Patterns of populist mobilization: comparing narratives on COVID-19 in the global South

F. BELDER, S. DESTRADI, J. GUROL, C. HERAS RODRÍGUEZ, M. KÖLÜK, J. MARTINS, S. ROGEL AND SWARATI S.*

In May 2020, as the COVID-19 pandemic was ravaging Brazil, President Jair Bolsonaro attended protest rallies against the lockdown measures, revelling in crowds of supporters and violating social distancing rules after having repeatedly dismissed COVID-19 as 'a little flu'.[1] At the same time, India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi used every opportunity to underline his leadership characteristics and allegedly excellent crisis management[2]—after having imposed one of the harshest lockdowns worldwide.

These two cases illustrate that populist leaders used the pandemic as a window of opportunity for mobilizing popular support, albeit in fundamentally different ways. This article aims to explore how populist governments in different world regions have capitalized on the pandemic for the purpose of domestic political mobilization. The main underlying assumption, derived from theories of populism, is that populists in power need to keep mobilizing their supporters and therefore are constantly on the campaign trail.[3] A major crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic constitutes a perfect occasion for populist mobilization as it allows populist leaders in office to construct reality in their favour by deliberately promoting their own narratives about the pandemic, its origins and its management. These can contribute to generating support for the government and thereby legitimize its policies, possibly concealing poor crisis management. The article explores the narratives shaping the official discourse on the pandemic in

* Ferit Belder, Sandra Destradi, Julia Gurol, Carlos Heras Rodríguez, Melih Kölük, Jameson Martins, Shaked Rogel and Swarati S. This work is part of the project 'Populist discourses on COVID-19 in the global South' (DE 1918/4-1), funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG). The ideas expressed in this article are those of the authors. For further information on the project, see: https://pop-disc.populism-internationalrelations.com/. We want to thank our student assistant, Konrad Ringleb, for his support throughout the research process. We also thank Klara Leithäuser for proofreading. Appreciation is also extended to the anonymous reviewers as well as the editorial board of *International Affairs* whose comments helped to improve the article considerably.

[1] Rob Picheta, Vasco Cotovio and Shasta Darlington, 'As hospitals in Brazil teeter on the brink of collapse, Bolsonaro does pushups with supporters', CNN, 18 May 2020, https://edition.cnn.com/2020/05/18/americas/brazil-coronavirus-sao-paulo-bolsonaro-rally-intl/index.html. (Unless otherwise noted at point of citation, all URLs cited in this article were accessible on 11 Nov. 2022.)

[2] 'COVID and Mr Modi's beard', *The Globalist*, 27 Apr. 2021, https://www.theglobalist.com/covid-narendra-modi-beard-india/.

[3] See e.g. Nadia Urbinati, 'Political theory of populism', *Annual Review of Political Science* 22, 2019, pp. 111–27 at p. 113; Jan-Werner Müller, *What is populism?* (London: Penguin, 2017), p. 41.

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countries of the global South governed by populists, identifying different patterns of populist mobilization.

Our analysis focuses on five countries governed by left- and right-wing populists: Brazil, India, Israel, Mexico and Turkey. The focus on countries with deeply divided societies from different regions broadens the empirical scope of existing research on populist mobilization, which predominantly draws on cases from the global North.[4] The study is based on in-depth qualitative analyses of 357 original-language speeches and statements by the populist governments under scrutiny. A largely inductive approach allowed us to extract context-specific narratives and to broaden the scope of our analysis beyond expectations generated from the existing literature.

Our findings are surprising, contradicting some of the assessments of previous studies on the pandemic and global populism,[5] as well as on 'medical populism'.[6] We find that the widespread perception that populists tend to downplay the pandemic by dismissing scientific knowledge,[7] or to foment societal divisions by blaming some sections of the population or 'bad elites' for the pandemic,[8] cannot be generalized. Only Bolsonaro's government followed this 'populist playbook'. The other governments mobilized domestic support by resorting to narratives of national unity, highlighting the people-centric dimension of populism (as opposed to the anti-elitist element). This shows that a better understanding of the various manifestations of populism in different world regions is helpful to gain more insight into different patterns of populist mobilization beyond the more frequently studied cases in the global North.

The article is structured as follows. The first section discusses populist mobilization and conceptualizes our understanding of populist narratives. We then introduce our data corpus and analytical methods, and proceed to examine patterns of mobilization along the lines of populist narratives on the pandemic in Brazil, India, Israel, Mexico and Turkey. Building on these findings, we conclude by developing hypotheses about variations in patterns of populist crisis mobilization and by discussing the policy-related implications of our findings.

[4] Jasper Muis and Tim Immerzeel, 'Causes and consequences of the rise of populist radical right parties and movements in Europe', *Current sociology: La Sociologie contemporaine* 65: 6, 2017, pp. 909–30; Elisabeth Ivarsflaten, 'What unites right-wing populists in western Europe?: re-examining grievance mobilization models in seven successful cases', *Comparative Political Studies* 41: 1, 2008, pp. 3–23; André Krouwel and Koen Abts, 'Varieties of Euroscepticism and populist mobilization: transforming attitudes from mild Euroscepticism to harsh Eurocynicism', *Acta Politica* 42: 2–3, 2007, pp. 252–70; Alexandra Homolar and Ronny Scholz, 'The power of Trump-speak: populist crisis narratives and ontological security', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 32: 3, 2019, pp. 344–64.

[5] Lenka Buštíková and Pavol Baboš, 'Best in Covid: populists in the time of pandemic', *Politics and Governance* 8: 4, 2020, pp. 496–508; Gideon Lasco, 'Medical populism and the COVID-19 pandemic', *Global Public Health* 15: 10, 2020, pp. 1417–29; Laura Cervi, Fernando García and Carles Marín-Lladó, 'Populism, Twitter, and COVID-19: narrative, fantasies, and desires', *Social Sciences* 10: 8, 2021, p. 294.

[6] Gideon Lasco and Nicole Curato, 'Medical populism', *Social Science & Medicine* 221, 2019, pp. 1–8.

[7] Michael Bayerlein, Vanessa A. Boese, Scott Gates, Katrin Kamin and Syed M. Murshed, 'Populism and COVID-19: how populist governments (mis)handle the pandemic', *Journal of Political Institutions and Political Economy* 2: 3, pp. 389–428; Jakob-Moritz Eberl, Robert A. Huber and Esther Greussing, 'From populism to the "plandemic": why populists believe in COVID-19 conspiracies', *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* 31: supp. 1, 2021, pp. 272–84.

[8] Lasco, 'Medical populism and the COVID-19 pandemic'.

Populist mobilization in times of crisis

The literature on populism has been burgeoning for decades, leading to a number of competing, but also partially complementary approaches. The issue of populist mobilization has been addressed by scholars including Weyland, Jansen and de la Torre, who—mainly with an empirical focus on Latin America—have focused on the relationship between a personalistic populist leader and largely unorganized masses.[9] Urbinati specifically discusses how populists in power have a peculiar incentive to resort to mobilization.[10] By having been voted into power, they have themselves become the much-despised political 'establishment':[11]

> Populism in power [is] like a permanent electoral campaign, which the leader and its majority wage in order to prove they are not—and never will be—a new establishment. Persuading the people is paramount, since faith in the leader is the only guarantee the populist has that his or her power will last.[12]

In this article, we aim to uncover some of the ways in which such mobilization can take place in times of crisis. In other words, we go beyond the discussion of the more structural features of populist mobilization, and focus on the ideas and the narratives that form the core of mobilization. To do so, we build on the ideational approach to populism,[13] which regards populism as a 'thin-centered ideology',[14] a narrow set of ideas about what society should look like. According to Mudde, populism is

> an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite', and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people.[15]

[9] See e.g., Kurt Weyland, 'Clarifying a contested concept: populism in the study of Latin American politics', *Comparative Politics* 34: 1, 2001, pp. 1–22. Some studies consider mobilization a definitional element of populism (e.g. Robert S. Jansen, 'Populist mobilization: a new theoretical approach to populism', *Sociological Theory* 29: 2, 2011, pp. 75–96), but do not specifically focus on populists in power as we do. Analyses of Latin American politics understand populism as a 'top-down political mobilization of mass constituencies by personalistic leaders who challenge elite groups on behalf of an ill-defined pueblo, or "the people"' (Kenneth M. Roberts, 'Latin America's populist revival', *SAIS Review of International Affairs* 27: 1, 2007, pp. 3–15 at p. 5). According to Carlos de la Torre, 'Populismo, ciudadanía y Estado de derecho', in Carlos de la Torre and Enrique Peruzzotti, eds, *El retorno del pueblo: Populismo y nuevas democracias en América Latina* (Quito: FLACSO, 2008), pp. 23–54 at p. 40), populist mobilization can contribute to including previously marginalized social groups into the notion of the 'people'. However, an understanding of the people as formed by constituencies unable to express themselves politically in an autonomous manner (Kenneth M. Roberts, 'Parties and populism in Latin America', in Carlos de la Torre and Cynthia J. Arnson, eds, *Latin American populism in the twenty-first century* (Baltimore, MD: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2013), p. 39), and of populism as based on uninstitutionalized mass support, is not suitable to all contexts analysed in this article. For example, Modi certainly is a personalistic leader, but has the support of a well-organized and structured political party, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and of a range of Hindu nationalist organizations that have come to pervade Indian society; also, Turkey's Justice and Development Party (AKP) is well institutionalized.

[10] Nadia Urbinati, *Me the people: how populism transforms democracy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019).

[11] Urbinati, *Me the people*, p. 125; see also Müller, *What is populism?*, p. 41.

[12] Urbinati, *Me the people*, p. 191.

[13] Kirk A. Hawkins and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser, 'The ideational approach to populism', *Latin American Research Review* 52: 4, 2017, pp. 513–28.

[14] Cas Mudde, 'The populist Zeitgeist', *Government & Opposition* 39: 4, 2004, pp. 541–63.

[15] Mudde, 'The populist Zeitgeist', p. 543.

This understanding of populism is flexible enough to allow for the identification of populist elements, most fundamentally its constitutive components *people-centrism* and *anti-elitism*, both of which are apparent in specific contexts such as mobilization during the pandemic.

Crises like the pandemic are indeed ideal opportunities for populist governments to mobilize support.[16] Different strands of research understand crises either as triggers or as products of populism, or as a combination of both. Scholars studying crises as triggers of populism consider them to be exogenous and antecedent to populism, and as something that contributes to explaining the success of populist parties. As Roberts illustrates, the weakness of society and the state in moments of crisis is what turns the tide in favour of populists.[17] Indeed, the emergence of populism in Europe has been frequently discussed as a product of the financial crisis that began in 2007.[18]

Other scholars, in turn, consider crises to be endogenous to populism. According to Moffitt, populists discursively construct crises by

> pit[ting] 'the people' against a dangerous other, radically simplify[ing] the terms and terrain of political debate and advocat[ing] strong leadership and quick political action to stave off or solve the impending crisis.[19]

Hence, these scholars expect populists to deny expert knowledge and to advocate simple, allegedly common-sense solutions in times of crisis.[20] Scholars such as Stavrakakis and colleagues combine elements of these two approaches.[21] They take into account 'objective' conditions of crisis as well as how these are discursively used by populists for political mobilization. This article follows a similar approach, as the COVID-19 pandemic is obviously exogenous to populism but has been used by populist governments to mobilize support. We are interested in exploring how this happened in various countries, and thus focus on populist narratives on the pandemic.

The role of narratives for populist mobilization

Since the 'narrative turn' of the 1970s in the social sciences, literatures on strategic communication have proliferated, and the study of discourses and narratives has

[16] See Benjamin Moffitt, 'How to perform crisis: a model for understanding the key role of crisis in contemporary populism', *Government & Opposition* 50: 2, 2015, pp. 189–217; Yannis Stavrakakis, Giorgos Katsambekis, Alexandros Kioupkiolis, Nikos Nikisianis and Thomas Siomos, 'Populism, anti-populism and crisis', *Contemporary Political Theory* 17: 1, 2018, pp. 4–27. On populism and crisis performance during the pandemic, see Erica Simone Almeida Resede, 'Pandemics as crisis performance: how populists tried to take ownership of the COVID-19 pandemic', *Czech Journal of International Relations* 56: 4, 2021, pp. 147–57.

[17] Kenneth M. Roberts, 'Neoliberalism and the transformation of populism in Latin America: the Peruvian case', *World Politics* 48: 1, 1995, pp. 82–116.

[18] Hanspeter Kriesi and Takis S. Pappas, eds, *Populism in Europe during crisis: an introduction* (Colchester: ECPR, 2015); José Rama Caamaño and Guillermo Cordero, 'Who are the losers of the economic crisis? Explaining the vote for rightwing populist parties in Europe after the Great Recession', *Revista Española de Ciencia Política*, vol. 48, 2018, pp. 13–43.

[19] Moffitt, 'How to perform crisis', p. 190.

[20] Benjamin Moffitt and Simon Tormey, 'Rethinking populism: politics, mediatisation and political style', *Political Studies* 62: 2, 2014, pp. 381–97.

[21] Stavrakakis et al., 'Populism, anti-populism and crisis'.

found its way into International Relations (IR).[22] Yet the political science literature uses a multitude of sometimes conflicting terminologies. It is important to distinguish narratives from neighbouring concepts such as myths or propaganda. While a narrative is essentially a story or a form of storytelling,[23] propaganda can be understood as a more general political tactic, often used in the context of political campaigns. Hence, propaganda can make use of certain narratives for political purposes but narratives *per se* do not automatically constitute propaganda. Analysing narratives is thus a more promising approach to disentangle the ways in which stories are told to convey particular messages with the aim of mobilizing political support. Myths, in turn, are more closely intertwined with processes of identity construction and less specific than narratives.[24]

We understand narratives as parts of an actively constructed storyline that presents, interprets or frames a topic in a certain way. Hence narratives constitute a 'particular structure made up of actors and events, plot and time, and setting and space'.[25] From literature on narratives in authoritarian contexts we know that narratives can bolster claims to legitimacy based on elements such as personalization, performance, international engagement or ideology,[26] providing a linguistic tool to embed these claims in politicians' rhetoric. Hence political narratives also represent the will and effort to establish the dominant interpretation of certain topics. As a sense-making device that allows conceptions of stable selfhood to be projected, or even protected, across time and space,[27] narratives are an important tool for populists seeking to bolster their claims to legitimacy and propagate their understanding of 'the people' and 'the elite', as well as to provide specific interpretations of a certain event, such as a crisis, to generate political support.[28]

Following from these understandings of populism and narratives, we conceptualize 'populist narratives' on the pandemic as stories about different aspects of COVID-19 that address how the pandemic started and unfolded, how it should be managed and what its consequences might be. Our analysis focuses on a set of categories concerning this kind of COVID-related narratives. To classify them as 'populist', they need to entail references to the core constitutive components of populism: anti-elitism and people-centrism. These aspects can be emphasized to different degrees in the populist discourse. Accordingly, some populist leaders tend to emphasize the anti-elitist component of populism, focusing on the threats

[22] Brent J. Steele and Alexandra Homolar, 'Ontological insecurities and the politics of contemporary populism', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 32: 3, 2019, pp. 214–21.

[23] Molly Patterson and Kristen R. Monroe, 'Narrative in political science', *Annual Review of Political Science* vol. 1, 1998, pp. 315–31; Margaret R. Somers and Gloria D. Gibson, 'Reclaiming the epistemological "other": narrative and the social constitution of identity', in Craig Calhoun, ed., *Social theory and the politics of identity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), pp. 35–99.

[24] Herfried Münkler, 'Politische Mythen als Grundlage von Repräsentation und Symbolik', *Politische Repräsentation und das Symbolische* (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2016), pp. 227–43.

[25] Linus Hagström and Karl Gustafsson, 'Narrative power: how storytelling shapes east Asian international politics', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 32: 4, 2019, pp. 387–406.

[26] Julia Grauvogel and Christian von Soest, 'Claims to legitimacy count: why sanctions fail to instigate democratisation in authoritarian regimes', *European Journal of Political Research* 53: 4, 2014, pp. 635–53.

[27] Jakub Eberle, 'Narrative, desire, ontological security, transgression: fantasy as a factor in international politics', *Journal of International Relations and Development* 22: 1, 2019, pp. 243–68.

[28] Homolar and Scholz, 'The power of Trump-speak'.

to the 'true people' emanating from domestic or foreign elites. Others prioritize the people-centric aspect of populism, praising the strength and unity of the people and putting less emphasis on the 'bad elites'.[29]

Data and methods

The empirical analysis focuses on five countries from different world regions, characterized by deeply divided societies and polarized political systems, which had (right- or left-wing) populist governments during the first two years of the pandemic: Brazil, India, Israel, Mexico and Turkey. It is based on a corpus of 357 original-language speeches and statements of representatives of populist governments from these countries. The documents stem from different points of the pandemic (first wave of infections, imposition of first restrictive measures, introduction of vaccines, following waves of infection).

We used MaxQDA software for the inductive, manual coding of our material.[30] This allowed us to grasp both manifest and latent meaning within the data. To ensure reliable and consistent coding, we generated common coding guidelines and carried out multiple rounds of test coding, each followed by adaptations to the coding frame. While language barriers prevented us from extensively cross-checking our coding, we repeatedly discussed problematic cases with the help of translations to minimize cognitive biases. In creating our frame, we considered literatures on populism and the pandemic which highlight themes such as the grievances of the 'people' falling victim to the disease owing to the elites' neglect,[31] or narratives about threats and dangerous 'others'—be they pharmaceutical companies, the 'medical establishment', or migrants and other excluded sections of society.[32] We also considered the literature on populism and emotions, which highlights how negative emotions are used for mobilization.[33] However, we deliberately chose to be open to other narratives to complement those developed on the basis of the existing literature. Ultimately, our coding frame included the three master codes of 'people-centrism', 'anti-elitism' and 'narratives on the pandemic', as well as a number of more detailed codes. The coding focused on paragraphs as text segments (units of coding), and it proceeded in two steps. First, we coded notions of people-centrism and anti-elitism. Second, we coded narratives on the pandemic, focusing on:

[29] For similar arguments suggesting the usefulness of dissecting the conceptual components of populism, see Maurits J. Meijers and Andrej Zaslove, 'Measuring populism in political parties: appraisal of a new approach', *Comparative Political Studies* 54: 2, 2021, pp. 372–407.

[30] For a list of detailed codes, please contact the authors.

[31] Lasco and Curato, 'Medical populism', pp. 2–3.

[32] Lasco, 'Medical populism and the COVID-19 pandemic', p. 1419; Kim Y. Dionne and Fulya F. Turkmen, 'The politics of pandemic othering: putting COVID-19 in global and historical context', *International Organization* 74: S1, 2020, E213-E230.

[33] Guillem Rico, Marc Guinjoan and Eva Anduiza, 'The emotional underpinnings of populism: how anger and fear affect populist attitudes', *Swiss Political Science Review* 23: 4, 2017, pp. 444–61; Mikko Salmela and Christian von Scheve, 'Emotional roots of right-wing political populism', *Social Science Information* 56: 4, 2017, pp. 567–95.

- origins of the pandemic;
- measures to fight the pandemic;
- vaccination/medication;
- long-term implications of the pandemic;
- the international dimension.

All narratives coded were temporally related to a specific phase of the COVID-19 pandemic and directed to the respective domestic audience in each of the five countries. Thus, we explicitly excluded more general populist narratives on elite, people and the 'general will', and focused our analysis specifically on the pandemic context. In a further analytical step, we assessed the extent to which narratives on the pandemic were framed in distinctively populist terms, by looking at co-occurrences of narratives and the constitutive elements of populism (anti-elitism and people-centrism). In particular, we sought to identify which elements of populism were most explicitly associated with specific narratives on the pandemic.

Populist narratives on COVID-19 in Brazil, India, Israel, Mexico and Turkey

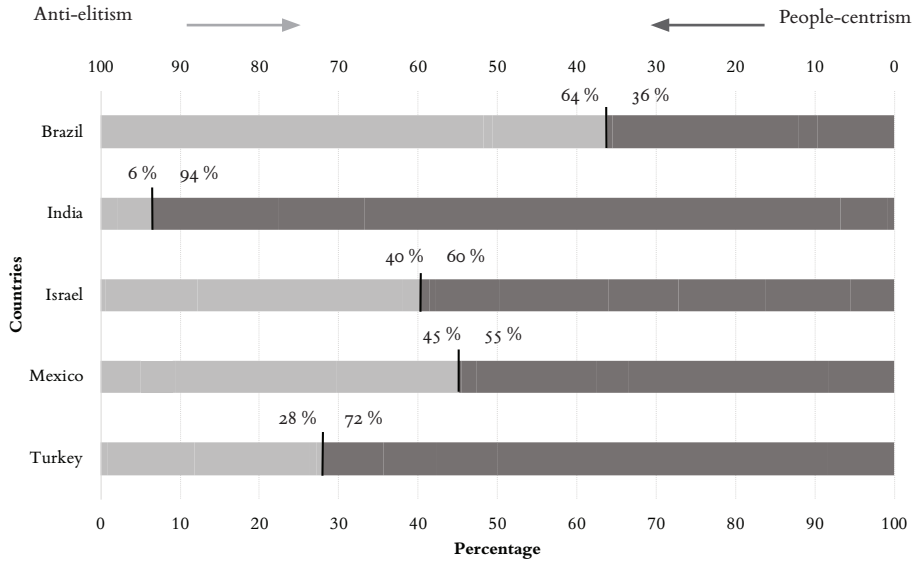
Our analysis yields a number of interesting results. The following sections outline our comparative findings, before discussing more specific insights from each of the cases. The most surprising finding is that, apart from the Bolsonaro administration in Brazil, the examined populist governments did not correspond to the expectations of the 'medical populism' literature; nor did they systematically resort to the blaming of elites, to conspiracy theories on the origins of the pandemic or to divisive narratives attributing the crisis to a set of dangerous 'others'. Instead, they highlighted people-centrism and to some extent even promoted a discourse of national unity.

Figure 1 (below) illustrates the shares of anti-elitism and people-centrism in the populist discourse of the analysed governments. It reveals that all five populist governments combined anti-elitist and people-centric elements when issuing statements about the pandemic, but that only in the case of Brazil anti-elitism prevailed (featuring in 64 per cent of coded segments). Turkey and India, both governed by highly divisive right-wing populist administrations, are particularly surprising as here the people-centric dimension dominated strongly (in 72 per cent of the coded segments in the case of Turkey and 94 per cent in the case of India).

Regarding the specific narratives on COVID-19, we found that the origins of the pandemic were not discussed extensively—again, this is quite surprising if we think of how explicitly a populist leader like Trump tried to mobilize support by blaming China for the outbreak of the pandemic.

In line with the emphasis on people-centrism, some cases show a prevalence of narratives of 'national strength and unity' (especially Mexico and Israel). Moreover, we see patterns of populist mobilization using narratives that emphasize the characteristics of the populist leaders as caring for 'the common man', as prevalent in the Indian case. Other frequently used narratives are those that emphasize the government's alleged success of pandemic management—regardless of the actual

Figure 1: Shares of anti-elitism and people-centrism (text segments) in speeches of the populist governments.



effects of the adopted policies. For example, Modi was keen on stressing that India ostensibly performed very well (strong prevalence of the category 'performance') and without external help (a code we labelled 'own achievement'). Being 'better than the West' is another narrative used by Modi and, even more frequently, by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. In line with the personalization of power under populist governments and the idea of populist leaders as embodying the popular will, we also observed a predominance of narratives about populist leaders as saviours, personally guiding the people out of the crisis. These narratives were visible in all cases, but most prominently in Israel and Mexico.

Brazil

The Brazilian President Bolsonaro was the only populist leader in our sample who explicitly conformed to the playbook described by the 'medical populism' literature, namely criticizing political and scientific elites and downplaying the pandemic as a 'flu'.[34]

Our analysis of Bolsonaro's speeches since the outbreak of the pandemic brought to the fore two dominant sets of narratives, namely 'measures as a means of repression' and 'measures as ineffective'. These narratives basically denied the validity of measures used to fight the pandemic, claiming that they were not only ineffective

[34] This is also reflected in his pandemic management. The abjectly inadequate policies pursued by Bolsonaro's government, leading to more than 660,000 fatalities between March 2020 and March 2022, went so far that the parliamentary commission investigating crimes during the pandemic recommended the indictment of Bolsonaro for crimes against humanity in its final report of October 2021. See Senado Federal [Federal Senate], *CPI da pandemia,* 2021, https://legis.senado.leg.br/comissoes/mnas?codcol=2441&tp=4.

but even dangerous, mostly because they harmed the economy and thereby the livelihoods of ordinary Brazilians. We can further detect evidence of a strong thread of anti-elitism, with Bolsonaro frequently attacking the 'political establishment'. The latter entails authorities from various tiers and branches of government (mayors and governors, the federal supreme court, members of parliament) who were striving to implement quarantine measures and vaccination campaigns. While anti-elitism might at first glance seem out of place in the discourse of an incumbent president, it very much corresponds to the notion of populist leaders claiming to be different from the 'establishment' and criticizing political elites.[35]

When we look at the co-occurrence of codes on populism and narratives on the pandemic, this intertwining of anti-elitism and the pandemic as a window of opportunity for mobilization becomes even more apparent. For instance, Bolsonaro systematically blamed the allegedly 'irresponsible' or 'evil' political elite for imposing measures that entailed economic hardship for the poorest, while ignoring possible solutions. A code we labelled 'chloroquine/alternative medicines' appears in 15 per cent of the coded segments and shows how Bolsonaro sought to promote his own version of how the pandemic should be managed and handled. Moreover, he framed the development of the pandemic as a process in which he acted as a saviour, forced to step in and provide the means to safeguard people's livelihoods in the light of the failures of the bad elites. The following statement exemplifies this way of reasoning:

> Our government has not forced anybody to stay home, it did not close shops down, it did not close churches or schools down and it did not take away the livelihood of millions of informal workers. (2 June 2021)

In the early days of the pandemic, the Brazilian parliament passed bills to guarantee at least some level of social protection, for example via social grants to vulnerable groups. These measures were later, well into the middle of the crisis, taken over by the federal government, which implemented a social grant programme through extraordinary funding (from April 2020 until mid-2021). That may explain why 11.5 per cent of the coded segments refer to the performance of the government in dealing with the crisis and to being able to offer social protection to 'the poor or vulnerable' (8.7 per cent of coded segments). Indeed, we found that the codes 'performance' and 'the poor/vulnerable' often appeared together.

Another important narrative in Bolsonaro's discourse, already mentioned above, was the praise for alternative medicines, especially hydroxychloroquine, presented as a feasible early treatment for COVID-19. Bolsonaro frequently lauded this medication while simultaneously downplaying the effectiveness of masks and vaccines, as well as the overall gravity of the disease. Even as the death toll in Brazil reached catastrophic levels during the peaks of the first wave in July 2020 (more than 1,000 registered deaths daily) and the second wave in April 2021 (about 3,000 registered deaths daily), Bolsonaro often claimed to feel sorry for the victims, but at the same time stressed that people should simply face the situation, live their

[35] See Urbinati, *Me the people*.

lives and, if they fell ill, trust the ability of their doctors to prescribe chloroquine and other alternative medicines. As he put it, 'I got sick and took hydroxychloroquine. Maybe I have been the only head of state to look for a medicine against this evil' (11 June 2021).

The prevalence of anti-elitist elements in Bolsonaro's speeches during the pandemic may be explained by the relationship he tried to keep with his supporters throughout the health crisis. He had been elected on a radical neoliberal agenda of economic growth, coupled with a highly conservative, nationalist and religious rhetoric. The COVID-19 wave in March 2020 represented an opportunity for him to keep his most zealous supporters mobilized around the same agenda, namely an 'epidemiological neoliberalism'. His denialist approach to the consequences of the disease served the goal of reinforcing this stance—in opposition to the policies of governors and mayors, members of parliament and the supreme court, all of whom were implementing measures to tackle the spread of the virus, along with media-led awareness campaigns in favour of social distancing.

We can conclude that although the polarization on measures and vaccines as a solution to the crisis contributed to Bolsonaro's increasing political isolation, the constant mobilization of supporters through direct communication on social media kept the approval ratings for his administration relatively stable. The opposition of members of the political establishment and the main media outlets bolstered the anti-elitism of Bolsonaro, whose storyline blamed the authorities for imposing measures that jeopardized economic activity and therefore people's livelihoods. It is worth noting that the implementation of measures to provide economic protection to vulnerable social groups between 2020 and 2021 fuelled some of his people-centric narratives focused on the poorest layers of society. However, Bolsonaro insisted on connecting Brazil's sluggish economic performance with the measures to contain COVID-19 enforced by local authorities.

Israel

Israel was the world's first country to adopt a large-scale vaccination campaign, having managed to secure large numbers of vaccine doses early on. During the period analysed in this article, the right-wing populist government of Benjamin Netanyahu was still in power.[36] And yet in this case we see an entirely different set of narratives (and policies) in play from those of the right-wing populist government of Brazil.

In fact, Netanyahu's COVID-19 narratives were primarily framed in terms of Israel's national strength and unity, displaying strong notions of people-centrism and more moderate anti-elitism. This emphasis was often linked to Netanyahu's own leadership style, conveying the message that Israel was strong and united because of the way the people's leader managed the pandemic. This creates an

[36] Julius Maximilian Rogenhofer and Ayala Panievsky, 'Antidemocratic populism in power: comparing Erdogan's Turkey with Modi's India and Netanyahu's Israel', *Democratization* 27: 8, 2020, pp. 1394–1412; Gavil Talshir, 'Populist rightwing ideological exposition: Netanyahu's regime as a case in point', *Advances in Applied Sociology* 8: 4, 2018, pp. 329–49.

interesting similarity to the case of Bolsonaro, who also used the pandemic to promote his leadership, albeit through increased anti-elitism.

In putting people-centrism at the core of his mobilization strategy, Netanyahu did not only lean on Jewish traditions and myths, particularly those he framed in terms of 'national triumph'. He also frequently deployed religious references entailing appeals to his people's trust and solidarity, as the following statement shows:

> Our nation persevered in great storms, this gives us strength, this gives us hope. We persevered against Pharaoh, and despite that the coming battle will be long and difficult—we will persevere against COVID. With God's help and yours, the citizens of Israel. Thank you all. (3 March 2020)

From the early stages of the pandemic onwards, a strong people-centrism could be detected in Netanyahu's speeches, which would later be joined by narratives of 'personal leadership' (30 per cent of coded segments) and 'performance' (18 per cent), stressing his competence in crisis management. In terms of co-occurrence, the above-mentioned codes were also associated with pro-vaccination narratives, depicting Netanyahu as a caring and responsible leader who provides his people with vaccines.

In June 2021, Netanyahu's Likud government was ousted from power. This offers an interesting opportunity to observe changes in Netanyahu's crisis mobilization with reference to the pandemic. Interestingly, the shift to the opposition was followed by a major change regarding the type of Netanyahu's people-centrism: the notion of who belongs to the people became more inclusive, no longer excluding Israel's Arab minority, which often is excluded in Netanyahu's populist discourse. Yet in his COVID-19 rhetoric, inclusiveness prevailed to support the story of Netanyahu as a saviour in times of crisis:

> We have brought here millions of vaccine doses, more than any other country population-wise. And we brought them for everybody, Jews and Arabs, religious and secular. We all can and should vaccinate (31 December, 2020).

Yet as the Bennett–Lapid government took over power, a shift towards stronger anti-elitism in Netanyahu's pandemic narratives became apparent. His speeches became more assertive and his anti-elitist comments moved from mild criticism of the political establishment to outright denunciations of supposed incompetence and malice. Speeches against the Bennett–Lapid government were also the only instances where the narratives of 'measures as repression' or 'conspiracy' could be found. Netanyahu's pro-vaccine narrative also changed during this time, losing the former connection with people-centric codes and becoming more strongly linked to anti-elitism, stressing the new government's alleged neglect of the vaccination campaign. The strong connection between vaccines and Netanyahu's personal leadership or Likud's 'performance narrative' remained. Overall, the case of Israel therefore revealed interesting shifts in populist narratives on the pandemic with the transition of Netanyahu and his Likud party to the opposition. Moreover, the case of Israel stands in strong contrast to that of Brazil, not only in terms of

policies, but also in terms of the discursive elements used to mobilize support for the populist government.

India

India was one of the countries hardest hit by the pandemic. Modi's right-wing government initially implemented one of the strictest lockdowns worldwide (lasting 21 days), announced with less than three hours' notice. One year later, however, the government allowed large religious and political gatherings, which contributed to a devastating second wave in spring 2021. Despite poor pandemic management, however, Modi did not deny its severity or argue against coping measures and vaccines. Instead, he used the pandemic to mobilize support by presenting himself as a popular leader who cared for the 'common man'. Moreover, he stressed the strength of his government's crisis performance by arguing that India was handling the crisis 'better than the rest'.

Concerning the features of populism in Modi's narratives on the pandemic, the low salience of anti-elitism is striking. Modi and his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) renounced their usual trashing of the 'elitist' opposition and liberal sections of society, focusing instead primarily on the discursive construction and representation of 'the people'. In doing so, the BJP showcased itself as a 'people's party', also making reference to its strong leadership since 2014. Interestingly, the understanding of the people promoted in Modi's narratives on the pandemic is very different from the exclusionary anti-Muslim understanding espoused by members of the party's lower ranks or representatives of the numerous Hindu nationalist organizations who are active members of the party's parent organization Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). Modi, who had long been careful about adopting openly divisive language as prime minister, addressed both Muslims and lower-caste Hindus (mostly Dalits) during the pandemic.

However, one cardinal aspect of Modi's populist rhetoric was continuously present across all phases of the pandemic: his effort and persistence in presenting himself as a humble man, by assuring his presence, metaphorically speaking, in every common Indian household. Modi's active portrayal of himself as a self-made man, and his habit of identifying himself as a 'Chowkidar' (gatekeeper) who would do anything for the protection of the nation and the people, gave him additional leverage in the eyes of the public and built on the aspiration for every 'common man' to be safeguarded by a figure who belongs neither to the conventional power belt of Indian politics nor to the upper strata of Hindu caste society. Hence, the predominant notion that acquired legitimacy in the context of the pandemic was the assumption that Modi holds both power and knowledge about the common and vulnerable people, to whom he presents himself as a last resort of security. Moreover, Modi emphasized the outstanding features of India's approach, promoting a narrative of Indian exceptionalism in comparison even to developed countries. Despite his regime's poor crisis management, then, Modi's narratives on the pandemic highlighted the government's successes,

trying to mobilize support by conjuring the image of one 'people' united in adversity.

The analysis further revealed a strong connection between people-centric references such as 'the common man', the anti-elitist code 'national political establishment' and three narratives on the pandemic, namely 'better than the rest', 'global crisis' and 'measures as protection'. Connecting these elements, Modi managed to tell a story about how well he cared about the common man, in contrast to the national political establishment that failed to fulfil its responsibilities. For instance, during one of his speeches Modi emphasized:

> Most of you must have heard about the situation in America too! There is no dearth of resources and modern technology in America. Yet, today America is very badly affected by Corona! You should also remember that the population of America is around 330 million, whereas in UP [Uttar Pradesh, a state in northern India] there are 240 million people! But in the US, 25,000 people have died so far, while in UP about 600 people have died. (20 June 2020)

Although anti-elitist narratives were strong in the BJP's more general discourse during the years analysed, in his speeches referring to the pandemic Modi departed suddenly and starkly from such anti-elitist narratives, most of which focused on the national opposition. The only references made to anti-elitism were occasional mentions of the Indian National Congress, mostly criticizing their health-care policies and crisis management strategies. Yet in general, our analysis shows that in his COVID-related rhetoric, Modi departed from the populist playbook of mobilizing support by dividing society into two antagonistic groups, and instead focused primarily on the construction and the representation of 'the people'.

Turkey

In the case of Turkey, the main pandemic narratives resembled those discussed above for India. Overall, the government of right-wing populist president Erdoğan did not deny the severity of the pandemic and took care to develop a set of social distancing measures and a vaccination campaign. These measures were flanked by a set of narratives highlighting the 'strength/resilience of the nation', claiming that Turkey was handling the crisis 'better than the rest' (this latter code constituted 23 per cent of all coded segments).

Erdoğan's populist narrative clearly gave pride of place to people-centrism, stressing national unity by highlighting Turkey's crisis performance. However, to some extent, his discourse was also characterized by anti-elitism, the elite being mostly identified with opposition parties and actors, as the following example shows:

> While Turkey has been struggling with the pandemic by working hand in hand with the state and the nation; unfortunately, a certain segment led by the CHP [main opposition party] is looking for making mischief (20 March 2020).

Despite these elements of anti-elitism, Erdoğan's speeches frequently resorted to references to unity, solidarity and fraternity to mobilize support. In many

segments of the speeches analysed, the codes 'strength/resilience of the nation' and 'call for action' co-occurred, as the president called for support from the people to maintain this strength. In a fashion similar to Netanhayu in Israel, Erdoğan also deployed religious references that mentioned God as a saviour in the crisis and appealed to peoples' trust and solidarity. Again like those of the Israeli prime minister, his speeches often combined stories centring on the allegedly excellent performance of the Turkish state in managing the pandemic, combined with an emphasis on the country's solidarity and unity as well as referring to the help of God in overcoming the crisis:

> Although the problems in the world will continue for a while due to new variants of the virus, I hope Turkey will successfully leave this process behind. As long as we take care of our unity, solidarity and fraternity, there will be no problem that we cannot overcome with the help of God. (6 June 2021)

Our analysis further revealed that other people-centric codes, such as 'historical greatness', also co-occurred with the codes 'call for action' and 'support/mobilizing support for the leader'. This shows that Erdoğan was trying to mobilize the entire population against the pandemic. Simultaneously, he used the pandemic as an opportunity to generate support for his leadership. In Erdoğan's speeches, people-centric references very frequently co-occurred with the narrative of being 'better than the rest'. This illustrates that Erdoğan compared Turkey with the rest of the world in terms not only of its health and economic performance but also of his own leadership performance in taking care of the elderly and Turkish people abroad (especially at the beginning of the pandemic). When talking about the 'elitist' national political establishment, Erdoğan frequently made reference to the health-care system, capacity issues, and the serious shortcomings in hospitals before the period of rule by his own party, the AKP. In particular, he criticized the opposition party (CHP) for hampering the government's health policies and infrastructure projects such as the construction of large city hospitals. These, in turn, Erdoğan portrayed and thus instrumentalized as proof of the efforts that put Turkey in a distinguished position in the world in terms of pandemic management—which lent his criticism of the CHP an even stronger undertone. In a similar vein and also with the aim of stressing that Turkey was 'better than the rest', Erdoğan highlighted the country's achievements abroad in terms of delivering medical supplies to other countries, especially those in the developed world.

Overall, then, in the case of Turkey as well we see that populist narratives on the pandemic were used to mobilize support for the government. These incorporated some anti-elitist elements, but also a substantive share of people-centric appeals, and mostly referred to Turkey's comparatively good performance and to the claim that it was doing better than western governments.

Mexico

When the pandemic struck in Mexico, the left-wing populist Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) had just ended his first year of presidency as a very popular leader. Mexico's main challenges before the pandemic were violence related to organized crime, poverty and inequality. Accordingly, AMLO's pandemic discourse focused on the poor, and his narratives often referred to economic hardship. COVID-19 put health care at the top of his political agenda, adding to, rather than substituting for, security and economic issues. Generally, the fight against corruption had been a focus of his populist discourse, and his main goal since his first presidential campaign in 2006 had been 'a true purification of public life'.[37]

Overall, the case of Mexico resembles the cases of Turkey and India regarding the emphasis on people-centrism, which was a frequent feature in AMLO's COVID-related communications, combined with a strong focus on his personal leadership. The analysis further revealed 'individual responsibility' as a dominant narrative. This mainly co-occurred with the people-centric narrative 'strength and resilience of the people'. The reason for this is that in Mexico most pandemic measures were non-compulsory, including lockdowns, mask-wearing and social distancing. Therefore, AMLO praised responsible civic behaviour as a sign of the strength and resilience of the people, thereby stressing the collective dimension of 'individual responsibility', namely, showing responsibility with fellow citizens, the people and the nation. In telling this story, the government often rhetorically identified itself with the people:

> We are the complete reflection of our people's sentiment. There is no divorce; it is not an elite's government for the benefit of a few that turns its back on the people; no, we are the people. That is a great strength. (31 March 2020)

The analysis also shows that AMLO identified 'the people' both with the poorest and with the whole nation, and attributed virtues of resilience and solidarity to the Mexican people. The codes 'strength/resilience of the nation' and 'the poor/vulnerable' appeared most frequently under the category of people-centrism. At the same time, AMLO identified the elite with the political establishment, particularly with opposition parties: the post-authoritarian Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), the conservative National Action Party (PAN) and the centre-left Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD). In a fashion similar to Erdoğan, AMLO often blamed former political elites for mismanaging the health system and claimed that his own government would improve the health system to tackle the pandemic:

> We were lucky that the coronavirus arrived late [in Mexico] … That allowed us to have the beds, to get the ventilators, the specialists, but we had a deficit of physicians, specialists, nurses. How was that deficit produced? Because those irresponsible people bet on privatizing education and health. (4 April 2020)

[37] Kathleen Bruhn, '"To hell with your corrupt institutions!": AMLO and populism in Mexico', in Cas Mudde and Cristóbal R. Kaltwasser, eds, *Populism in Europe and the Americas: threat or corrective for democracy?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 88–112 at p. 90.

This narrative was anchored in statements about fighting corruption, even if it was at odds with a discourse proclaiming 'republican austerity' and occasionally criticizing the civil service bureaucracy as an elite captured by interest groups.[38] Thus, although anti-elitist elements appeared less frequently in AMLO's pandemic discourse than people-centric references, criticism aimed at past elites was strongly prevalent. Similarly, AMLO also criticized the media, accusing them of opposing his government because of their economic interests as private companies. The 'political establishment' and 'the media' are thus by far the most frequently used anti-elitist codes.

The analysis also revealed interesting temporal trends regarding the development of these anti-elitist elements in AMLO's pandemic discourse. Initially, an anti-oligarchy denunciation of *la mafia del poder* ('the power mafia', a term to designate an alliance between economic super-elites and corrupt politicians) was strongly present, but this later shifted to criticizing *los conservadores* ('the conservatives'), a label used to designate everybody opposing his government, whether NGOs, businessmen, feminist activists, intellectuals or journalists.[39]

Interestingly, some of AMLO's pandemic narratives were not at all connected to the constitutive features of populism. Examples are narratives emphasizing the importance of vaccines and measures ('measures as protection', 'trust in scientific evidence' or 'vaccines as the solution') and narratives addressing the global dimension of the crisis ('global crisis' or 'burden-sharing'). This suggests that some spheres of AMLO's pandemic discourse, namely on health policy and international policy, remained relatively isolated from his efforts at populist mobilization. Decisions about protection measures and vaccines against COVID-19 were rather framed as being technical and explicitly non-political. Therefore, when the opposition questioned them, the government could accuse them of not attending to scientific criteria and of politicizing public health. The following statement reveals this line of reasoning:

> We took the decision of leaving this public health issue in the hands of technicians, of doctors, of scientists, because if we left this issue in the hands of politicians, which is the worst, then everything unsettles. That is another epidemic that has to do with vested interests, with those who don't approve of us and use everything to blame us. (16 March 2020)

This underlines AMLO's efforts to depoliticize decisions about protection measures and vaccines. Instead of portraying them as a political issue, he resorted to stressing that these measures were unavoidable to combat the pandemic.

Comparing populist narratives on the pandemic in the global South

As the discussion of our case-studies has revealed, the populists under scrutiny used the global crisis situation as a window of opportunity for political mobiliza-

[38] Cesar Renteria and David Arellano-Gault, 'How does a populist government interpret and face a health crisis? Evidence from the Mexican populist response to COVID-19', *Revista de Administração Pública* 55: 1, 2021, pp. 180–96 at pp. 185–6.

[39] Humberto Beck and Patrick Iber, 'The contradictions of AMLO', *Dissent* 69: 2, 2022, pp. 108–17.

tion. While this was the main underlying assumption of our article and is thus not surprising, what is striking is the amount of variation regarding the mobilization patterns in the five countries examined. In particular, three findings stand out: the variance in the use of anti-elitism or people-centrism in populist narratives; the emphasis on crisis management performance; and the use of narratives on personalized leadership.

The most important finding is that only Bolsonaro adopted narratives that downplayed the severity of the pandemic and blamed the 'elite'. While this does not imply that Bolsonaro's pandemic rhetoric was completely void of people-centric references, the amount of anti-elitist narratives we found during the analysis of Brazil is astonishing. In criticizing the 'bad elite', identified with subnational decision-makers trying to implement measures to fight the pandemic, whom he blamed for endangering the livelihoods of poor Brazilians affected by the economic consequences of lockdowns and other measures, Bolsonaro conformed to the playbook of 'medical populism'. In contrast, the governments in Israel, India, Mexico and Turkey focused strongly on promoting people-centrism. Instead of conjuring up conspiracy theories and blaming obscure elites for the crisis, they emphasized the people-centric component of populism and tried to mobilize support by highlighting the strength of the people. None of those governments downplayed the severity of the pandemic, or the importance of a scientific approach and of adequate measures to fight it—unlike many populist actors in Europe, for example. Anti-elitism was present in some of these governments' narratives on the pandemic, as in AMLO's blaming of past governments for not having built up the health system adequately, but overall, people-centrism prevailed.

A common element across all five cases is the focus on performance narratives. All these governments tried to present their policies as successful and to celebrate their performance in the crisis—regardless of actual results. In some cases, they even claimed to be doing 'better than the rest' of the world and especially than the industrialized countries of the 'West'. An international component implicitly challenging the actors at the core of the much-criticized 'liberal international order' was therefore an inherent part of the narratives of some of the governments analysed.

Finally, another common theme across all these cases was the emphasis on the role of the populist leader as a saviour able to do the right things in the name of the people and for the people. Of course, these leadership narratives had different case-specific features—such as Netanyahu's references to the past of the Jewish people or AMLO's calls for responsible individual behaviour.

So while there are several common features, how can we explain the elements of variation in the populist narratives analysed? In particular, why did Bolsonaro base his populist narratives on anti-elitism, whereas Netanyahu, AMLO, Modi and Erdoğan put people-centrism at the forefront of their approaches? We conclude this article by developing a number of hypotheses on the basis of our five case-studies. The systematic testing of these hypotheses remains subject to further

research. In particular, we argue that three factors might have had an impact on the use of anti-elitism or people-centrism: (1) the stability of these governments; (2) their duration in power; and (3) their leaders' perceptions of being outsiders to the political system.

First and foremost, we hypothesize that the *stability of a government* matters for the choice of populist mobilization narratives. When Bolsonaro was elected in 2018, this happened in the wake of a long period of political turbulence that caused the ousting of former President Dilma Rousseff and the interim administration of President Michel Temer, and led to a highly polarized and fragmented political context. Bolsonaro's government was itself highly unstable, and from early on, the fear of losing power and the need to establish himself in this polarized environment induced him to resort to an anti-elitist rhetoric that would set him apart from his political opponents. Both during his campaign for election and well into his term in office, this was visible in his harsh criticism directed at politicians from the former left-wing administration of the Worker's Party, such as Lula and Rousseff. Similarly, after forging people-centric narratives for the major part of the pandemic, Netanyahu shifted towards stronger anti-elitism in his COVID rhetoric after losing power. In opposition, Netanyahu's pandemic communication became more assertive, including criticism of the political establishment and denunciations of supposed incompetence and malice. Based on insights from these cases, we expect that the less stable a populist government is (that is, the more it is challenged internally), the more it resorts to anti-elitism in its mobilization efforts.

Second, a government's *duration in power* seems to have an influence on the use of anti-elitist or people-centric narratives. This element is closely intertwined with the stability of government and also aligns with Urbinati's theorizing about populists in power.[40] When the first wave of infections hit Mexico and Brazil in 2020, neither AMLO nor Bolsonaro had been in power for a very long time—in contrast to Netanyahu, Erdoğan and Modi. AMLO had been in office for only 15 months—long enough to acquire some knowledge of the working of the public administration, but leaving room to blame former governments and public servants for handing over a flawed public health system. In contrast, Erdoğan's government, which had been in power for almost two decades, found itself in a position of having sole responsibility for protecting public health, social well-being and the national economy during the pandemic. That is to say, pandemic management had turned into a litmus test for the government as pressure emerged from the opposition and its supporters. In such a situation, Erdoğan resorted to involving the entire nation in his government's efforts. This explains the intensity and the stability of the use of non-divisive people-centric language in the government narrative, as well as the notion of sharing responsibility with the people. It also explains the strong emphasis on good government performance, claimed to be even better than that of other national governments. On the basis of the cases analysed, then, we expect that the longer a populist government is in power (or, in

[40] Urbinati, *Me the people*.

other words, the more consolidated the government is), the more it adopts narratives focused on people-centrism in its mobilization efforts.

As a third explanatory factor for the prevalence of anti-elitist pandemic narratives in the case of Brazil and, albeit less strongly, Mexico, we hypothesize the respective leader's *perception of being an outsider* to the political system. Bolsonaro clearly nurtured this aspect, and also AMLO frequently depicted himself as an outsider marginalized by the political elites. He and his followers also depicted his government agenda as one of major change with historical reach, facing strong resistance from the media, the political elites and some business leaders. While all populists in power claim to be different from the established elites, we therefore hypothesize that the more populist leaders perceive themselves as being outsiders in the political system, the more they will adopt narratives focused on anti-elitism in their mobilization efforts.

To conclude, the analysis has revealed that a fine-grained study of cases from different world regions can contribute to calling into question not only the findings of the existing literature, but also our more general assumptions about populism derived from prominent cases like that of Donald Trump in the United States. In the cases analysed, for example, we did not find any prominent narratives on the origins of the pandemic entailing the blaming of certain actors for its outbreak and diffusion—quite the opposite of Trump openly blaming China for the COVID-19 outbreak and the WHO for its mismanagement. Our findings therefore suggest that we need to understand the phenomenon of populism in a more nuanced way. Not all populist leaders and governments are mavericks endangering their countries and undermining global governance through irresponsible policies. At the same time, despite huge differences, there are some common logics to populism that are important to understand. The continuous desire to mobilize support, and the targeted use of crisis situations to do so, is an important common feature of populists in power. Still, we should not be so naive as to assume that the people-centrism we found in populists' pandemic narratives implies a more general change in these populist governments' attitudes towards a more 'tame' and inclusive rhetoric, or possibly even towards more inclusive policies. In many cases, divisive rhetoric is not employed by populist heads of government, but is delegated to lower-ranking political figures. Populist parties and governments have been using different discursive elements in parallel, strategically targeting their communication towards different audiences and emphasizing the two components of populism (people-centrism and anti-elitism) to very different degrees in that process.[41] Future research should build upon these insights from the pandemic to find out whether and, if so, how populist actors resort to different kinds of narratives to mobilize support in different types of crisis, including for example specific security crises or the climate crisis. It is possible that the COVID-19 pandemic, with its extraordinary severity and its global reach, constituted an exception in such mobilization patterns.

[41] Sandra Destradi, Johannes Plagemann and Hakki Taş, 'Populism and the politicisation of foreign policy', *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 24: 3, 2022, pp. 475–92.