

2. Populism, freedom of speech and human rights

Freedom of speech wars on campus do not occur in a vacuum but are shaped by wider political upheavals, of which two have great impact on these debates. Firstly, there is a rise in mass movements (often called ‘populist’) in the UK, the USA and Europe. Secondly, there is a rise in feelings of entitlement to personal rights: online and offline people often appeal to their personal right to speak freely in ways which disregard and challenge the rights of others (such as the right to live free from fear of hatred and harm).

In this chapter we examine the connections between populism, freedom of speech and human rights. The UK uses an uneasy combination of liberal democracy and rights-based liberalism to decide what it thinks about freedom of speech. On the one hand, liberal democracy presumes that we are each autonomous as long as what we do is protected by laws. On the other hand, rights-based liberalism appeals to a higher belief that we all have universal human rights. The difficulty here is how to balance competing needs and rights: at any one time, the law must decide in favour of one person’s rights over those of another and so not all rights can be exercised equally, simultaneously or to their full extent. In addition, the capitalism at the core of liberal democracy entails inequality that extreme groups can exploit. Right-wing populism sneaks into the gap between liberal democracy and rights-based liberalism and plays libertarian and no-platforming demands off against each other, inhibiting free speech by creating adversarial, antagonistic positions.

To explore these issues, we begin by examining the concept of populism and its key features. Then we explore how right-wing populist leaders gain power by making cynical appeals to free speech rights, sometimes to justify their Islamophobia. Claims about universities and students form an important part of their rhetorical arsenal. Finally, we consider populist hate speech, and student attempts to resist it by no-platforming speakers whom, for example, they consider racist. We show how right-wing populism distorts human rights principles of freedom of expression *and* liberal democratic aspirations to freedom of speech, and we suggest deliberative democracy, the development of group work to share and solve problems, as a powerful response.

What is populism?

One problem when trying to understand populism is the diverse range of people and movements to whom the label ‘populist’ is applied. They include those on the political Right, such as Donald Trump anti-European Union political parties, and grassroots far-right movements such as that led by Tommy Robinson; those on the political Left, such as Momentum (part of the UK Labour Party) and grassroots movements like Occupy Wall Street; and movements that seem to break out of the traditional Right / Left binary like Leave.EU. Some theorists look for similarities among phenomena identified as populist. We analyse three approaches to focus upon two major characteristics: populism as a movement that polarises people’s understanding of politics into binaries such as ‘us v them’, and populism as a movement that relies more upon powerful emotive language than upon ideology or planning. We understand ‘ideology’ as a systematic ordering of ideas to justify actions, inevitably creating exaggeration in order to make the ideas seem real (Ricoeur, 1976; Scott-Baumann, 2017).

The first, explanatory, approach to populism, often known as the ideational approach, focuses on analysing the ideas shared by its different forms. This provides an understanding of populism as commonly sharing three simple claims:

- 1) Society is divided into binaries, such as ‘us v them’ and ‘the people v the elite’
- 2) The ‘people’ are pure with a shared, identifiable ‘general will,’ whose needs are not being met
- 3) The ruling political ‘elites’ are corrupt and must be ousted (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2017; Hawkins *et al.*, 2019: 3)

Understood in this way, populism is a ‘thin-centred’ ideology that is parasitic upon other, more easily recognisable political movements like socialism and fascism and, most commonly at present, upon liberal democracy. Populist movements promise to champion the will of the people and overturn the self-interested governing elite (Baker, 2019).

The second, activist, approach to populism is very different, seeing populism as politics itself, rather than something separate from the usual way of doing politics in a democracy (Laclau, 2005; Mouffe, 2013). In this view, the popular impulse must be respected because conflict is inherent in politics, and there is always an ‘us’ made up of people without power agitating against ‘them’, those who have power (Baker, 2019). Laclau and Mouffe, who adopt this

approach, propose a new form of populism that the people will construct and that will be emancipatory: populism for them means that the people will take control of their destiny and construct fair political structures. They argue that negative depictions of right-wing populism ignore the fact that populist tendencies underpin all large group movements, across the political spectrum and not only on the Right (Laclau, 2005: 19). Laclau's and Mouffe's work is often called constructivism since they believe any social group can construct a new and better society.

The third, predictively pessimistic, approach to populism is exemplified by Müller (2016), who alerts us to the dangers that he sees ahead. Deeply suspicious of all populist movements, Müller warns that the terms Right and Left do not help us to understand populism. For example, he shows that Podemos, the Spanish left-wing movement is inspired by the right-wing political theorist and Nazi sympathiser, Carl Schmitt (1988). Schmitt is known for theorising 'decisionism' – the idea that we should support laws made by a government because they are made by the government, not because they are good or appropriate. Agamben (2005) showed how this can lead to the 'state of exception', whereby laws are passed that justify exceptional state control in difficult circumstances and can then be retained after the state of exception is over. Müller (2016) sees this as characteristic of populist parties like Podemos, considering it anti-pluralist, against citizen participation and internally authoritarian. Schmitt would approve of this approach to politics. Indeed, the Podemos leaders, Íñigo Errejón and Pablo Iglesias, have been profoundly influenced by Schmitt and the risks of Schmitt's legacy that Müller sees in Podemos are plausible. Yet it is possible to interpret Schmitt's legacy more positively; both Podemos leaders have been influenced by Laclau and Mouffe, and Schmitt's ideas about the need for strong leadership and clear decision making could even help to reinvigorate democracy in Spain, if conjoined with good political planning (Booth and Baert, 2018).

All three analyses agree that populist movements often revolve around a charismatic leader. Indeed, in the last decade leaders who bear some of the identikit features of populist leaders have come to power. For example, Donald Trump in the United States, Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, Viktor Orbán in Hungary and (to some extent) Boris Johnson in the UK all make strong use of populist rhetoric, and display decisionism – making decisions because that shows leadership, regardless of the quality of the decision or its feasibility. In fact the decisions they make are often based on whipping up emotions and dividing the people rather than offering realistic solutions. Populist leaders have also mismanaged the COVID-19

pandemic, with unclear strategies for protecting citizens from the virus. According to systematic analysis by Garikipati and Kambhampati (2020), female (non-populist) leaders, such as Jacinda Ardern and Angela Merkel, have managed COVID-19 better through their proactive policies, effective use of communication and clear appreciation of the risk posed by the virus.

Populist language

Laclau (2005: 10-12) suggests that populist movements are, first and foremost, expressions of the people's will and therefore a clear and powerful expression of political fact. He considers emotive, powerful language that can bind people together to be vital for politics in general and rejects the argument of Minogue (1969) that populist movements rely on distorted rhetoric. Laclau argues that Minogue's position represents the common tendency for 'ethical denigration' of populism. He critiques this idea, also seen in mass psychology analyses, of viewing the individual as potentially reasonable and the crowd as irrational. He argues that features ascribed to populism are inherent in human actions and that analysis of populism therefore provides a way to understand human actions and thoughts (Laclau, 2005:30; 67). Mouffe (2013; 2014) also proposes that all political discourse relies upon antagonisms that are impossible to resolve and must therefore be replaced with agonism – positive attempts to resolve conflict. Deliberative democracy resembles Mouffe's agonistic approach, and in 2019 Chwalisz (2019) celebrated 'a new wave of contemporary deliberative democracy, based on the premise that political decisions should be the result of reasonable discussion among citizens'.

Laclau and Mouffe's analysis of the power of language (discourse) in popular movements is helpful. They see all discourse as a structured totality that always includes social, political, cultural (and we add gendered) components. Meanwhile, in Europe, we currently see little left-wing populist discourse of the sort that Laclau hoped for. Instead we find populist use of rhetoric that is anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim.

Such hate speech has found a natural home on the internet (KhosraviNik and Unger, 2016; Pohjonen, 2018). Social media platforms are 'distributed, non-hierarchical and democratic', with content generated by people who are suspicious of mainstream media outlets (Bartlett, 2014: 106). It is well-evidenced that social media algorithms will multiply postings that evoke strong emotion, and hate speech is effective at that (Pajnik and Sauer, 2019). As Ebner (2020) points out, online extremists have huge influence and technology firms exploit their

power to attract attention. Humans are addicted to the internet: Myerson (2001) noted the inevitable loss in communication of face to face, co-present bodies. This online loss of human texture as Habermas explained it, means that less and less of life is explored through the dialogue in which one seeks to be understood by others. Social media invites us to ‘register our desires’ through one-sided statements and posts, more than to communicate in a dialogical, balanced way (Myerson, 2001: 32-34).

Mainstream newspapers also repeat populists’ language, which is antagonistic and encourages conflicts ‘for which no rational solution could ever exist’ (Mouffe, 2013: 3). For example, in 2015 the *Daily Express*, a mainstream tabloid which opposes UK membership of the EU, quoted in detail a speech given by British politician and Brexiteer Nigel Farage in the European Parliament. Farage warned that Turkey would soon become a member of the European Union and that millions of Turks would therefore flood into Britain (Burman, 2015). Such emotive assertions were crucial to Farage’s target to get the UK out of the EU. After years of austerity in Britain that made millions desperate for a change of politics, by deploying such rhetoric Farage was able to turn people’s desire for domestic change into a debate about the EU.

Green’s (2019) analysis of ‘bullshit’ explains this process. Bullshit is an extreme statement which is so difficult to refute that it becomes unfalsifiable, even if it is untrue, and we are put into the weak position of negating it (‘Turkey will not enter the EU, millions of Turks will not come to UK’), which simply repeats the original claim and thereby strengthens it. Green uses Frankfurt’s definition of bullshit as being worse than lies (which deny truth), because bullshit denies the very importance of truth (Frankfurt, 1986: 15). Green analyses various forms of bullshit that are very powerful (bullshit as sincerity, as symbolism, and as unfalsifiability). He shows how sincerity trumps accuracy (in our example, Farage may seem sincere when being righteously indignant); symbolism trumps meaning (the Union Jack flag, the plucky little Brits against fat, corrupt Brussels); and unfalsifiability trumps facts (Turkey will not soon enter the EU but most people will not bother to check this). We can also see in Farage’s speech the powerful rhetorical techniques proposed by Aristotle: ethos (‘trust me’), logos (‘believe me’) and pathos (‘follow me’).

Monologic, emotive, exclusionary and loud use of language is a recurring and important feature of (right-wing) populism, which Le Bon describes as ‘affirmation without proof as a way of lying’ (Laclau, 2005: 27). In extreme cases, populist rhetoric can inspire fear and hate,

unilaterally authorising itself to offend on the assumption that the majority of citizens are being deprived of their rights by a dangerous minority. Ricoeur understood how effective this negativity can be, tapping into a human tendency to describe one's personal situation by loss, lack and longing rather than by what we *have* (Scott-Baumann, 2013). This negative approach also relies upon creating binaries that are irreconcilable, as we see in UK with the Brexit debate between 'Remainers' and 'Leavers'.

The 'people', the 'elite', and empty signifiers

The term 'the people' is much discussed in populist discourse. Butler (2015: 155-156) notes that when a group self-identifies as 'we, the people', they are not doing what they assert, i.e. bonding themselves to the mass of a population. Rather they are achieving the opposite, by tacitly identifying themselves as special and exclusive, and contrasting themselves with another group that disagrees with them. Green shows how the term 'the people' is used by populists to sharpen differences ('us v them'), isolate their opponents, mobilise diffuse interests and persuade listeners to view themselves as 'the people', as opposed to 'the elites' (Green, 2019: 10; Müller, 2016: 261).

Indeed 'the people' and 'the elite' may not mean much, and yet it is precisely this poverty of meaning that makes them so powerful. Laclau calls these terms 'empty signifiers'.

Commentators can use them to appeal to audiences without clarifying their meaning, because they are freighted with heavy emotional baggage that renders them hard to refute (Laclau, 2005). The term 'freedom of speech' in populist rhetoric and even in everyday discussion is often an empty signifier, thereby inhibiting constructive proposals for how to handle speech practically. 'Populism', too, can be an empty signifier. As Baker (2019) points out, some politicians and commentators accuse their opponents of being 'populists', in order to delegitimise their arguments and position them as being outside normal politics, and as potential threats to democracy.

Of course, all political figures use rhetorical approaches to appeal to their followers, as Leone (2013) and Leone *et al.* (2015) show with their close analysis of Barrack Obama's style of speech. Obama is not a right-wing populist, yet he uses rhetorical techniques and autobiographical narratives to secure support by appealing to inclusive and empowering emotions of solidarity across class and colour. Here also are empty signifiers, such as 'hope' and 'change we can believe in' (Kumar, 2014). By contrast, right-wing populism's most powerful feature is language that is exclusionary, discriminatory and often racist. Laclau

challenges us to use language powerfully, while avoiding bullshit. As we show in Chapter 7, the Community of Inquiry (CofI) approach can be used to challenge the simplistic binaries of populist rhetoric.

Populist leaders, appeals to ‘freedom of speech’ and Islamophobia

Populism today, particularly on the right, is intricately linked to rhetoric about rights and freedom of speech. Indeed, the phrase ‘freedom of speech’ has become a rhetorical touchstone for political leaders seeking to present themselves on the side of ‘the people’. Boris Johnson demonstrated this in his first speech as Prime Minister, when he invoked the Union Jack flag: ‘It stands for freedom and free speech and habeas corpus and the rule of law’. Johnson promised he would be ‘answering at last the plea of the forgotten people and left behind towns’ (PoliticsHome, 2019). This approach played into the populist story because, as explained by Philip Alston, United Nations Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, this ‘left behind’ label ensures that ‘the majority in society suspect that they have no stake in the human rights enterprise, and that the human rights groups really are just working for ‘asylum seekers’, ‘felons’, ‘terrorists’ and the like’ (Alston, 2017: 6).

A common move of populist leaders is to claim that free speech is under attack by ‘the elite’ and that they are its defenders. Sometimes they present themselves cynically as victims of censorship – a move which inevitably secures them widespread media coverage. Deploying the rhetoric of freedom of speech has become a way for populist politicians to mask their own power, whilst simultaneously cementing it. Furthermore, for right-wing populists in particular, rhetorical appeals to freedom of speech go hand in hand with attacks on minority groups, particularly immigrants and Muslims. Schmitt (1988) argued that in order to be strong, a nation must be homogenous, which in his view necessitated creation of a friend / enemy dichotomy to unify the state. This involves making difference seem like risk so that minority groups in a majority population can be made to seem dangerous. Religion, culture or skin colour provide easy, visible markers for such othering. When accusing Muslims of being dangerous and a threat to the West, populist leaders are not merely expressing their personal views but are tactically encouraging this friend / enemy dichotomy. This is a version of the inductive fallacy: some terrorists have been Muslim so all Muslims are potential terrorists. Islamophobic speech is another tool by which populists can signal their membership of ‘the people’.

Appeals to freedom of speech and Islamophobia merge when populists repeat the long-standing Orientalist claim that Islam censors freedom of speech and thus goes against the rights of liberal, secular society. Commentators who adopt a secular position often cite the Rushdie Affair (1988-9) and the Charlie Hebdo terrorist attack (2015) as proof of the claim that Islam denies freedom of speech in contrast to Western liberal values (Myre, 2019). As Western secularisation and affiliation to traditional religious identities grow in tandem, values like freedom of speech become sacred principles seen by many as something that cannot be compromised. Muslims can therefore be portrayed by others as censorious and anti-freedom of speech; and if they express concern about speech acts they find offensive, their concerns are dismissed as anti-Western. In the *Re/representing Islam on Campus* research (see Chapter 4), a senior white female academic showed her class one of the cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad originally published by Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten in 2005, in order to explain how they had led to feelings of offence and rioting among Muslims globally. A Muslim student made a formal complaint. According to the academic:

His argument was that I had sort of forced him to break his faith by putting the images up in his presence and that that was a sort of massive trauma to him somehow.

This academic had presented the cartoons as a way of mapping media manipulation and Muslim leaders' reactions and she regretted that she had upset the student. Yet this phenomenon can itself be manipulated: right-wing populist leaders tap into this sensitivity among some Muslims and use it as a justification for Islamophobia, to demand libertarian rights of free expression and to gain political traction.

Such cases involve populists hijacking the rights discourse in order to protect their own power. Bilkova (2019) demonstrates how human rights can be both appealed to by populists (insisting upon their right to speak freely) and misused (rejecting the value of human rights by accusing them of favouring minorities). Yet we are not living in the 'endtimes of human rights' as Hopgood believes (2013). Instead it is necessary to challenge continuously those who want to say what they like without any regard for others.

The conflation of the appeal to freedom of speech and possible Islamophobia to win popular support is clear in Boris Johnson's claims about Muslim women in 2018. While campaigning to become Prime Minister he described Muslim women wearing the 'burka' as looking like 'bank robbers' or 'letter boxes' (Perfect, 2018). He was ordered to apologise by the

Conservative Party Chairman but refused, calling the order an attack on freedom of speech (Newton Dunn, 2018). Using our four approaches to freedom of speech discussed in Chapter 1 (liberal becoming libertarian and guarded liberal becoming no-platforming), we see Johnson's article as libertarian dressed up as liberal. In the article, he tempered his insulting description by also asserting that he would not stop women wearing the 'burka'. In this way, populist politicians like Johnson achieve two aims. They signal to the public that they are unafraid to speak their mind and are defenders of freedom of speech. Simultaneously, they push public views about freedom of speech away from the liberal or guarded liberal models, and towards the libertarian model, which they legitimise and exemplify.

Populist hate speech and university no-platforming

It is a commonly-used right-wing libertarian device to accuse university students of being 'snowflakes' – people who melt into emotional irrationality whenever faced with opposing views – and of stifling every 'ordinary' person's right to freedom of speech, as exemplified by the claim of political journalist Fraser Nelson (2018) that 'Free speech is crumbling under the weight of the young's easy outrage'. He even accused students of taking these censorious attitudes into the workplace when they graduate, threatening the long-term health of society.

Right-wing populist leaders exploit this narrative of moral panic. When campaigning for his Brexit Party in 2019, Nigel Farage accused universities of 'constant bias, prejudice and [left-wing] brainwashing', and of fostering a culture hostile to right-leaning students:

[L]ots of students that I've met... say 'Nigel, we're scared to say what we think because of the abuse we'll get from professors and our fellow pupils' (Morgan, 2019).

Claiming that key elements of liberal democracy like universities, judges and even the 'mainstream media' are all betraying the people is a crucial move used by populists to garner support. Some students respond to these narratives of moral panic by moving further towards libertarianism. In contrast, as we show in Chapter 4, more students react to extreme libertarian speech by advocating guarded liberalism or even the no-platforming approach for speech they consider offensive or racist.

In shifting towards guarded liberalism and no-platforming, many students are aligning with those theorists who advocate varying levels of censorship against right-wing populists who spread 'hate speech'. There is much disagreement about defining hate speech, including

frequent attempts to explain it as objectively recognisable in any circumstance. Boromisza-Habashi (2013: 23) gives a general definition of hate speech as utterances ‘directed against groups of people and arous[ing] fear in them in a strategic and conscious manner’. Even if we accept this, there is much disagreement about what to do about it and whether the context must be considered. Waldron (2012) and Parekh (2012) propose that hate speech must be legislated against. Waldron (2012: 4) uses metaphors such as ‘slow-acting poison’ to describe hate speech: this may be accurate, but it is also misleading in that it implies all hate speech is intrinsically poisonous.

In contrast, Heinze disagrees that hate speech (howsoever defined) should be banned. Hate speech is, Heinze admits, a blight on human relationships, but he argues it must always be understood and dealt with in the context in which it arises. This context is often a democracy, which is where hate speech must be tackled – where inequalities create the contexts that cause the hate speech (Heinze, 2016: 79). He believes that Parekh is wrong to assume a one-size-fits-all model for democracies, when in fact there are many different types, with different manifestations of freedom of speech. This means it is inappropriate to make universally applicable judgments about handling hate speech.

There are other strategies for handling hate speech than banning it, of course. Advocates of no-platforming of far-right populists as a default position, for example, correctly point out that ‘Not all ideas are equal’ and deserving of equal public exposure, and that it cannot be assumed that exposing such views to ‘sunlight’ will successfully ‘disinfect’ them (Mulhall, 2019).

There is considerable sympathy for such positions within Higher Education. Some students’ unions have adopted ‘safe space’ policies. This refers to an attempt to create social and educational places in which members of minority groups can speak freely, those who normally feel silenced by imbalances of power. Meanwhile, the National Union of Students (NUS) has a policy of not inviting speakers from a number of organisations it considers racist or fascist (some proscribed, some not) from speaking at its events (NUS, 2017).

In the *Re/presenting Islam on Campus* research project (see Chapter 4), Scott-Baumann and her team encountered the belief that no-platforming is necessary to preserve the rights and freedom of speech of minority groups. As a white male non-religious postdoctoral student said:

I wouldn't defend a fascist using free speech, because their agenda means no free speech in the future. So, you think about long-term aims.

This is a utopian belief that individual acts (like no-platforming a fascist) can transform society for the better. To balance hateful ideologies we need utopia: utopian thought and language have the energy to oppose the given order and replace it with something better. This means facing up to such an ideology to dismantle it. But we must also accept that utopia can be extreme in its own way, as in this example where the student denies the right to freedom of speech to someone whose view he opposes. We may need to become more pragmatic in how we respond to hate speech from right-wing populists. Students' unions customarily avoid inviting right-wing speakers like Farage, which deprives the student community of the opportunity to challenge them and weaken their power.

We find Heinze's arguments convincing here. In a 2016 article, he presents ten arguments for no-platforming, matched by ten (stronger ones) against (Heinze, 2016). He clearly prefers a democratic position that encourages the liberal approach to freedom of speech, allowing people to speak freely within the law and when offence can be limited or discussed. He finds this preferable to a no-platforming rights-based approach that finds it very difficult to balance one person's right against that of another.

The extent of no-platforming on campus

Undoubtedly there have been some high-profile cases of students attempting to deny a platform to people they do not like. A particularly concerning case involved the former Home Secretary Amber Rudd, whose invitation to speak at the University of Oxford in 2020 was cancelled by the inviting society merely 30 minutes before the start of the event, following pressure from students (Grierson, 2020). But we cannot assume that such attempts are either common in universities or successful. Media reports about university speaker events often describe incidents as 'no-platforming' when in fact something more complex has occurred. An oft-cited example is that of the feminist Germaine Greer, who was invited to give a lecture at Cardiff University in 2015. Student activists called for her to be no-platformed for her 'transphobic' views. Instead, the university ensured the event went ahead the following month, though it issued a statement distancing itself from 'discriminatory comments' (Packham, 2016).

Regardless of student attempts at silencing, very few succeed. The vast majority of requests for events and speakers are upheld by universities. According to the Office for Students, out

of 62,094 external speaker events requested in English universities in 2017-18, only 53 (0.09%) were rejected (Office for Students, 2019: 10). In 2018, the BBC Reality Check team issued Freedom of Information requests to universities and received responses from 120 of them. Since 2010 there were the following episodes: six occasions on which universities cancelled speakers as a result of complaints; seven student complaints about course content being in some way offensive or inappropriate (in four of these cases action was taken); and no instances of books being removed or banned (Schraer and Butcher, 2018). This is a tiny number of incidents, and should dispel the narrative so popular with right-wing populists that freedom of speech in universities is in crisis.

But lack of a crisis in freedom of speech does not mean that there are not threats to it. The statistics cited above do not tell us how many requests for external speakers are discouraged informally by staff; nor the extent to which students are deciding not to make requests for the speakers they want, out of risk aversion. In the following chapters, we examine these issues in detail.

Conclusion

Populism is currently mostly right-wing. Populist leaders become influential by deploying rhetoric that sets up an 'us v them' binary, racist tactics against Muslims and migrants and Jewish people. On a few university campuses there is left-wing populism; such movements may categorically exclude all multi-viewpoint debate about certain issues like transgender rights, Israel / Palestine, or the removal of statues. Right-wing populists have hijacked human rights arguments. They assert their own right to speak freely in libertarian, paramount ways while denying that right to others. Paradoxically, they also challenge the legitimacy of human rights and claim that the rights of minorities (migrants and Muslims) are unfairly privileged over those of the general population. Such debates are characterised by a lack of facts.

With regard to the ways in which human rights arguments are both misused and challenged in the freedom of speech debate, we are not arguing that the liberal elite roots of the rights discourse are poisoning the human rights tree as Hopgood proposes (2016). However, liberal democratic hopes can be distorted: right-wing populists use exaggerated versions to ask too much or too little of the rights-based discourse, which then cannot function fairly. To avoid such distortion and strengthen liberal democracy, Alston (2017: 13) echoes Laclau and Mouffe, arguing that human rights groups must work more on economic and social rights; we

believe this entails closer engagement with their opponents, including authoritarian, anti-rights groups.

If we are to resist right-wing populism, it is necessary to retain one positive aspect of populism: its desire to speak truth to power. But we must also learn to overcome populism's seductive binary of 'us v them', which tempts us to view our political opponents as dehumanised enemies. The utopian mode of progress must encourage the imagination rather than merely critiquing the ideologies we seek to topple: open discussion is the first step. Democratic populism is the solution, as advocated by Laclau (2005) (with populist reason), Mouffe (2013) (with agonism), Chwalisz (2019) (with deliberative democracy) and Abou El Fadl (2001) (with Islamic pluralistic community practice). Each can help to disrupt authoritarian posturing. In Chapter 7 we show how universities can help students to do this.

Right-wing populism is also driving the freedom of speech wars on campus. Populist leaders tap into people's worries that universities are failing to uphold this freedom or are abusing it and giving Islamist extremists free reign. By pointing to both these narratives of moral panic, populist leaders are able to bolster their argument that the central institutions of liberal democracy are failing 'the people'. But these narratives are largely baseless and are also misdirected: the focus of their concern is on students, rather than on wider structures which are driving risk aversion on campus. The following chapters interrogate these in detail.

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