



7-2020

Populism as a Logic of Coincidences. An Interview with María Pía Lara, Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana Mexico

María Pía Lara
Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Mexico

Katie Henning
University of Kentucky

Aimee Imlay
University of Kentucky

Lilia Malavé Gómez
University of Kentucky

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.13023/disclosure.29.08>

Follow this and additional works at: <https://uknowledge.uky.edu/disclosure>



Part of the [Arts and Humanities Commons](#)

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 4.0 License](#).



Recommended Citation

Pía Lara, María; Henning, Katie; Imlay, Aimee; and Malavé Gómez, Lilia (2020) "Populism as a Logic of Coincidences. An Interview with María Pía Lara, Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana Mexico," *disClosure: A Journal of Social Theory*. Vol. 29 , Article 9.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.13023/disclosure.29.08>

Available at: <https://uknowledge.uky.edu/disclosure/vol29/iss1/9>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by *disClosure: A Journal of Social Theory*. Questions about the journal can be sent to disclosurejournal@gmail.com

Populism as a Logic of Coincidences.

An Interview with María Pía Lara, *Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana Mexico*.

Interviewers: Katie Henning, Aimee Imlay and Lilia Malavé Gómez, *University of Kentucky*.

María Pía Lara is professor of philosophy at the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana. She is also Co-director of the Prague Colloquium of Critical Theory. She has published essays and articles in International journals on Critical Theory, Politics, Ethics and Aesthetics, Feminism and Populism. She has written several books including: Moral Textures: Feminist Narratives in the Public Sphere (Los Angeles, Berkeley, San Diego: Polity Press, 1998 and Cambridge, England: Polity Press, 1998); Narrating Evil: A Post-metaphysical Theory of Reflexive Judgment (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007); The Disclosure of Politics: Struggles Over the Semantics of Secularization (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013); Beyond the Public Sphere: Film and the Feminist Imagination (Evanston, Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 2020 Forthcoming).

How did you come to study populism?

Dr. María Pía Lara (PL): As you know, many people think that in Latin America populism is the big thing. I mean especially since the governments of Ecuador, Bolivia and Venezuela (with Chávez first and then Nicolás Maduro). Chávez from Venezuela as the worst that can happen to any country, and he and Maduro are supposed to be the populists. Yet Chávez always said that he was a socialist and look to Cuba as his most admired model. And this can be thought of as a conceptual mistake while I actually think now that it is a well-crafted distortion. If you take the example of Bolivia, when Evo Morales was its president, you could find that his government helped to build up a constitution that responded to the specific needs and rights of many different ethnic groups. Bolivia has a very diverse and majoritarian ethnic groups, and there is a minority of white people there, but they belong mostly to the upper class and they were the ones who now orchestrated the coup against Morales. And Brazil is another different example. First with Ignacio Lula, who was one of the most beloved presidents of all times. He was accused of corruption on charges that were never proved, by the same judge Sergio Moro who instructed the prosecutor on the legal procedure to accuse Lula of corruption. We know about these exchanges of emails because they were leaked. Moro is now a Minister of Jair Bolsonaro. But before that, Dilma Rousseff had to be impeached, and she ended up not finishing her term. The strategy then turned to impede Lula to become again a candidate as president and it was all orchestrated by the oligarchy with much support from the United States.

Argentina is also a different case. As Fernando de la Rúa, the then President resigned, Néstor Kirchner (a famous lawyer well-bred in the Peronista party) won the next election. While being president he finally concluded with all the trials of the murderous militaries involved in the bloody coup of 1976, where around 30,000 Argentinians disappeared. His was a democratic government and it invested heavily not only in social programs of health, education, culture, but also in backing the efforts of organizations like the mothers and grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo to do justice to those whose families whose children were abducted and placed in military families. When he decided not to run for the second time, Cristina Fernández succeeded him as she won the next election. She pursued many good policies as well, but her attitude was certainly described as authoritarian. However, both Kirchner and his wife finished for the first time in the recent history of democracy their terms as presidents. Now Cristina Fernández is back again as a Vice-President after the economic collapse brought by the neo-liberal policies of Mauricio Macri. So my interest in South American politics was connected with the idea of trying to focus on how the general distortions on the describing all these different people and experiences, by putting them on the same level with a pejorative concept such as populism, will actually never allow other people to understand what happened there in recent years with what was called the Pink Tide. It is called the pink not because of anything regarding something “feminine” but because these different political leaders came to government through democracy by winning the elections, through democracy. Pink is a different color from red and red was the color used to describe socialists. See how subtle changes on the uses of our expressions can impact directly to connections to the past?

So, I think that part of my interest in the topic was also to create some sort of conceptual separation from what is happening in Europe. I think there are a lot of theorists today who are trying to just say, well these phenomena are all just populism, right or left do not exist anymore. Latin America’s experiences are not only not well understood, people tend to underestimate some of these new experiences. So, I just wanted in the paper that you have read - I wanted to be especially provocative in the sense I have explained above, by saying that if they think it is possible to put all different experiences and ways of doing politics as the same, they are plainly wrong. These examples that I just describe dealt with issues about social justice, better redistribution, judicial and material justice and they built up new ways of constructing constitutional changes that were so powerful that it would be unfair to them just to brand them with a pejorative label. I did not mention José Mujica, the former president of Uruguay, who had been imprisoned for decades because of his earlier activism, but he was one of the most interesting politicians of today too. So, this is the main point: using the concept of “populism” erases any specificity in terms of understanding what happened in each one of these countries. So, my main point first is to signal that there must be a separation between what is going on in Europe with nationalism, chauvinism, xenophobia, and what happened recently in South America. And I am not even including now the United States. That said, there is something else happening in the United States and now in Mexico. Each deserves careful examination and historical basis. So, all I want to say is that by this concept indiscriminately one describes all which is nothing at all. It is a barrier on our understanding and lead us into many mistakes. I want to have the kind of very careful, sort of analysis of each one of the countries and to focus on their specific problems.

The word populism is an umbrella term and it can potentially overlook the very specific social, economic and political circumstances of each country in which a populist regime come to power. When we use the term populism as kind of catchall umbrella term, it could be considered a paradigmatic insult. Do you think we are painting populism with a broad brush and could we consider it, on either the right or left, a critique of liberalism?

PL: Yes. That is a very good point. I think that what we have to focus on is: the ultra-right critiques use the weapons of the problems that have become routinely presented such as the loss of jobs, the post-industrial global world, the lack of sovereignty, the loss of jobs to promote their own white supremacist views. While the progressive left has understood that the agenda of neo-liberal has only brought poverty, the precarious ways of losing social rights, and only the 1% has gotten richer. So, we must ask what the problem is with the neoliberal policies and why have they lost hegemony, while the critique runs the danger of being used for very opportunistic reasons. Caution with this. Yes. Yes. It's a very good point.

With that, when I think of what has been considered either neo-populism or right wing populism, it is a bit ambiguous that this style of populism is a critique of neo-liberalism because I see it as advancing the neo-liberal agenda.

PL: Well, one of the interesting question for us is to focus on how the logics of contingencies that Ernesto Laclau observed in his book when right-wing social movements learn to use and adopt some of the claims from the progressive critique and with the purposes of expropriating the present unrest of many people. A good example of that is how Marine Le Pen claims that they are the ones who actually worry about the how the middle class has lost ground in economic terms and how climate change has become now part of their own agenda. Even these radical right movements are against neo-liberalism, but their goals are the opposite of those progressive movements who questioned the status quo of neo-liberalism. First of all, they hate globalization. All of them hate globalization. That is because they hate immigrants and refugees and mostly this argument of recovering sovereignty has been used in Europe in Hungary with Victor Orbán, and in Italy with Matteo Salvini, in England with the Brexit and Johnson, and then in the United States with Donald Trump. I think that when Trump realized at the very beginning how when he talked about the wall his followers multiplied, a strategy he learned from Steve Bannon and his advisers, he has followed it through and through in an even more radical fashion (white supremacist). So, in the end, it's all about how the precarious ways in which middle classes have been thrown into poverty where people want to blame the immigrants. But in fact, this is how neo-liberalism works. The opened discussion about state sovereignty can be framed as "Make America Great Again" or as the Brexiteers say "Take Back Control". It is true, with globalization sovereignty has lost ground, but neo-liberals discarded long ago that the state's main goal is to protect the people, these social policies are costly and therefore the economic institutions do not want state intervention. The global financial institutions are the ones who are really making the policies for the states. One of the things about neo-liberalism, the primary agenda of neo-liberalism, is to cut out all social programs and their agenda is to make the state as thin as possible. State spending was all about austerity in Europe. And when Obama helped the recovery of the economy from its crisis, they took the people's taxes to pay and bailed out banks and financial institutions but

failed to demand accountability from them. It helped the economy, but mainly those institutions went back to their vicious practices. This has been experienced in all these societies like Europe, especially, but also in the United States because they did not create regulations against financial gains. We cannot take this decision too lightly because, every decision let us say in Europe, every decision of the economy lacks a political connection and when a government like the Greeks wanted to improve social spending, and it was sanctioned by the European Union. But the European Union is not a political identity, it is only an economic identity. So, when you consider Greece, they had spent a lot of money (with the advice of Global financial institutions) and they were in great debt. When Syriza won the elections, they wanted to recover social programs: to have social healthcare, to restore the pensions for all people which had been drastically cut. And when Tsipras won the elections, he won because people wanted to recover some sense of sovereignty, with good social programs for their society. So, on the one hand, the global institutions allow people to perceive a loss of political sovereignty. On the other hand, the so called "populists"-- like the Syriza government in Greece --wanted to recover their possibility of social spending but were forced to comply to the demands of the rescue by financial institutions. And most of the European right-wing social movements have emerged or have appeared as making the demand to recover what they think they have lost due to immigrants and mobility. Especially working people, who for them, globalization meant that most of the so called, well developed countries de-industrialized themselves resulting in job loss because it was cheaper to move industries to poor countries with less social rights for the workers. To have these big industries, these maquilas in Mexico, in Tijuana, in India, and in China, meant that the people from these countries could work in very poor conditions, with very low salaries, and in the places where the enforcement of workers' rights is almost inexistent, like my country or in India, etc. People are working under horrible conditions. For very low salaries. So, the money goes all the way back to, not to the country where the workers are situated, but back to the person who owns the industry, to the so called elite who are the real owners of businesses like Ford, Chrysler, etc. So, what has happened in places like Detroit is that many white workers became unemployed. So, the workers were left with nothing. For them it seemed like the immigrants are getting their jobs, their claim was "oh, they're, they're stealing our jobs!" A lot of this kind of reactions happened in England where English workers thought that the Polish workers were stealing their jobs because of the European Union mobility. So the Brexit was a movement fed by ultra conservative right wing organizers like Nigel Farage or Boris Johnson (the actual Prime Minister) who thought Europe had eroded United Kingdom's sovereignty and they wanted their "control back" (that was the slogan invented for the Brexit). The English workers were all also against neo-liberalism, they want something different than what has been their sense of loss in their precarious lives. Instead of making claims that have to do with justice and inclusion, they are easily manipulated, and their claims appeared as wanting to exclude the foreigners. I mean, they feel excluded, but they also want to get rid of immigrants, get rid of refugees, and think that they can get back some sovereignty with the Brexit. And in their view, women have taken a lot of power also - they felt that they should do something about this. These expressions just tell you how the ultra-right has learned to use some of the grievances to procure the worst kind of exclusionary claims. Just look at how Donald Trump incited people in a meeting to scream when

he asked: “What should we do with the immigrants who are rapists and drug dealers?” and the people replied “killed them” (sic).

Would it be fair to say that populism on the left is about social justice and equality and populism on the right is a social and economic agenda focusing on restrictionism as far as restrictionist economic policies?

PL: You know, going back to the past with – “Make America Great Again”, or “Take back Control” as Brexiteers claimed that England needed – are expressions that belong to a mythical tale of greatness from the past in the case of the USA, and in the case of England, it was inspired by a long history of thinking that The United Kingdom is not really Europe but something else, nobody knows what that is anymore. That is one of the problems. The question is trying to figure out how the shadows of manipulation from the “populism on the right” expresses hatred and sees itself as a closed entity. Populism is better thought of as a logic of coincidences on what is not working, but then, the goals begin to clarify themselves to us as people are easily manipulated when their situations have worsened. As a concept, populism loses density when it is applied to all social movements from the right and the left. Understanding means something like making distinctions in the sense of how Hannah Arendt thought that historical analysis is one key element to our contextual understanding. We must follow the trail of experiences and structural changes that lead these different social movements here, because sometimes as they have made alliances with other groups that are right wing we learn to see that something horrible can happen. The left side of movements must be careful to make alliances because of these same goals. A good idea is to see how they conceive the state’s policies: either as right wing with the claim of “law and order” or the state spends on social programs of social inclusion and craft policies to help the redistribution of wealth. The state has to be involved in social health care, in public education, and all of these kinds of problems relate to how the budget of the state is organized with a public view of needs. I think that the young people in the United States see these problems more clearly than ever, especially, after Bernie Sanders has run for a second time for the primary elections of the Democratic Party. He retired from the candidacy, but his agenda is clearly now less questioned even among the some of the people in the Democratic Party. So, I think that the left in the past was very suspicious of the state. Again, there was a lot of anti-statism mainly dealing with how Marx was interpreted. So, one part of what is happening today is that the social movements that are progressive want to be elected, to have the power to enact agendas of social justice. The only way to gain power is through elections. So, the state has gained track among those who were first suspicious about it because without structural and systemic change there is nothing that we can do to alleviate our present needs.

In your article you mentioned how the use of populism as a concept has deterred theorists from really analyzing the difference between progressive and regressive groups. I was wondering if you had any predictions or ideas about the upcoming US election, what route it might take. So will populism become a topic of discussion this election cycle?

PL: The Americans have one interesting tradition that is different from other countries and Americans and so do the Argentinians and the Russians. By the way, Americans have a past of progressive populism with Roosevelt. And it was a very important experience for the health of

that society then. So, it was not something reactionary. It was not something to be scared of. Michael Kazin, who is an active historian, has written very good books on the subject. He said something like, you should not be surprised that in the United States there is this big legacy of populism. In the previous election, I thought that the progressive people were disappointed because Bernie Sanders did not win the nomination to become the candidate. And when Hillary Clinton won nobody understood why Mexicans were so scared that Trump was going to win. Hilary Clinton was not the good candidate to beat Trump, but the progressives thought that she would win because she was a woman. But that was not the point. She was a declared neo-liberal and the younger generations did not see real change with her candidacy. For many people there was no reason to worry, some of them even voted for an independent candidate or did not vote at all. Right now, I think that what is happening in the United States could have been a very interesting moment. I think that the word populism now appears with Trump. A scarier word appeared behind Bernie Sanders since they all said that “he is a Socialist”!!! Trump had big possibilities because the economy was well and he made sure to take a great deal of protective measures against the mobility of capital outside of the United States. But he has helped the elites in terms of what Andrea Bernstein’s new book calls them “oligarchs”. He has also stirred and supported the ultra-right claims of White Supremacy. Trump has not really been a populist in every way, he is an authoritarian who lacks any interest other than his own agenda. And this is something that confuses people but it should not. As I have explained before, the grievances from people make them very manipulative so feeding their sense of victims allows him to stand behind horribly cruel causes. He is an authoritarian, vindictive oligarch, corrupted to the bone, and willing to destroy each and every possible institution that impedes him to do as he wishes. It is not only Charlottesville, it is his selection of the judges appointed to the Supreme Court, it is William Barr interfering with prosecutions on the charges of corruption, his staff, and the way he corrupted the entire Republican Party by erasing any trace of decency in them. It is scary. We are now entering a site of unprecedented experience with the crisis of the coronavirus. So now that Biden is the clear candidate of the Democratic Party, but it will be interesting to see how much of Bernie Sanders’ agenda will become the visible claims against the debacle in public health and education now that the United States is living one of the worst crisis of its history. It is very difficult to make any sort of prognosis as things stand now. Trump has tried to manage the crisis to help his campaign, but that does not mean that all people can see themselves as before the crisis started. Again, we are now in a logic of possible contingent choices and it is difficult to see what Americans can learn from this horrible time.

During the 2016 election in the United States, we saw a push on the Bernie side for economic redistribution and social equality and then we saw on the right, Trump’s campaign. The election in 2016 was, arguably, a situation in which the political center was shaken. Do you think this a symptom of capitalism in crisis?

PL: Yes, very good. I gave a plenary lecture on the concept of crisis in August 2019. Today we are confronting the full face of how countries have been challenged because of their poor spending on social health programs, but this is fundamentally linked to the problem of an unprecedented crisis of capitalism.

So, what do you think are the long-term implications for world as a result of both politics and capitalism being in crisis?

PL: First of all, I think that Marx already thought that crisis of capitalism was going to go one after the other and that is why in his theory, he thought capitalism would be self-destructive. But his prognosis of it being self-destroying was that something else was going to emerge. And that is as far as he got in predicting what a post-capitalist society would look like. But with Karl Polanyi's *The Great Transformation* we see something much more complex because he understood a different moment of history that Marx had not seen at all. Marx lived in the industrialization of England, but he was right: capitalism lives through new contingent historical crisis. The concept of crisis means, in the Greek, to decide, to make a separation, to have a previous collective deliberation between two different choices or possibilities. That is how the Greeks used the conception of *krisis*. So, Marx was right in the sense that it is self-destructive, but Polanyi then thought that there always come social movements fostering upheavals, demanding social rights, and demanding better salaries. These are social rights as we know them, or social entitlements if you want to call them that. Marx never talked about the development of rights, rather he focused on better conditions for workers in every way, better conditions for life. Capitalism has been so incredibly malleable that it has integrated some of those criticisms in order to reproduce itself. You introduce measures and reforms and according to Polanyi, the Great Transformation is the development of what we call now the welfare state. Which means the state had the task of making possible a redistribution of wealth, but also to force enterprises, companies, etc., to give workers some social entitlements or social rights. So, what happened was that in Europe and in other countries such as the United States, Australia, etc. workers were having better lives, so they did not want to create a revolution. Why? Because they all had their apartments, their cars, all these things that capitalism got involved in creating and making for consumer's society. Karl Polanyi was right by arguing that without any social upheaval and struggles by different actors, capitalism would have remained the same. But, when capitalism reacts, it accommodates some of the criticisms to keep going. So, we are now in a moment where we are leading an unprecedented crisis and at this point, what will come of it is not very clear. We do not have any assurance of anything. But if anything needs to be learned is what have been the priorities of countries who did not want to spend on ample social health care for all and we are now seeing how vulnerable their people are because of those very bad decisions. It is also important to reconsider that many of the consumers' choices now seem so irrelevant when you realized that hospitals do not have enough resources to cope with this terrible pandemic. Health care for all now seems something very different from how people saw it before. And the people in hospitals have also began to be regarded as more important than we ever thought. So, what you're seeing in the United States depended on the things that Bernie Sanders' brought with his agenda and people might not be seeing him anymore as scary "socialist", but as making health care a necessity and the only proper thing to do after this global experience. We might learn to consider care not only as a given and women as being the primary responsible for doing this very badly paid job. A policy about care should not be a private possibility, but a public right for all.

In thinking about capitalism in crisis. How would a crisis affect Venezuela or Nicaragua?

PL: Nicaragua is a country where his leader has lost its track. Their authoritarian past (Somoza was the famous dictator for many years) has returned with a different political actor. We need to contextualize how each country deals with their past and to understand how their particular experiences are opened or not by the way they handle their past experiences. In the case of Venezuela, like in the case of Cuba, because they bare some similarities, in the very beginning it was the problem of the sanctions from the United States and Europe which were imposed on these countries and has led them to face very difficult conditions. Cuba was almost strangled economically, but their social health care system worked well and they have education free for all. Venezuela is a very poor country and compared to Cuba is bigger and more complex. Chávez declared himself socialist and immediately George W. Bush imposed sanctions and worked to get rid of Chávez. He was beloved and daring, but he also had to deal with difficult decisions. Chávez was confrontational and in very open terms as I remember one of his speeches at the United Nations when he came right after Bush and exclaimed in public: “The air smells like sulfur”. The reference is a mirror image of how the United States portrayed Chávez’s regime as evil. After his death, Nicolás Maduro had a difficult task to continue fighting not only against sanctions but with open help from the United States to organize a coup with Juan Guaidó. I know that Pompeo has worked very hard to make the life of Venezuelans impossible and they say that Maduro is trying to set a deal for a peaceful transition with the United States (sic). So, my experience is that the United States has always intervened in the affairs of Latin America, protecting themselves by making sure that those other countries remain governed by puppets rather than independent progressive leaders.

I was 13 years old when Allende was elected in Chile and before he had to endure a coup led by his General Pinochet, he committed suicide. The middle classes and the elites were very active in saying “take this government away from us” and the Americans fought all the way to help Pinochet’s accomplished his coup and accepted the bloody years of his dictatorship. Previously, they worked hart with many people and organizations to have all the goods of consumption taken away so that the people would be very desperate and when the coup came, of course, with a lot of help and organization form the United States, it was a massacre. Years after Pinochet still had tea with Margaret Thatcher until he was indicted for his crimes against humanity led by the Spanish Judge Baltazar Garzón. Chile became the first experiment of the policies created by the neo-liberal intelligence working in the universities. So, I have seen this tragedy happened.

The question with Cuba, is that even with all the sanctions they have never been able to take away the revolution for the Cubans. John F. Kennedy organized an invasion that failed but it was known as the invasion of The *Bahia de Cochinos*. So that is the point, if the involvement of the United States in Latin America had ceased for a moment, maybe things could have been different. United States involvement has returned now and my objection to Juan Guaidó in Venezuela is that he has been completely financed by the United States and this is a terrible alliance. So, to finish the point, yes, I think Maduro has inherited a legacy of difficulties and he has not been capable of reacting better, but who could under his circumstances? In spite of that, he is still in power and that can only mean that there are many people who still back them. He is

also a very confrontational figure, and this kind of attitude does not help. This is why I am very much against Chantal Mouffe's work on confrontational politics. Mouffe says that "agonism" means regarding your enemies as political adversaries framed in the conflictive political realm where some limits can be established. But the opposite is the case, confrontational attitudes like Trump's behavior towards his opponents, for example, have made political life in the United States terrible, vicious, and plagued with perils. Trump has given voice to those who did not dare to say what they thought and now they can say it, like the previous example where Trump asked his followers-- "What do we do with immigrants?"—and the people replied "kill them". I think it is obvious that Donald Trump's strategy constructs enemies as a way to bolster his image with his followers. It is not so obvious that the same strategy is done by Nicolás Maduro since he always relates his enemies to the strategies that the United States are doing to remove him from power. But in Nicaragua's persecution of the opposition by Daniel Ortega is something else. He and his wife Rosario Murillo, who is the Vice-president, betrayed the spirit of the Sandinista Revolution.

And now, my understanding is that Ortega is a neoliberal representing a complete shift.

PL: Ortega is getting much worse than Maduro in many ways. The openly spectacular question with regards to Maduro is that anything that helps us to visualize Venezuela as the rottenest place in the world, will help the United States to accomplish the end of that failed experiment. The recent power outages in Venezuela have been organized and financed by the United States and this is going to explode in the news soon. And all the military who left Venezuela are left out, they are abandoned in Colombia. Now they do not know what to do, and they don't receive any help from the U.S. or from Colombia. They were just used. Europe had Africa and the United States has South America. I think that we should recover here a critique of neocolonialism. I think that it is time for Americans and Europeans to realize how intertwined the fate of the political failures of Latin America or Africa are related to having been colonies. Of course, there were many mistakes made by Chávez, but we need time and space to criticize how and what happened there. He also had the charisma which Maduro lacks. And of course, politics is not always the realm of rationality that we could wish, it is a complex world because people who love their leaders can follow them blindly. And leaders can make big mistakes too and be pernicious, malevolent, authoritarian, etc. In a way that is a legacy that Maduro burned completely because if Chávez had not had cancer, he might have lasted longer and perhaps might have had a better chance to succeed in his project. And a lot of people would still be fascinated by him.

The problem with Maduro is not only that he lacks charisma, his mistakes piled up with living on dire conditions due to the secret war organized by the USA. When he speaks, he sounds so cliché. So, the perseverance of the leaders depends a lot on their charisma. And this is one of the things that we have now to learn to consider a better understanding because I think that everybody thought we do not need the Hitler-like charisma anymore. Of course, we see all these movies and documentaries and we do not understand how so many people supported him, but he was able to capture the worst on people and he was regarded as a charismatic leader.

Of course, sometimes Trump has been said to have some sort of charisma when he speaks to the people, that is why he loves speaking because he manipulates the needed reaction from the

people. Nobody wanted to consider studying the charisma of leaders except for Max Weber, of course, because charisma has nothing to do with something that we cannot control or that we can learn rationally to set limits to it. But in politics we need to consider charisma as an important element and take it seriously. It is a very important element in populism as it is also demagogues. So, we should not close the door on how people react to the charisma of leaders and how people are manipulated by means that are not rational at all.

So, I am going to talk about it today because I am going to propose a concept of the social imaginary. Because if we do not consider that we're completely closing ourselves to the most predominant element of political activism of a leader or leaders. Working with the emotions, make populists a special kind of leaders who employ emotions to surround their claims with a theatrical sort of performance. So, I think that understanding what charisma is should be important and we should learn from how it has been used in the past. People who feel victims can be easily manipulated. Nothing is more hurtful than when you have been left out of the dignity of having a job or meaningful participation in society, especially for aging people. This is an important problem. Programs of social inclusion and justice are very different from those exclusionary ways in which victimization led to horrible outcomes. So, the main question is how do we discriminate among different claims and why? Consider, for example, how old people should be able to have some sense of meaningfulness and purpose in life. And when they do not have it if these things hurt. Claims about care and health should be the frame so that justice is what prevails. So yes, it is a moment that has a lot of things to do with justice, not hatred. We just have to be very careful on how we want to consider all these elements and carefully craft distinctions and contexts. I prefer being very delicate by separating conflicts and histories and then being able to learn something about these differences.