

# POPULISM, NATIONALISM, ILLIBERAL DEMOCRACY

Bob Groves for World Affairs Council, July 2019





*The* **Atlantic**

TRUMP BUILDS  
HIS AUTOCRACY  
by David Frum

What Getting Shot  
Taught Me About Politics  
by Elaine Plott



# IS DEMOCRACY DYING?

A WARNING FROM EUROPE:  
The Worst Is Yet to Come  
BY ANNE APPLEBAUM

HOW AI COULD GIVE RISE TO TYRANNY  
by Yuval Noah Harari

JAMES MADISON VS. THE MOB  
by Jeffrey Rosen

## THE SLOW-MOTION CRISIS IN AMERICA & THE WORLD

OCTOBER 2018  
THEATLANTIC.COM



PLUS:

Amy Chua & Jed Rubenfeld  
ON THE SLIDE INTO TRIBALISM

Ibram X. Kendi  
ON RACISM'S THREAT TO THE AMERICAN IDEA

Yoni Appelbaum  
ON THE SECRET TO A HEALTHY DEMOCRACY

Stephen Breyer  
ON AMERICA'S ISOLATED COURTS

**HOW  
DEMOCRACIES  
DIE**

What are you for?

What is worth your support?

# Liberal Pluralist Democracy

- Free/fair elections AND
  - *Protection of Minorities-racial, ethnic, religious, sexual orientation*
  - *Freedom of Press/Media*
  - *Independent Judiciary*
  - *Promotion of Vibrant Civil Society, i.e., democracy as a way of life*
  - *Civil liberties/human rights protected by law*

# Two Unwritten Norms Needed for Democratic Constitutions to Work

1. Mutual Toleration: politicians accept their opponents as legitimate
2. Forbearance: self-restraint in the exercise of power; underutilizing one's institutional advantages in the spirit of fair play

Democratic institutions--elected leaders, courts, legislatures--are more than just formal rules; they encompass a shared understanding of appropriate behavior that overlays them

# Illiberal Democracy

## KEY CENTRAL ASSERTION:

*An election is **THE** authority, & **ALL** the authority that is needed for majority control of **ALL** institutions of government, civil liberties & **ALL** elements of society*

*Exists to varying degrees in countries today, e.g., Hungary, Turkey, The Philippines, Venezuela, Poland, Brazil;*

*“Role Model”*: Vladimir Putin-President of Russia

# Behaviors of Illiberal Leaders

- Rejects, in words or actions, the democratic rules of the game
- Denies the legitimacy of opponents
- Tolerates or encourages violence
- Indicates a willingness to curtail civil liberties of opponents-including media

Plus

# Demonizing of the “Other”

“Migrants will bring crime & terror, mass disorder, riots & gangs hunting down our women & children”

“The masses arriving from other civilizations endanger our way of life, our culture, our customs, & our Christian traditions”

Viktor Orban, Prime Minister of Hungary

# Some Examples of Illiberal Behavior: Global

- Venezuela: election/selection of new parliament & judiciary to replace those already elected/selected
- Turkey: closure of 180 media outlets & 15 universities, firing of 2500 journalists, forced resignation of 20% of all judges, thousands in jail
- Hungary: closure of Central European University due to ties with George Soros, Open Society Foundation
- Philippines: killings of thousands accused of drug dealing with no court hearings or legal process
- Poland: attempt to force all judges to retire at age 65

# Examples of Illiberal Behavior: U.S.

- Refusing to consider presidential nominee for the Supreme Court
- Questioning a sitting President's citizenship status: "birther" movement opposing Barack Obama
- Threatening to refuse acceptance of election results
- "Lock her up, that's right" Michael Flynn leading a chant, Republican Convention, 7/18/16
- "I'm going to open up our libel laws so when they write purposely negative & horrible & false articles we can sue them & win lots of money" Donald Trump, campaign rally Ft. Worth, Tx, 2016
- "You know what they used to do to guys like that when they were in a place like this? They'd be carried out on a stretcher, folks. I'd like to punch him in the face" Donald Trump, campaign rally Nevada, 2/22/16

# Which One Violates Liberal Democratic Norms?

“If we give Donald Trump eight years in the White House, he will forever and fundamentally alter the character of this nation, who we are, and I cannot stand by and watch that happen” Joe Biden, April 25, 2019

“Welcome to the race Sleepy Joe. I only hope you have the intelligence, long in doubt, to wage a successful primary campaign. It will be nasty—you will be dealing with people who truly have some very sick & demented ideas” Donald Trump tweet, April 25, 2019

# Populist Definition

A political strategy based on a calculated appeal to the interests or prejudices of ordinary people

Source: British Dictionary/Dictionary.com

# Populism

- No definition of populism will fully describe all populists. That's because populism is a “thin ideology” in that it “only speaks to a very small part of a political agenda”
- An ideology like fascism (e.g., Hitler) involves a holistic view of how politics, the economy and society should be ordered. Populism doesn't. It involves kicking out the political establishment, but it doesn't specify what should replace it. So it's usually paired with “thicker” left or right-wing ideologies like communism or nationalism.

# Populism contains two primary claims:

1. A country's 'true people' are locked into conflict with outsiders, including establishment elites.
2. Nothing should constrain the will of the 'true people'.

# 3 Types of Populism

- **Cultural populism** claims that the **true people** are the native members of the nation-state, and outsiders can include immigrants, criminals, ethnic and religious minorities, and cosmopolitan elites. Cultural populism tends to emphasize religious traditionalism, law and order, sovereignty, and painting migrants as enemies.
- **Socio-economic populism** claims that the **true people** are honest, hard-working members of the working class, and outsiders can include big business, capital owners and actors perceived as propping up an international capitalist system.
- **Anti-establishment populism** paints the **true people** as hard-working victims of a state run by special interests and outsiders as political elites. Although all forms of populism rail against political elites, anti-establishment populism distinguishes itself by focusing on establishment elites as the primary enemy of the people and does not sow as many intra-society divisions.

# Populists in Power Since 1990

- 46 leaders or Populist political parties in 33 countries
- Between 1990 and 2018, the number of populists in power has increased from 4 to 21. This includes countries not only in Latin America and in Eastern and Central Europe—where populism has traditionally been most prevalent—but also in Asia and in Western Europe.
- Anti-establishment populism was once most prevalent, but cultural populism is now the most common form of populism across the globe.

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# Countries with Populist Leaders in 2018

- Belarus
- Bolivia
- Brazil\*
- Bulgaria
- Czech Republic
- Greece
- Hungary
- India
- Indonesia
- Israel
- Italy: Anti-Establishment
- Nicaragua
- Philippines
- Poland
- Russia: Cultural
- Serbia
- Slovakia
- South Africa
- Sri Lanka
- Turkey
- United States: Cultural
- Venezuela: Socio-Economic

# Nationalism

“You know what I am? I’m a nationalist. Ok. I am a nationalist. We’re not supposed to use that word. I think it should be brought back”

Donald Trump, Campaign Rally, Houston, Tx, 10/22/18

# So What is “Nationalism?”

1. The construction of identity as focused on national borders
2. A conception of policy interests as mediated through:
  - *cultural symbols, traditions, historical narratives, and,*
  - ***in its most dangerous form, race, ethnicity and religion.***

There are many manifestations of nationalism, from the extremes of civil and interstate wars to the stirrings within citizens during the World Cup, the Olympics or national anthem before an Eagles game.

# Nationalist Politics: 3 Assertions

1. A unique nation exists with specific characteristics
2. The nation's interests & values take precedence over every other interest & over every other nation's values
3. To ensure the survival of these interests & values the nation must attain sovereignty—give little or no credence to universal values such as universal human rights or global agreements, e.g., Paris Climate Change Treaty

# Type 1: Exclusive Nationalism

- The characteristics of the unique nation are distilled based on race, ethnicity, religion, or other attributes.
- Assertions of this type of nationalism become a means of discrimination, xenophobia, and chauvinism, which can lead to not just voting but violence.
- **When purveyors of such nationalism gain political control, the levers of the state can be used to benefit one group over another, sometimes in truly terrible ways.**

## Type 2: Inclusive Nationalism

Nationalism that leverages the interests, values, and visions of the nation to bring people together for common cause. More than just hoping that people look on a national flag with admiration, the purveyors of inclusive nationalism use it to encourage citizens to recommit to the nation's values and its mission, usually by tying said interests to a particular policy platform.



**“Leader of the League Party and interior minister, with aspirations to become Prime Minister, (Matteo) Salvini has come to symbolize the rise of Europe’s new populist nationalist leaders and the threat they pose to democratic systems.”**

“How much of a threat is Italy’s Salvini?”, Trudy Rubin, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 5/17/19

“Salvini’s popularity rests not on any clear ideology, fascist or otherwise, but on his populist ability to convince his supporters that they are being cheated and he is the only one that cares”

**After the experience of nationalism in both world wars (90 million died), nations came together in an attempt to establish an international order that would promote the interests, national and common, of all countries.**

The resulting global order, made up of laws, systems, and organizations like the United Nations, the World Bank & the European Union sought to diminish the factors that make attractive appeals to forces like nationalism, even as it sought to promote a more peaceful & prosperous world.

**For almost seventy years, and in many countries and regions around the world, the plan worked.**



# A Human Rights Goal for Nationalism

Finding ways for positive attitudes towards one's own nation to co-exist with & support active involvement in the global community.

“Brazil is so big, so large, people will realize with Bolsonaro’s election that this populist, nationalist movement is not localized. This is going to be the defining characteristic of the 21st century.”

Steve Bannon, former advisor & campaign manager for Donald Trump

“Around the globe, Trump’s style is inspiring imitators & releasing dark impulses”, G. Witte, C. Morello, S. Mahtani, A. Faiola, *Washington Post*, 1/22/18

# Populism, Nationalism and Illiberal Behavior

Populism and Nationalism, in their worst forms, are often combined with illiberal behavior, by authoritarian or want-to-be authoritarian leaders, to achieve or maintain their control of a country.



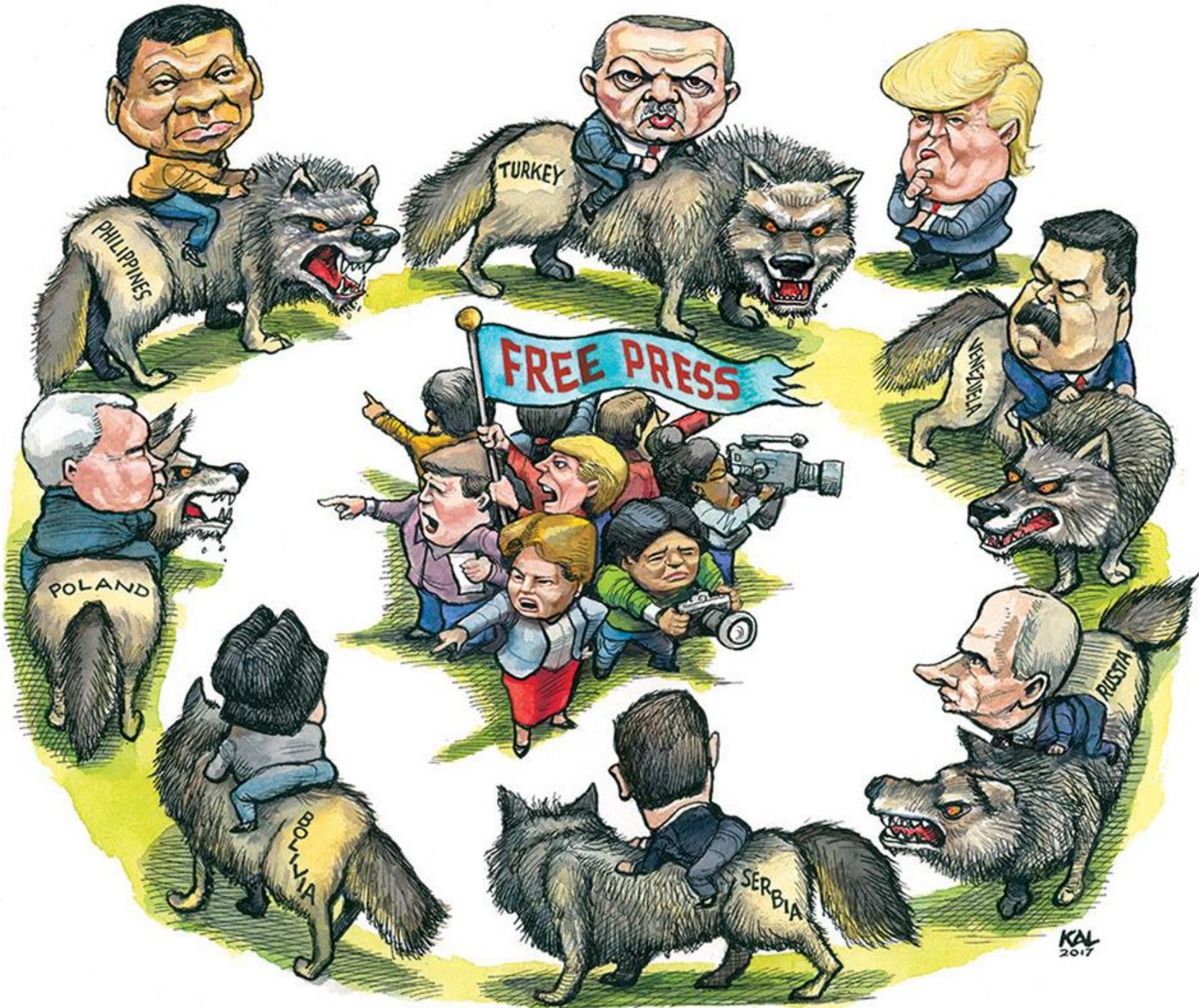
**Germany's biggest trade union** urged voters to participate in this month's European Parliament election and reject nationalism and right-wing populism. MARKUS SCHOLZ / AP  
*Phila. Inq. 5-2-19*

# *Emergency Alert* for Younger Generations!

Populism & Nationalism are USELESS for addressing the 3

Biggest Threats to your future well being:

- CLIMATE CHANGE
- HIGH TECH DISRUPTION
- NUCLEAR WAR



*“A popular government, without popular information, or means of acquiring it, is but a Prologue to a Farce or a Tragedy or, perhaps both”*

**James Madison, 1822,**

Source: “Madison vs. The Mob”, Jeffrey Rosen, *The Atlantic*, October 2018

# What is Freedom of the Press/Media?

- *It is the right of a free and independent media to report without fear, interference, persecution or discrimination*
- *It is the right to provide knowledge, give voice to the marginalized and to highlight corruption*
- *It creates an environment where people feel safe to question government action and to hold power accountable.*
- Source: Mission Statement of Article 19, accessed 02/16/16; [www.article19.org](http://www.article19.org)

# Journalists at Risk: Stark Facts

- **Journalists killed: 1,337 since 1992; 54 in 2018; 47 in 2017; 16 in 2019 (8 with motive confirmed) as of 6/19/19:**
  - *859 murdered; 736 with complete impunity*
  - *299 in cross fire/combat*
  - *172 dangerous assignment*
- **Medium:** Print: 629; Internet: 228; Radio: 257; TV: 422; Documentary film: 2
- **Beats:** Politics: 47%; War: 42%; Human Rights: 21%; Corruption: 21%; Crime:17%

# Impunity: Unsolved Journalists Murder Cases

- Philippines: 40
- Mexico: 26
- Somalia: 25
- Iraq: 25
- Syria: 18
- Pakistan: 18
- India: 18
- Brazil: 17
- Afghanistan: 11
- Russia: 8
- Bangladesh: 7
- South Sudan: 5
- Columbia: 5
- Nigeria: 5

■ Source: Committee to Protect Journalists, Global Impunity Index, 2018

# Journalists at Risk: Stark Facts

- **Journalists in jail: 251: 2018; 262: 2017; 259: 2016; 199: 2015**
- **2018:** Turkey: 68; China: 47; Egypt: 25; Eritrea: 16; Saudi Arabia: 16
- **Medium:** Internet: 199; Print: 104; Radio: 13; TV: 23
- **Charges:** Anti-state (treason, subversion, acting against national interests): 70%; defamation, retaliation, false news: 11%; no charge: 18%;
- **Journalists Missing: 60**

Welcome to ***Rappler***, a social news network where stories inspire community engagement and digitally fuelled actions for social change. Rappler comes from the root words "rap" (to discuss) + "ripple" (to make waves).

**Maria Ressa, Founder, Executive Editor & CEO:** *in 2018 she received the Gwen Ifill Press Freedom Award from the Committee to Protect Journalists*