



Engaging Populism

Democracy and
the Intellectual Virtues

Edited by Gregory R. Peterson
Michael C. Berhow · George Tsakiridis

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction: Populism and the Significance of the Intellectual Virtues

*Gregory R. Peterson, Michael C. Berhow,
and George Tsakiridis*

INTRODUCTION

Recent decades have witnessed a slow but accelerating rise of populist movements across the globe. Once primarily seen as a type of movement at the margins of political expression, populist politicians have recently risen to leadership in both North America and Europe. Especially since the 2016 presidential election and the United Kingdom's vote to leave the European Union, academics and political commentators have sought to understand what many once thought impossible. A quick overview of mainstream outlets includes multiple articles about whether Donald Trump is a populist (Lind 2016; Friedman 2017; Rice-Oxley and Kalia 2018; Martin and Heberman 2019), discussions about Boris Johnson and his populist push for Brexit (Smith 2019; Grice 2019; Boot 2019), and pieces about the

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populist movements of Senators Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren (Cassidy 2016; Epstein and Hook 2017; Cantrell 2019; Sullivan and Costa 2020). It is noteworthy that the populist label gets attached to opposing political movements—Trump and Johnson on the political right, Sanders and Warren on the political left. When one examines populism from a global and historical perspective, moreover, this noteworthy feature remains. Populism, it seems, does not fit neatly into existing ideological categories. Thus, a diverse set of political actors can, as John Judis notes, all properly be identified as populist—“from the Russian Narodniks to Huey Long, and from France’s Marine Le Pen to the late congressman Jack Kemp” (Judis 2016, 13).

Philosophers have generally eschewed reflection on the significance of particular political movements. Although the literature is replete with fine-grained analyses of Liberalism, Marxism, Socialism, Nationalism, and (more recently) Cosmopolitanism, these are not understood as political movements but rather as systems of thought. While examples of such engagement exist—Arendt’s (1951) *The Origins of Totalitarianism* perhaps being the most important—they are relatively rare. Part of the aim of this volume is to suggest that this is an error, and that much can be learned by consideration of the dynamics that inform and propel political movements such as populism. The approach of this volume is novel as well, in that it engages populism from the perspective of ongoing work on the intellectual virtues. Although study of intellectual virtues has matured significantly in recent decades, it is only relatively recently that scholars have begun to explore the relevance of intellectual virtues and vices for political cognition. The current volume is thus doubly novel, first in its philosophical engagement of populism, and second in its employment of work on intellectual virtues to help understand and engage the phenomenon. Such work is best done in interdisciplinary collaboration, and, in this vein, this volume recruits contributions from philosophy, political and moral psychology, history, legal studies, and religious studies to aid in the task.

Populism is initially perplexing: How can a single descriptor adequately apply to such opposing political ideologies? Political scientists have wrestled with this question for some time. One such answer—as will be further explained below—is that populism is perhaps best articulated as a “thin” rather than a “thick” ideology (Inglehart and Norris 2017; Mudde and Kaltwasser 2018; Kyle and Gultchin 2018). That is, populism is a general worldview that pits a “corrupt elite” against a “true and noble people.” As thin ideology, this view of the world can piggyback on thicker ideologies that may or may not be in conflict with each other. In addition, this duality

is typically portrayed in a deeply divisive way, employing harsh, often moralizing language that allows no room for rapprochement or compromise. The anti-elite stance of populism can also entail a deep distrust of expertise, including entire fields of study when their conclusions contradict the “people’s will.”

This negative evaluation of expertise by populist movements is but one of several possible entry points for reflection on populism and intellectual virtues. The purpose of this volume is to examine this and similar questions, including to what extent movements such as populism reflect the operation of particular epistemic virtues and vices. There are many ways to address a question like this. Consider the ongoing debate over the significance of “expert knowledge” (see Nichols 2017). Given the influence of populism, one could identify experts with the conspiring elite, where those elites are then in conflict with ordinary citizens (see Hazlett, this volume). In rejecting such expertise, it may be argued that individual populists simply lack relevant facts, and that correction of these empirical mistakes is all that is needed. In such a case, the populist who rejects expertise may not be any more epistemically virtuous or vicious than anyone else. But it also may be that populists are prone to certain kinds of vices that lead them to reject expertise, or it could be the case that experts themselves possess certain vices (either moral or epistemic) that contribute to such rejections. The relevance of such debate is obvious when considering, say, political arguments over climate change, conflicts over racial injustice and police brutality, disagreements about wearing masks in public, the vaccine wars, or other critical issues that currently divide U.S. citizens.

While philosophical reflection on intellectual virtues and vices is often highly abstract, the implications are immensely practical. Should I trust my Google search or my medical doctor? Is an expert opinion more valuable than the wisdom of the crowd? How should trust in expertise be restored after the experts admit to lying? When is an Internet source credible? Questions like these illustrate why a volume like this is relevant within our current political climate. They also provoke deeper questions about how to promote constructive civic dialogue that leads to human flourishing. Such questions include:

- (1) Are there intellectual virtues that disproportionately contribute to the epistemic functioning of democracy and to wise democratic deliberation?

- (2) What institutional factors contribute to the formation of civic-oriented intellectual virtues, and what factors impair their functioning?
- (3) What is the relation between populism as a phenomenon and civic-oriented intellectual virtues?
- (4) To what extent might populist movements reflect a failure or functioning of specific intellectual virtues?
- (5) What is the relation between intellectual virtues and cognitive biases?

These deeper questions shape much of the content in this book. While the literature on populism within political science is robust, and philosophers have developed sophisticated accounts of moral and intellectual virtues, less effort has been taken so far to apply reflection on intellectual virtues to political theory, let alone to the dynamics of political movements. This volume aims to correct this situation.

POPULISM: A BRIEF HISTORY

How we understand the history of populism depends on what we conceive populism to be, but a conventional starting place is the emergence of the Populist Party at the end of the nineteenth century in the United States. This early American populism was primarily agrarian in character, but it allied and intersected with emerging union movements, with which they shared the conviction that producers should receive a larger percentage of the proceeds deriving from the fruits of their labor than was currently the case (McMath 1995). For these populists, monopolies and the corrupt economic and political system that supported them were the enemy, and the aim was to return political power to the populace, where it rightfully belonged. It is from this early American form of populism that the term “populist” descends, and it was coined intentionally as a derivation of the *populus*, Latin for “the people” (McMath 1995, 146).

Nineteenth-century American populism is distinctive in its affirmation of itself as “populist”; whether it is the first genuinely populist movement is another question. The late nineteenth century also produced a Russian form of populism, although it was characterized by the idealization of peasant life by Russian intellectuals rather than a movement among the peasants themselves (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2013). Some American populists drew inspiration from Andrew Jackson’s presidency in the first half

of the nineteenth century, and scholars sometimes cite both Jackson's presidency and the course of the French Revolution as examples of early forms of populism. Slightly further back, Jean-Jacques Rousseau's (1987) conception of the general will is understood by some scholars (e.g., Mudde 2007) as giving scholarly expression to the core conception of the "people's will," even though Rousseau's thought plays little direct role in populism's later development.

Understandably, contemporary social scientists give greater weight to current forms of populism, the roots and character of which are diverse. Much attention has been given to both Latin American and European populisms, which have some features in common but are distinctive in several ways. While Latin American populism found early expression in Argentina under Juan Perón in the mid-twentieth century, the continent experienced new waves of leadership by the end of the twentieth century that ranged considerably in their economic policies while nevertheless sharing characteristic patterns of rhetoric and leadership. Thus, while Peru's Alberto Fujimori and other Latin American populists of his period endorsed free markets and the liberalizing of the economy, left-leaning policies have been typical of more recent populists such as Hugo Chávez in Venezuela and Evo Morales in Bolivia. The development of Latin American left-leaning populisms stands in stark contrast to the European experience, where right-wing forms of populism have been more typical and influential. These movements also have roots in the late twentieth century, gathering steam in the wake of the signing of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 that gave birth to the European Union. According to Cas Mudde (2007), this radical right-wing European populism, typified by politicians such as Jean-Marie Le Pen, Marine Le Pen, Silvio Berlusconi, and Geert Wilders, conjoins populist rhetoric with both nativism and authoritarianism. As in the Latin American case, Mudde argues that the economic issues that typically divide liberals and conservatives are not central to populist identity; rather, they are exploited opportunistically in pursuit of their nativist and authoritarian commitments.

Although it was in the United States that populism found early expression, it was only in the 2016 election cycle that populism achieved significant enough acceptance to successfully play a major role in presidential politics. Here both right-wing and left-wing forms of populism have found expression, with Donald Trump successfully leading right-wing populists while Bernie Sanders' presidential campaigns gave expression to its left-wing form. The success of populism in the U.S is contemporaneous with

the global rise of populism more generally, and the twenty-first century has experienced a marked global rise of governments led by populists (Kyle and Gultchin 2018), including not only the United States but also countries as diverse as India (under Narendra Modi) and the Philippines (under Rodrigo Duterte). The duration of this current wave is difficult to predict, but populism in its current form is unlikely to disappear anytime soon, and its effects will be felt for decades to come.

DEFINING POPULISM: SOCIAL SCIENTIFIC APPROACHES

The term “populism” has and continues to be used in several different ways. On first analysis, it might be thought that populism is simply identical with democracy, and the agrarian American populists who coined the term perhaps had something like this in mind. Although there is no clear direct line of influence, the rhetoric of populism at times evokes Rousseau’s conception of the general will as the expression of the mutual interest of the people, and Mudde and Kaltwasser (2013) cite Rousseau’s general will as one of the core concepts informing populism. Among contemporary philosophers, however, populism is rarely discussed. When it is, it is typically raised in the context of debates over the proper relation of majority rule versus the protection of individual rights (e.g., Richardson 2002). Similarly, political scientist William Riker in his *Liberalism against Populism* (Riker 1988) sought to discredit the intelligibility of populism as majority rule on theoretic grounds. Populism has often been used as a term of opprobrium, perhaps most famously by Richard Hofstadter (1965), who saw in populism evidence of the “paranoid style” of American politics. To be populist is to be crude and ignorant at best, dangerous to democracy at worst. Despite an effort led by Ionescu and Gellner (1969) in the 1960s to develop a scholarly consensus on the defining characteristics of populism for purposes of empirical investigation, the term has since been used in different but related ways, and there have been doubts about whether the term “populism” defines any one thing or is simply ambiguous in its usage. After all, it is difficult to see what commonality exists between the late Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez and, say, Marine Le Pen, the prominent leader of the radical right in France.

Benjamin Moffitt (2016) has recently argued for the existence of three distinct usages of the term among current researchers, adding his own fourth conception, which understands populism as a “political style” adopted primarily on the part of politicians in their efforts to achieve and

maintain political power. For Moffitt, populist leaders are distinctive not only in their radical contrast of the people and corrupt elites, but also in their clever usage of new forms of media as an effort to connect “directly” with the people and in their use of crude language as a means of signaling identity with the common people. In contrast, other scholars have argued that populism can be understood as a strategy pursued by political leaders (Weyland 2001) or as a discourse, an approach Moffitt attributes to Kirk Hawkins (Hawkins and Littvay 2016).

It is the final approach identified by Moffitt, populism as a “thin” ideology, that at the moment appears to have the greatest support. As mentioned above, this approach represents a worldview that pits a corrupt elite against a true and noble people. Hawkins describes this worldview as a political discourse that “frames democracy as a struggle between the will of the common people and a conspiring elite” (Hawkins 2019, 8). Some have objected, however, that such framing is too problematic, inadequately accounting for the different roles that political actors, movements, and parties can play in populist movements. In response to this objection, Mudde and Kaltwasser agree that useful definitions must have the ability to exclude concepts that do not fit within the stated definition. When it comes to populism, then, a good definition must clarify the distinctions between populism and non-populism. For Mudde and Kaltwasser, there are at least two alternatives to populism, namely, elitism and pluralism (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2013, 499). Since elitism valorizes the role of elites, it parts sharply with populism’s anti-elitist critique, even though the elites may sometimes also appeal to “the people” as a means of justifying their own policy prescriptions. While pluralists may share with populists a critique of ruling elites, they reject the Manichaeic framing commonly at the heart of populist rhetoric. It is this understanding of populism as a “thin ideology” that is adopted by many of the contributors to this volume and which continues to have the greatest impact in the empirical study of populism.

CHARACTERISTICS OF MODERN POPULISM

If populism is indeed best construed as a thin ideology, then one might think that the only distinguishing feature of populism is its Manichaeic distinction between the virtuous people and the corrupt elite. Despite this, there are a few features that, if not universal, are at least somewhat

common and which appear to associate with populism in a way distinctive from other ideologies.

As already noted, Moffitt has argued that populist leaders are distinctive in their employment of crude language and behaviors as a means of showing solidarity with the people. This may involve nothing more than conventional swearing, but it may also involve crude disparagements of women, immigrants, or minorities, and in the case of male leaders it may also include boasts concerning sexual prowess and virility. Hugo Chávez, Donald Trump, Silvio Berlusconi, and Rodrigo Duterte have employed versions of this rhetorical style. Moffitt has also argued that populist leaders show a deftness with the use of communication technologies. This is certainly true of Donald Trump, who has wielded his Twitter account to great effect, and it is also true of Silvio Berlusconi, who owned his own media company. But other populist leaders do not always demonstrate the same facility.

The greatest worry concerns the relation of populism and democracy, since there now exists a long list of individual populist leaders who were elected through free and fair elections but, once elected, progressively employ the power of the state to restrict electoral competition to their own considerable advantage. Latin America's experiments with populism show that this tendency has not been restricted to the right or left, demonstrated respectively by the presidencies of Fujimori in Peru and Chávez in Venezuela, among others. The creep of populist authoritarianism is widespread, and the employment of authoritarian rhetoric is considered by Mudde (2007) as a defining feature of European radical right populism. Since populism is centrally concerned with the expression of the will of the people, the willingness to violate democratic norms at first seems perplexing. From the perspective of the populist, however, elections that meet standard liberal criteria of being free and fair are anything but, since the existing system is already "rigged" to favor the elites already in power. Populist voters thus seem to endorse moves by politicians to restrict freedom of the press, since the press is controlled by interests that serve the elites rather than the people. Mudde and Kaltwasser (2013) argue that populism is thus compatible with a model of "competitive authoritarianism" (Levitsky and Way 2010) that endorses a thin conception of democracy in terms of the mere holding of elections, but it is in tension with liberal conceptions of democracy that emphasize the protection of individual civil liberties that are to be protected against even the will of the majority. Aytaç and Elçi (2019) argue that this tension is expressed

through criticism of institutions of horizontal accountability, not only a free press but also courts and constitutional limits that restrain the domain of the popular vote and which collectively, from the populist's perspective, serve the interests of the ruling class.

Several other characteristics are also sometimes associated with populism. Nativism, the view that the country belongs only to those who meet certain ethnic and perhaps religious criteria, is particularly associated with right-wing populism globally. It is less associated with left-wing populism, though some evidence for it can be found among the left-wing populisms of Latin America, most notably in Bolivia (Madrid 2008). Populism also appears both to contribute to and benefit from polarization, a dynamic that one can see especially in the United States, where increasing polarization preceded the emergence of populism on the national stage, and the emergence of populism has if anything contributed to its acceleration. Although more work needs to be done, evidence suggests an association between support of populism and susceptibility to conspiracy theories and rejection of science. Recent work by Castanho Silva et al. (2017) reveal a general association between populist convictions contrasting the people and the elite on the one hand and proneness to conspiracy-theorizing on the other, and another study by Kennedy (2019) indicates an association between levels of anti-vaccine attitudes and levels of voter support for populist parties on a national level in Europe. Plausible reasons can be given for both, and the role of conspiracy-theorizing and anti-science attitudes in the context of political life is fertile ground for reflection on the intellectual virtues, whether these tendencies are strongly associated with populism or not.

It is important to note that none of these factors, with the possible exception of nativism, are particularly associated with either the left or the right as traditionally conceived. Authoritarianism has both its left and right variants, and conspiracy theories can be found on both ends of the political spectrum. Populism thus does not fit neatly into the conventional way we approach politics, and as such it suggests the need for new kinds of analysis.

THE INTELLECTUAL VIRTUES: OLD AND NEW

Can current reflection on the intellectual virtues shed light on populism and democratic functioning? Many of the contributors to this volume answer in the affirmative. To understand why, it is helpful to provide a

brief overview of the intellectual virtues. Reflection on the virtues has a long history, with roots in both Plato and especially Aristotle in ancient Greece in addition to parallel traditions in India and China. Recent decades have witnessed a resurgence of interest in intellectual virtues within epistemology, education, and psychology (see Code 1987; Zagzebski 1996; Adler 2004; Sosa 2009; Roberts and Wood 2009; Greco 2010). Within epistemology, this developed in the wake of a renaissance in ethics that focuses on Aristotle's virtue theory (see MacIntyre 2007). For epistemologists, the motives were multiple. Interest in virtue epistemology increased as awareness grew that important dimensions of epistemic performance could not be completely captured by formal models of belief formation and that the character of agents must also play a role, including the character of other agents from whom we acquire knowledge. Ernst Sosa's 1980 article "The Raft and the Pyramid" played an important role in generating interest in the idea that a proper conception of intellectual virtues could help solve seemingly intractable debates in epistemology between coherentists and foundationalists. This led to the development of sophisticated and competing accounts of intellectual virtues by the 1990s. Among these was Linda Zagzebski's groundbreaking work, in which she argued that the concurrent renaissance in virtue ethics was relevant for epistemology, specifically because most epistemologists, whether consciously or unconsciously, ground their notions of justification or warrant on some moral theory (Zagzebski 1996, 3-15).

In most cases, Zagzebski argued, the relevant moral theory involved in epistemology has been some notion of epistemic duty (deontology), where the responsible knowing agent is required to fulfill certain obligations to properly ground true beliefs. If the agent fulfills such obligations, then she is justified. If she does not, however, then she is blameworthy or guilty (see Plantinga 1993, 11-19). This perspective on justification represents the internalist camp, where the ability to justify beliefs resides inside the thinking agent. That is, a person *S* is justified in believing *p* if and only if "*S*'s believing *p*, as *S* did, was a good thing from the epistemic point of view, in that *S*'s belief that *p* was based on adequate grounds and *S* lacked sufficient overriding reasons to the contrary" (Alston 1985, 71). Importantly, internalism asserts that for *S* to know *p* entails that *S* has access to the reasons justifying *p* and can, ideally, state them.

In other more recent cases, some epistemologists have identified various problems with internalism, and instead have constructed alternative approaches to justification that are based in consequentialist

reasoning—such as reliabilism (Cohen 1984, 281-84). Reliabilism is a form of externalism, where: “The justificational status of a belief is a function of the reliability of the process or processes that cause it, where (as a first approximation) reliability consists in the tendency of a process to produce beliefs that are true rather than false” (Goldman 1979, 10). Or similarly, reliabilism has also been described as the idea “that a belief has [justification] if it is produced by a reliable belief-producing mechanism or power or faculty” (Plantinga 1993, 208). This perspective on justification avoids some of the problems with internalism, since it does not require a knowing agent to have special access to the fact that she has *justification* for her beliefs (Plantinga 1993, 183). One can be justified, in other words, simply if the outcome of a belief-producing mechanism is more reliably true than false.

Philosophers such as Sosa and, more recently, John Greco (2010), have argued for an account of intellectual virtues in reliabilist terms. Intellectual virtues just are those faculties, traits, or developed habits that reliably produce true beliefs. Zagzebski and other virtue theorists have rightly highlighted that the debate over internalism and externalism is at least partially grounded in moral theory—whether deontology or consequentialism (see Zagzebski 1996; Code 1987; Montmarquet 1993; Roberts and Wood 2009). They also argued that the various Gettier-type problems in epistemology remained unsolved by these approaches to justification, and thus there is room to explore whether virtue theory can provide help where deontology and consequentialism fall short. For example, there are a few things that I think I know but am also unable to justify from an internalist perspective, such as the belief that my sense perception generally (albeit fallibly) corresponds to the external world. From an externalist perspective, however, it is not necessary for me to provide such justification. An externalist might simply argue that I can assume that my cognitive faculties are functioning properly within a corresponding cognitive environment unless I have reason to think otherwise. If I am correct in this assumption, moreover, then I am justified in believing that my sense perceptions ground particular beliefs about the external world—even if I cannot explain how that process works, and even if I am not aware of how my beliefs are justified. For Zagzebski, however, since intellectual virtues are also moral virtues, we are responsible for them, and this would imply the possibility of both praise and blame for the development (or lack thereof) of specific intellectual virtues.

For the externalist, the virtues just are specific traits which are reliable in the production of true beliefs. To be open-minded or intellectually curious just is to be appropriately receptive to new information or to actively pursue information when questions present themselves. For the externalist, virtues may not be necessary for justified true belief—such beliefs may be the result of deliberation or the employment of explicit skills of deduction—but they regularly play an important role in belief formation, so much so that their absence negatively impacts an agent’s epistemic flourishing.

Of course, the externalist may still have several problems. One relevant problem is the issue of epistemic charity (see Berhow, this volume), which would seem to be necessarily definable in internalist terms. That is, my cognitive faculties might be functioning properly within a corresponding cognitive environment, but that does not necessarily mean that I am receptive to the deliverances of those faculties. For the internalist, this suggests that properly functioning cognitive faculties within a corresponding cognitive environment are not sufficient for justification. One must also have appropriate dispositions. Recognizing the importance of this additional moral requirement, however, opens up further questions about the importance of moral virtues when applied to epistemology. What other virtues are necessary for grounding true beliefs? Some common proposals are virtues like love of knowledge, open-mindedness, curiosity, intellectual courage, intellectual humility, and intellectual charity. Such virtues are examples of intellectual virtues.

An intellectual virtue, then, might be defined as the type of virtue needed for formation of true beliefs and, possibly, for one to justify true beliefs. More broadly, an intellectual virtue—as opposed to a moral virtue—is any virtue that is necessary to produce epistemic flourishing. Within this understanding of intellectual virtues, there is both a motivational component (for the internalist) and a reliability component (for both the internalist and the externalist, see Zagzebski 1996, 166). For the internalist, for a virtue to be considered an *intellectual* virtue, it must be motivated to obtain knowledge, and it must also be reliably successful at obtaining knowledge.

This brief survey provides only a sampling of what has become a rich source of reflection within philosophical epistemology. More recent work has begun to focus on a range of issues, including specific epistemic vices (Battaly 2018), epistemic injustice (Fricker 2007), and the relation of

philosophical accounts of intellectual virtues to situational impacts highlighted in social psychology (Samuelson and Church 2015).

POLITICS, POPULISM, AND APPLIED VIRTUE THEORY

For philosophers, there are several possible benefits for engaging populism. For the epistemologist, the phenomenon of populism presents a specific test case for thinking about how particular intellectual virtues and vices manifest in the leaders and members of political movements. Such consideration may also lead to reflection on categories of virtue and vice that had not been previously considered and which merit scrutiny and conceptual development. For the political philosopher who may already be reflecting on the significance of populist movements, engagement with work on intellectual virtues may aid in reflection and understanding of the epistemic functioning of democratic societies, contributing to existing work on epistemic injustice. Further, we can ask to what extent intellectual virtues are also civic virtues. While reflection on the importance of intellectual virtues and vices for political functioning is relatively recent, a more extensive literature exists with respect to civic virtues (e.g., Dagger 1997; Macedo 1990). Plausibly, these are intersecting sets, with some but not all intellectual virtues also being civic virtues, and some but not all civic virtues being intellectual virtues.

Such questions will be of most interest to the philosopher, but there is good reason to suppose that reflection on the role of intellectual virtues and vices may play in movements such as populism holds benefits as well for the political psychologist, the political scientist, and other social scientists focusing on political life. Like the social psychologist, the political psychologist may be initially skeptical concerning the very idea of intellectual virtues, since much of the literature in both fields aims to show how various situational factors, including surreptitiously or subconsciously priming people one way or another, can bias moral and political judgments (e.g., Haidt 2012). Despite this, some traits do endure over time, and individuals can learn to overcome standard susceptibility to certain kinds of logical fallacies, such as the gambler's fallacy. Learning simple heuristics can improve reasoning skills, even though they are imperfect and work only in specific contexts (Gigerenzer 2008). One issue here is that political psychologists have not really looked at the kinds of traits that philosophers have in mind when speaking of intellectual virtues. This is even true to some extent with respect to a much studied capacity such as

empathy. While there exists a massive literature on empathy, only a small proportion addresses the extent to which empathy may be nurtured or inhibited (Peterson 2017). A few existing studies are suggestive of the possibilities that reflection on intellectual virtues may have for political psychologists. A preliminary study by Blassnig et al. (2019) suggests that individuals holding right-wing populist views are more susceptible to logical fallacies than controls, and a series of studies by Dan Kahan et al. (2012, 2017) provides evidence for the joint premises that level of education by itself does not predict one's proclivity to accept the scientific consensus on climate change, but a specific disposition, what the researchers label "science curiosity," does.

Recognition of intellectual virtues as an area of study thus opens up a number of possible avenues of exploration for the psychologist investigating political cognition generally and populism specifically. Similar opportunities await the political scientist, who is more interested in impacts at the population level and the role that institutions play in shaping the attitudes of individuals. Pursuing these questions may require the development of new sets of tools, since it is not clear that the kind of self-report surveys commonly used by political scientists are sufficient to capture dynamics of intellectual virtues in a population. Some of the more interesting questions may concern the role of intellectual virtues and vices among political and economic elites and the extent to which specific institutions, including educational institutions, shape the formation of intellectual virtues and vices in ways that impact political decision-making and the formation of political movements. Some of these approaches may be applied to the study of populism itself. Populism may itself be a kind of movement that is ephemeral, a curiosity of late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century political life. But the long arc of the history of populism, with roots extending back to at least the nineteenth century, suggests otherwise. The populist temptation of dividing the polity into a virtuous people and corrupt elite is perhaps ever present, revealing deep-seated patterns of human cognition, structural features of political institutions, or both. We submit that understanding the answer to these questions is aided by an understanding of the role that intellectual virtues play in political cognition generally and populism specifically, and that reflection on intellectual virtues may have application to understanding political life more generally. The chapters comprising this volume are each in their own way contributions to this argument.

OVERVIEW

This volume is broken into four parts. The chapters in Part I set the stage, providing background reflections on populism from the perspectives of history, political psychology, and religious studies. Parts II and III focus on individual intellectual virtues and their significance for our understanding of populism and addressing its potential excesses. Part II draws on the already rich philosophical literature on intellectual virtues, while Part III develops an interdisciplinary approach integrating philosophy, psychology, religious studies, and legal studies. The chapters in Part IV in turn widen the scope of reflection, exploring the significance of intellectual virtues and vices for broader political functioning.

Part I—Putting Populism in Context

In Chap. 2, Ingrid J. Haas examines how research in political psychology can help to explain the motivations underlying citizens' attraction to populist ideologies and candidates. She argues that the same cognitive processes driving people toward populism are those that undermine the intellectual virtues, which in turn decrease support for democratic norms and can lead to democratic backsliding. In particular, her chapter examines the role of emotions like threat, uncertainty, and anger in driving both support for populism and decreasing tendencies to support open-minded discussion and debate. She also considers how misinformation and attraction to conspiracy theories plays a role in the link between populism and antidemocratic tendencies.

Chapter 3 provides a historical case study on populism in the United States. In it, Jeff Bloodworth notes that in many historical accounts, Populism as a competing platform spontaneously vanished from the political scene after the 1896 election. Fusion with the Democrats in 1896 might have undermined the People's Party, but it brought populists into the two-party mainstream, so much so that erstwhile rural populists were a vital piece of the New Deal coalition. Through alliance with Progressives and urban liberals, rural populists developed a worldview that was both "populist" and supportive of intellectual virtues. This chapter reveals how early-to-mid-twentieth-century populists in a political coalition with urban liberals developed a mature populism that promoted civic-oriented intellectual virtues.

After Bloodworth's historical survey, George Tsakiridis examines the relationship between populist movements and modern evangelicalism. He argues that evangelicals have historically proved to be early adopters of technology as a means to share their message with the largest possible audience. Similarly, contemporary populists have a reputation for appealing to the masses using social networks to share their ideology against the elites of the world. This chapter specifically looks at how social networks and technology are central to evangelical and populist methods of message propagation. Looking at the American context where evangelicalism arose, Tsakiridis shows that evangelicalism, populism, and technology are inextricably intertwined. In large part, this accounts for both the appeal of populism to the evangelical community and the current and historical growth of populism. By looking at this historical connection through the lens of the modern context and the rise of Donald Trump, Tsakiridis shows how social networks and technology more broadly are central to the religious populism we currently find in the United States in the form of the evangelical movement. Tsakiridis' chapter invites consideration of how religious communities may shape intellectual virtues and vices in ways that have political significance.

*Part II—Populism and Intellectual Virtues:
Philosophical Approaches*

Alan Hazlett opens Part II by considering how populism influences our understanding of expertise and intellectual autonomy. In his chapter, Hazlett notes that populism is commonly associated with a kind of skepticism about expertise, in which the opinions of non-experts are to be preferred to any expert consensus. In light of this, expertise skepticism appears to be a kind of pathology of excessive intellectual autonomy. Hazlett argues, however, that the ostensible connection between populism and intellectual autonomy is mere appearance. Specifically, he contends that populist expertise skepticism does not involve excessive intellectual autonomy, because it does not involve a disposition for non-deferential belief, but rather a disposition for deference to “alternative” sources of information.

Chase Wrenn's chapter focuses on the importance of Truthfulness as a democratic virtue. Democratic virtues, according to Wrenn, are traits that promote the flourishing of democratic societies as democratic societies. He argues, moreover, that Truthfulness is such a virtue on several grounds.

It promotes epistemic justice and the trust among citizens that democracies need. It also helps to guard against populism and polarization, each of which is a self-destructive force in democratic societies.

In Chap. 7, Sara L. H. Shady considers the virtue of empathy and how it might discourage the antipluralism that is often associated with populist movements. In order to bridge the widening gap between different views of who constitutes the *we* in “we the people,” Shady argues that we must cultivate empathy. As an intellectual virtue, empathy can diminish the divisive influence of populism and foster a healthy civic pluralism. Rather than mirroring the current populist claims that only one view correctly represents the people, empathy recognizes the diversity of the people and creates the possibility for building a view of the good that bridges those differences.

Andrew Aberdein looks at the virtues of argument in Chap. 8. Aberdein argues that a virtue-theoretic account of argumentation can enhance our understanding of the phenomenon of populism and offer some lines of response. Virtue theories of argumentation emphasize the role of arguers in the conduct and evaluation of arguments and lay particular stress on arguers' acquired dispositions of character, otherwise known as intellectual virtues and vices. Aberdein observes that several factors to which the rise of populism has been attributed may be understood as arising from vices of argumentation, including arrogance, emulousness, and insouciance. Conversely, virtues of argument such as humility and good listening offer some prospect of a constructive response to populism.

In Chap. 9, Michael C. Berhow examines the role that epistemic charity can play in mitigating the negative effects of populist polarization. Berhow identifies three features of epistemic charity: it seeks to discover truth in an opponent's position when plausibly possible, it seeks to interpret an opponent's argument in the most rational way possible, and it seeks to respect an opponent during a deliberative exchange. He then introduces the notion of populist polarization, contending that populist polarization occurs when opposing populist movements—with hostility between competing “elites”—claim to express the general will of the people. Such circumstances, according to Berhow, create an environment where competing populist groups feel justified in remaining closed-minded toward their respective opponents. As such, Berhow argues that epistemic charity is a unique intellectual virtue, in that it provides the moral resources needed to overcome closed-mindedness.

Part III—Populism and Intellectual Virtues Across Disciplines

Chapter 10 begins Part III by providing an epistemology for listening across religious, cultural, and political divides. David R. Vishanoff notes that the rhetoric of cultural populism exploits and exacerbates the natural tendency for human communities to define their own identities by contrasting themselves with imagined Others. This heightens the already formidable epistemic challenge of intergroup understanding. In response, Vishanoff proposes an epistemology of intergroup understanding that is relational, recursive, eschatological, and sacrificial. He argues that coming to understand Others across group boundaries requires an ongoing process of listening and a willingness to sacrifice aspects of one's own self-understanding that prove to be grounded in self-serving misconstruals of the Other. Such listening requires open-mindedness, empathy, epistemic justice, epistemic charity, intellectual humility, and epistemic selflessness, which are therefore vital to the functioning of a pluralistic society, especially under conditions of populist polarization.

In Chap. 11, Sherman J. Clark identifies an epistemic virtue that might be described as an ability to cope with the ambiguity and complexity of democratic life. Lacking a ready label for this trait or capacity, Clark proposes that we contrast this virtue with the habit of mind that loves simple stories about how the world works. He argues that democracy needs citizens who are capable of resisting the siren song of simplicity when it threatens to lead us astray. But both democratic politics generally and populist rhetoric specifically often appeal to, and thereby potentially nurture, our love for and dependence on simple stories.

Next, Gregory R. Peterson, Michael L. Spezio, and Güneş Sevinç develop a conception of virtuous autonomy applicable to the understanding of democratic protest movements. In 2013, democratic activists in Turkey occupied Gezi Park in opposition to elites who sought to destroy it in pursuit of private economic interest. Peterson et al. argue that the Gezi protests and movements like them can be understood in part through the lens of virtuous autonomy, understood in terms of an ordering of the self that enables pursuit of authentic goals and resistance to viceful forms of heteronomy. As a virtue, virtuous autonomy is developmental in character, and it both shapes and is shaped by social and political institutions.