1. Your daughters, mothers & sisters are being raped & humiliated.

2. Your sons, fathers & brothers are being assaulted and mocked.

3. Drugs are being spread to our children.

4. Gangs of strangers are taking over our city centers.

5. What do members of a people do when their country is being colonized by a never-ending horde of race strangers?

6. Indigenous culture & healthy values are being openly intimidated, mocked and degraded.

The nominal groups “race strangers” & “people traitors” echo Nazi ideology. Far-right recruitment propaganda thematizes the responsibility for the imminent inequity: societal institutions & the current societal system are held accountable for the perceived threat & victimization:

7. The media silences the reality since they are a part of the attack.

8. Celebrities & corporate leaders cheer the perdition in order to maximize their profits.

9. What do we do when the media is completely controlled by people hostile elements?

10. The state & the people are no longer one, & the state is controlled by enemies of the people & the people are on the verge of the abyss & are separated from institutional power.

11. All govt institutions are working on the side of the enemy of the people & are against us

12. What should the people do when the government comprises people traitors and the enemy?

13. Corrupt politicians are one of the actors in the game.



These examples illustrate how the texts position public authorities & institutions as being alienated from the people & from reality which, in turn, interpellates (hails/greets/identifies with) the reader as being affectively disappointed & angry.

14. One laughs at you all over the world. The feminized, so-called, man who without resistance lets himself be run over

15. It is your passivity that makes this possible. Why don’t you do something about it?

16. It is you who is allowing this to happen. Why don’t you act?

18. We expect you to leave your potentially decadent & comfortable life behind & start acting.

19. You face a fundamental choice. A life in which you either deceive yourself and continue to live in comfort or an honest and straight-backed life of struggle!

20. Do we remain as passive bystanders when racial hybridization, degeneration and common decline are spreading like a plague in the decomposing welfare state?

Next comes the discourse of the 'new dawn'. Encouraging feelings of courage, (national) pride, & hope.

The myth of #palingenesis (rebirth from the ashes) develops from the trope of chaos to the trope of the new dawn.

This script is accomplished by regimenting the actions & eligibility conditions with which a potential recruit has to aligned with in order to qualify as a legitimate member of a Far-Right neo-Nazi group.

The practice of living a life as a neo-Nazi activist is contrasted with that of living an ordinary life in mainstream society. Recruits are represented as an agent of fearsome actions, who have a range of attributes, including:

“the will to sacrifice”; “risk-taking”; “struggling” & "fighting" - particularly against forces “which with full energy work for the extermination of our people” implies bravery. Thus, a reader who answers the call for action is affectively positioned as fearless and courageous.

21. The resistance movement will demand certain things from you and expects results. You can therefore say goodbye to a normal and safe life and instead welcome your new life, which entails an amount of risk taking and demands the will to sacrifice—a life of struggle.

22. The struggle is here and now, and no struggle can be pursued without sacrifice.

23. Dark times may lie ahead of us, but if the only way forward is through hell then, yes, we have to pave that way and fight everything than blocks our way.

24. We are occupied, & the survival of our people is at stake. The struggle can no longer be fought by spear & axe—but the call for struggle is the same & the possibility of answering the call or being a coward is the same choice now as it was in the past.

25. The national forces must regain the initiative & actively fight the forces which with full energy work for the extermination of our people.

The far-right value hyper-masculinity & deploy the trope of the brave, masculine fascist - the heroic few destined to save the nation.

Leaders (like Trump, Putin, Farage, even Johnson) are fundamentally linked to the propagandistic myth of Hitler as 'an heroic leader' & incarnation of 'virtuous courage & manliness'.

The performative power of this script lies in offering the reader a chance to become part of a heroic and historical, continual “we” and to share a sense of belonging and loyalty, which is demarcated in contrast to a cowardly and normal society.

26. Indigenous (whiite) ethnicities need to pick the fight for the reconquering of your nation and thereby give future generations of our country's sons and daughters access to freedom, security and national community [‘volksgemeinschaft’] in their own country.

27. Only active acting can save our racial group from the extermination our enemy wants.

28. This involves responsibility, sacrifice, risks, stigmatization & hard work - blood, sweat & tears: Proud & honest, unselfish & heroic, determining the destiny of our entire race.

The potential recruit is called upon to leave a shameful normal life & to enter a proud life of bravery.

Feeling pride implicitly involves a realization of the ideals that define the faults & errors that cause us to feel ashamed.

For the far-right, the return to pride depends on the positioning of the reader as someone who confesses to being part of the imminent chaos & decline. Thus, the enactment of shame interpellates the “you” to merge with continual fascist ideals as a means of returning to pride.

The unfolding of #palingenesis not only involves a reorientation from shame to pride, but also a gateway out of being angry, disappointed, & insulted: the actions & eligibility conditions of recruits are represented as necessary for the myth of palingenesis to become reality.

This representational pattern also imbues the ideal reader with hope, given that hope “is what allows us to feel that what angers us is not inevitable”: the positioning of the potential far-right recruit as 'hopeful' hinges on the transition between other affects.

The performatory power of hope & the promise of freedom from “crushing humiliation, poverty, & impotence” was fundamentally important to the success of the Nazi regime.

It compels the reader to partake in revolution by construing hope as being embodied in their future actions.

By aligning with the representational perspective of the propaganda, the ideal reader is also interpellated as someone who confesses his/her wrongdoings & who is willing to improve, and, by joining the far-right, the reader is invited to become a hero of 'the new dawn'.

Previous research reveals affective appeals to fear, anger, & frustration within far/extreme-right discourse, but it's not just fear, hate & rage which would be reductionist, given the crucial performative work that is fulfilled by pride, hope & bravery.

The emphasis on hope & bravery & the promise of freedom from despair & chaos paved the way for the Nazi's parliamentary takeover in Germany.

Contemporary recruitment propaganda appear to be interdiscursively linked with the affective–discursive practices of historical Nazism.

“Morally good” affects tend to be ascribed to “good” ideologies, whereas “morally bad” affects tend to be emphasized in the analysis of “bad” ideologies.

For example, hope as being integral to feminism, & fear & hate as being integral to nationalism & racism.

However...

This new research questions that claim.

Firstly, the affective script prompted by the far-right resonates with those affects offered by other political, social & religious movements eg by shaming recruits as a means of returning to both hope & pride.

This echoes how subjects are interpellated in diverse movements such as vegetarianism, eco-activism, AA communities, feminism & left-wing activism.

What is meant by this?

The confession of previous wrongdoings (eg meat consumption, flying, alcoholism, acting misogynistically, partaking in mass consumerism) is what allows a return to a position of rebirth and pride, while the call for action simultaneously allows the subject to embody hope.

Secondly, in order to not repeat what we already know (that fascist discourse is ideologically problematic & dangerous), or to reduce contemporary Nazism to an ideology that only nurtures affects such as hate or fear, we need research which pushes analysis further.

The author of this research, Gustav Westberg, argues that sensitizing the analysis to the workings of affect & acknowledging emotions such as pride, hope or even love as being pivotal to the performative force of fascist discourse will produce a more useful critical engagement.

In an age when the political landscape is imprinted by far right & populist nationalist parties, & when fascist movements are on the march, there is an urgent need for an increased critical understanding of the appeal of these ideologies.

Gustav Westberg of Örebro Uni, Sweden.

Another important article exploring the relationship between emotions & populist nationalism in contemporary societies where #capitalism, #individualism & #globalisation have created particular affective states that provide fertile ground for the populist appeal to resonate.

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Who Thinks, Feels: The Relationship Between Emotions, Politics And Populism

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ABSTRACT: There is a tendency both in academia and in popular understandings to posit emotions against rationality and to judge them as an expression of intellectual inferiority. This could not be more evident than in current accounts of populism, which often describe populist supporters as overtaken by passions rather than relying on rational deliberation. However these arguments hardly stand up to scientific scrutiny. As I will show by reviewing the state-of-the-art, advancements in disciplines such as political psychology have now provided systematic evidence of how, contrary to what is traditionally rooted in the public imaginary, emotions and cognition work in concert. If emotionality is an integral part of decision-making and is vital to any type of political engagement, the question we should rather ask is what is *peculiar* about the relationship between emotions and populism. In the second part of the article, I will explore how the emotional 'supply and demand' intersect in our contemporary societies, where capitalism, individualism and globalisation have created particular affective states that provide fertile ground for the populist appeal to resonate. By examining the emotions-populism relationship based on three broad dimensions - structural, subjective and communicative -, this article provides a multilevel analysis that unpacks the significance of emotions for the emergence, diffusion and success of populism.

KEYWORDS: Emotionality, Narratives, Political communication, Political psychology, Populism.