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# Perspective Chapter: Democracy beyond Rationality

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## Abstract

The ideal model of democracy is based on the assumption that voters make informed decisions on public issues on the basis of rational considerations, informed by arguments and deliberation. However, individuals obviously rely on their emotions as voters as much as consumers. This is not a new phenomenon, but the rise of digital and social media and the rise of populist politics in the 2010s have completely challenged the traditional understanding of democracy based on rational discourse. Building on the notion of the public sphere and the human rights jurisprudence that uses it, the chapter shows that the theoretical notion of democracy is inseparable from rational political discourse, and then examines how populism emerging within a democratic framework permanently dismantles this rational discourse. Populism is presented essentially as a political communication strategy, with its means and effects. Ultimately, the chapter seeks to answer the question of whether an emotionally overheated and thus extremely polarised society is still capable of solving its common problems within a democratic framework.

**Keywords:** emotions, public sphere, populism, political communication, voter decision

## 1. Introduction

The starting point for this chapter is that rational discourse is an essential element of the concept of liberal democracy: it allows for the accountability of power and the choice between alternative policy proposals. An important building block to this understanding of democracy is the notion of the public sphere, which is the field of more or less rational discourse. This debating, reasoning public sphere is still the constitutional and media policy framework for the regulation of the democratic state and media system. Rational debate leads to rational decisions, and voters make their own electoral choices by weighing up the opinions they hear in public.

This interpretation of democracy and the public sphere, however, could never in itself explain the motivations and nature of voter behaviour. Emotion, personal sympathy for particular parties, candidates, and bias have always been at the heart of electoral decisions.

The chapter seeks to answer the question of what happens to democracy when rationality is completely removed from public discourse and electoral behaviour. This is precisely what populism attempts to do: to turn public discourse into a completely emotional one, to turn voters' choices into an identity question. Is a public sphere that

completely marginalises the role of facts and arguments still capable of serving as the basis for the democratic functioning of a society?

On the other hand, can populist communication be used as a starting point to strengthen the commitment to democracy? Is it possible to develop such a strong emotional attachment to the abstract institutions of democracy as is possible with populist authoritarian leaders? These questions are motivated primarily by the authors' personal experiences and doubts in Hungary, but the exploration of the relationship between populism and democracy goes far beyond the problems of any one country.

## **2. The need for a deliberative democracy**

Democracy, as we understand it, is first and foremost the possibility of peaceful change of power for a given society. The division of powers, the system of checks and balances, and even the entire toolbox of the rule of law are ultimately guarantees that the holder of power cannot arbitrarily extend the scope and duration of the exercise of power, and that voters dissatisfied with the way and results of the exercise of power can entrust the exercise of power to another actor through a formalised act, the elections, which does not involve violence at all. This necessarily presupposes a constant public scrutiny of democratically acquired power, i.e., the revealing of measures taken by the holders of power that are unfavourable or abusive to society, and the constant public presentation and discussion and deliberation of alternative policy proposals by the power seekers in areas and on issues of importance to society.

An obvious limitation of this concept of deliberative democracy in practice is that it is idealistic and therefore places excessive expectations on voters, politicians and political discourse. It imagines the voter as a well-informed actor, constantly engaged in public affairs; the politician as someone who exercises his power solely in the public interest and aware that he himself is not infallible; and political discourse as a public space with a full range of information and conflicting opinions, based on mutual respect between political rivals.

The reason for taking this idealistic interpretation as a basis of the public sphere is, first of all, that this approach is clearly reflected in European human rights jurisprudence on freedom of expression and freedom of the press: this provides the framework for the interpretation of freedom of expression as a fundamental right to discuss the common affairs of the community, and which ensures informed and engaged participation in the democratic process. Even if the theoretical validity of the civic or deliberative public sphere is rather limited, as a constitutional benchmark, it has had a major impact on the shaping of the concept of freedom of expression and the framework of democracy.

The European Court of Human Rights thus defines freedom of expression as an “essential foundation” of a democratic society, “one of the basic conditions for its progress and for the development of every man” (*Handyside v. the United Kingdom*, § 49). According to the German Constitutional Court, freedom of communication is “directly constitutive of a free, democratic state order, since it makes possible the constant intellectual debate and the battle of opinions, which is the vital element of a free, democratic state order” (BVerfGE 7, 198, 208). By virtue of its functions in a democratic society, the guarantee of freedom of expression “also means the guarantee of public opinion as an essential political institution” (Decision 30/1992 (V. 26.) of the Hungarian Constitutional Court).

This interpretation of freedom of expression and public opinion is a simplistic transposition of the sociological concept of the public sphere into human rights decisions on the nature of democracy. In what follows, we will present the various elements of these concepts of the public sphere, not with the aim of providing a comprehensive summary of the interpretation of the concept [1], but to point out how closely the concept of the public sphere is linked to the rationality of discourse.

### **3. The public sphere as the arena for rational political discourse**

The public sphere is a political institution, which has a role to play in controlling the exercise of public power and in facilitating dialogue between those in power and the community. Its functioning therefore has a direct impact on the quality of democracy. According to Gerhards and Neidhardt, the term itself “embodies a kind of ‘volonté general’, an elementary democratic quality” [2]. The public sphere is an informal guarantee of democratic functioning that considers an informed community, able and willing to take a stand and seek consensus on public affairs, as inevitable participants in democratic decision-making. In this approach, the public is the mediator between politics and society, “the space for articulating opinions and issues” [2].

For Luhmann, the basic function of the public sphere is the selection of topics, and thus the selection of subjects for political communication and the self-observation of particular social systems [3]. In Gerhards and Neidhardt’s approach, the mere collection of political topics cannot be a sufficient function of the public sphere. For them, the public sphere is an “arena”, a “system of discourse” that mediates between citizens and the political system through the collection and processing of information [2]. In this public sphere, as a system of communication, anyone can participate and, moreover, the issues discussed in public must be comprehensible to the public. Public debate creates a public opinion that is widely shared and becomes the dominant opinion in the community.

The defining characteristic of the Habermasian civic public sphere, “the world of private people gathered as a public”, “the world of public reasoning”, is its universal accessibility [4]. Only such a public sphere, open to all and providing equal opportunities for all to speak, is capable of presenting and confronting different points of view and of creating a framework for genuine dialogue. This is a precondition for fulfilling all other expectations of the civic public sphere.

Embedded in his theory of communicative action, Habermas defined the public sphere as a space created when private individuals express their opinions on public matters as a free, uncoerced audience [5]. Habermas sees the larger audiences that emerge from non-direct encounters, such as audiences of readers, listeners, and viewers, as an extension and abstraction of interpersonal interactions, rather than their destruction. He also attributes to mass media audiences a critical resilience to the media’s informational and entertainment content.

The civic public sphere is an essential component of deliberative democracy, in which political debates are open to all, and political decisions are preceded by consensus-seeking discussions. Habermas distinguishes deliberative democracy from the liberal and republican models [6]. In the liberal model of democracy, the government is merely a moderator between private interests, and private interests that are essentially market-based, and that provide the right conditions for effective and secure interactions between individuals. Democracy in this model is a system of

institutions that aggregates the collective will of citizens into representative associations of interests, aggregates it and translates it into political decisions: hence the name aggregative democracy model. However, according to Habermas, individual interests in this form do not aggregate into a community, and without common ethical norms, institutions and procedures do not lead to a truly democratic functioning. In the republican model of democracy, the government has an active redistributive role, and political institutions do not simply protect market processes but generate social change themselves. The political community pursues unified social goals and ethical norms and maintains political institutions with a unified will, but this is tyranny of the majority rather than true democracy. However, in the republican model, everyone is expected to participate as an autonomous member of the political community in a civic culture that goes beyond their own interests and preferences.

In line with these concepts of democracy, Gerhards distinguishes between the discursive and the liberal models of the public sphere [7]. The discursive public sphere basically describes the Habermasian concept of the public sphere, in which the public sphere is the mediating medium between the center and the periphery of the political process, between the voter and the NGOs and corporations articulating the interests of individual citizens. The shaping of democratic will starts at the periphery, in the public space provided by citizens' organisations, and from there, it moves through the parties to the center of political decision-making. In practice, this ideal process of will formation can only take place by exception; Habermas is therefore ultimately content to assume that there is always a feedback loop between the decisions taken in the center and the public will formation in the periphery. In the Habermasian public discourse, rational argumentation plays a decisive role in the discourse, which ultimately leads to the emergence of some kind of consensus.

Gerhards contrasts the Habermasian conception of the public sphere with the liberal model of the public sphere, which assigns a less important role to the public sphere. According to this model, the public is open to all, but individual citizens are represented by collective actors, essentially those confirmed by democratic elections. This conception of the public sphere does not define the standards for evaluating individual speech, since it sees the main function of the public sphere as being public speech itself, not argumentation and consensus-building. The only expectation of the participants in the discourse is mutual respect for each other.

Such approaches to the public thus envisage a political community that is debating, reasoning, making rational decisions, ready to compromise and based on mutual respect. But this raises a number of questions and doubts.

#### **4. Polarisation, platforms, populism**

The 2010s have been particularly fertile for rethinking how the public sphere works. Not unrelated to each other, two phenomena have emerged that have seriously complicated the conditions for social dialogue and rational discourse. It was during this period that digital platforms became the inescapable arena for public communication, and the emergence of populist political trends and leaders, right and left, from Trump to Orban, Bolsonaro to Maduro, in developed and less developed democracies.

The search and ranking algorithms underlying the platforms ultimately produce a unique set of content for each user based on the user's previous virtual actions, such as search and browsing history, previously published posts and other reactions, and previous purchases. Very little information is available on how the algorithms



work, and the platform providers are companies with global dominance or monopoly positions. In all cases, the design of search and ranking algorithms is a “value-based decision” that ultimately has an opinion-forming effect [8]. The purpose of these algorithms is to provide the user with relevant information, and to do so they must define criteria of relevance. Although the benefits of personalised content are obvious for users, content providers and advertisers, there are also significant risks. The “personalised filter” creates “self-fulfilling identities”, over-emphasises certain personal preferences and ultimately becomes a shaper of individual user needs [9].

Research in recent years has largely questioned the relevance of the filter bubble phenomenon, or at least its scope [10–12]. It is hardly disputable that, in the form of posts or comments in the news feed, the user encounters facts or opinions that weaken his or her own position in the digital space, and that the digital media environment is by no means the only source of information. At the same time, platforms do create an environment in which an increasingly closed network of acquaintances who share the user’s views is created, providing constant positive reinforcement of the user’s knowledge and attitudes. In such an affirmative medium, dissonant facts and opinions can at most only moderately shape individual beliefs and can even become part of the affirmative feedback itself: they can be inserted into a broader narrative in which the mere fact that a particular communication comes from a particular person or group of people can be used to label the content of the communication as untrue, discredited, wrong, biased, without further ado. It is precisely through the reinforcing network of acquaintances that social media provides an interpretative framework that helps to situate each communication in the user’s worldview. In Tufekci’s formulation, belonging to a group is stronger than facts [13], and the most important consequence of the functioning of platforms is the effective creation of groups that share a given worldview. Thus, bubbles do not mean that users do not have access to information and opinions that contradict their own, but rather that they consider these contradictory information and opinions as discredited or ignored. This credibility bubble creates gaps in society as deep as if dissenting groups were completely unaware of each other’s opinions. Moreover, the phenomenon is by no means limited to social media and platforms but also has a profound impact on the interpretation of messages in traditional media [14].

These credibility bubbles have a number of consequences that severely limit rational discourse. One of them is the amplification of the spread of disinformation: if a refutation of a factually untrue statement comes from the “other side”, the refutation can be ignored without further ado. This is why the effectiveness of the tools to counter disinformation by countering untruth with real facts is very limited.

The credibility bubble can be effectively used to maintain a polarising political communication. By consciously divisive messages, the political actor seeks to create and reinforce a politically based group identity, to bind its own voter base to itself, to maintain emotional loyalty, and to secure the (just) necessary electoral majority for re-election. With these conditions how can people decide what is the best political representation for them?

## **5. The limits of the rational discourse**

Reasoning and deciding “usually imply that the decider has knowledge (a) about the situation which calls for a decision, (b) about different options of action (responses), and (c) about consequences of each of those options (outcomes) immediately and at future epochs” [15]. As Damasio pointed out, emotional reactions play

an important role in how we process information. But what happens when political communication directly aims to trigger emotional responses in the electorate?

The normative approach is that political decision-making involves information about political programmes, knowledge of the candidates and political dynamics of the given country. Furthermore, it is based on a comparison of the individual's viewpoints about politics and economics with the options on offer and the selection of the most advantageous of these. This would be the rational choice, the *dispassionate decision-making* process in which the voters actively gather as much information as possible. The ideal person in the model constantly monitors the electoral period, carrying out an analysis on the basis of the information available to him or her, taking into account its positive and negative consequences. The final decision is the result of analytical calculation, free from passionate emotional influences [16].

It is easy to see that this model is only a base against which all other types of decision-making can be compared. Moreover, anything else that can be close to this requires a kind of privilege that depends on a number of factors. On the one hand, the level of education affects the need and ability to learn about political processes such as policy making, the legislative system or the electoral system itself. On the other hand, the possibility of access to gather credible and focused information about politics is not only an issue in the context of an unbalanced media structure and disinformation, but in the everyday life of an individual living in the information society. The emergence of new media and the proliferation of new technological devices has steadily increased the amount of information that is not only available, but also unavoidable. An individual encounters much more information in a single day than he can actually process, and the simultaneous use of new technological devices not only keeps attention constantly captured, but directs it for certain purposes.

The advent of mass communication has led to the development of what can be summarised as organised persuasive communication [17]. This includes any system that strategically communicates information to people with the aim of persuading them to adopt a certain behaviour or belief, such as marketing, political marketing, PR or advertising. Capital in this context is human attention, and the tool is grabbing the focus of the people to the greatest possible extent. This implies that the average voter has to put a lot more effort into gathering the information needed to make a decision, and this is still seen in the context of the ideal, rational model of political decision-making. But we have to consider that the average citizen does not care deeply enough about politics to devote attention, time and energy to collect accurate information. Furthermore, we cannot ignore the fact that there is a general disillusionment with politics, with a widespread view that “all politicians are liars”.

There are other models of decision-making that can be seen as more accurate considering the average voter. The main aim of the *fast and frugal decision makers* is efficiency. They only consider a few attributes of a candidate that they consider important and ignore every other aspect that is irrelevant from their perspective. Their drive is the cost of information gathering, low investment, maximum result. From the point of efficiency, a somewhat parallel attitude is the *intuitive decision-making* that seeks only the necessary information to choose. There is no calculation here either. They use cognitive shortcuts, stereotypes and schemas in order to make the process easier for themselves [16]. While the aforementioned voter persona could be influenced by the electoral campaign, those who could fit into the *confirmatory decision-making* model only seek information to confirm their already existing preferences. Their choice is strongly affected by predetermined party identification that is inherited at birth, such as early-learned social identifications. The decision in this

type of process is not based on calculation, the information passively gathered mainly includes the most visible issues covered by the media and the evaluation is based on prior preferences. The motivation is not self-interest, as we could see in the former, rational model, it is to maintain convictions [16].

As the first model has limited applicability and the last one is a justification of a biased point of view, our approach is based on the last two models that consider decision-making intuitive with limited processed information that is guided by the aim to make a choice with the less effort possible. Populist communication offers the most effective means of persuasion to meet this need.

## 6. Populism and emotions

Populism is a thin-centered ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic camps, “the pure people” versus “the corrupt elite,” and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people” [18]. Thin-centered here means that it rarely occurs on its own, but rather merges with another ideology, nationalism for example. The definition of populism as an ideology is still a matter of debate, and we prefer those approaches that define it as a political style. Populism is a key concept to understanding today’s political sphere, but in terms of influencing political decisions, it is worth looking at theories that consider it as a performative or communication style and focus on its performative, rhetorical approach [19–21]. The ‘*people*’, the ‘*elite*’ and the ‘*general will*’ are the three main concepts with which populist tendencies emerging in different contexts can be uniformly described. They can be seen as signifiers, the meanings behind the concepts may differ, and can be drawn differently. The elite does not necessarily mean a political elite within a country, it can be any group with economic or political power outside the country. It can be a global elite or a transnational alliance, as we can see many examples in the narratives of European right-wing populist parties based on the elitist nature of the European Union [22].

The populist communication strategy seems to be in line with the very problems that affect decision-making mechanisms. Some authors even describe populist discourse as “a “manipulation strategy” that plays with emotions to the detriment of political reason” [23]. Naturally, there are many forms that political communication overall uses to deceive the public. Political actors avoid lying in its traditional sense that requires making a false statement with the intention to deceive. Lying is costly, a false statement is easy to detect, and political actors will lose credibility. In order to avoid it, they use spinning, a specific type of framing [24]. It is not necessarily untrue, but definitely unreliable, thus we can define spin as a certain type of manipulation of the perception of information. Half-truths, de-emphasising information, or misleading the attention of the public by producing or publishing a controversial issue are just a few examples of the techniques that could be used in the political sphere in order to influence or convince the people. However, the populist communication strategy consists more of than well-measured interpretations.

## 7. The populist persuasion

Simplicity serves the purpose of general comprehensibility so that political messages can be understood by everyone, regardless of background or education.



Populists use simple language with understandable terms and the inclusion of stereotypes [25]. The cultural codes, metaphors and archetypes are already familiar to the community. This not only facilitates the processing of information and gives the impression that the political sphere is simple, but also brings the politician who is providing the information closer.

It relies primarily on sympathy since the belief in a charismatic leader is essential for the effective implementation of populist rhetoric. Charisma, “a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers and qualities” [26], is a base point from which a politician could deliver a convincing narrative. With an effective market-oriented strategy, that identifies the needs of the target group, a political candidate could seem like someone the society has long desired and could show certain characteristics that create emotional attachment in the targeted electorate. The aim of political personality branding is to create a political persona with which the audience resonates [27]. One of the effects of the proliferation of the use of social media platforms in political communication is that political brands now incorporate more personality alongside political craftsmanship. Populist leaders could show an image of their everyday side, thus creating the sense that they are ‘one of us’, and this is crucial in the populist strategy of representing ‘the people’. If the politician’s personal brand is in line with the professional image, the audience will perceive it as authentic. Authenticity generates credibility and this impression implies that the given politician knows what is good for us and can represent the general will. Populist leaders could draw the boundaries of the nation and become a symbolic condensation of it [28]. People nowadays tend to be more attached to the politician himself, not the political parties. The performative power of populism rests on the followers’ belief that the iconic body of the populist leader represents their own identity [29].

## **8. “In anger, we trust”**

Populist persuasion requires, of course, more than an iconic leader. On the one hand, it needs visibility. Media logic seeks the sensational, the out of the ordinary, as this is what most increases the attention capital. The dramatisation of the news, the selection principle of prioritising contradictions, conflicts and crises is the perfect base for populism [19]. Populist actors use dramatisation, crisis and emotionalization not only to conform to media logic and thus gain more attention, but also to persuade and motivate voters. This is most effective when negative emotions are involved [30].

This type of communication is “mainly characterized by being simple, emotional and negative” [31]. The populist tendency to consciously display emotions, thereby triggering the electorate supports the claim that it is a manipulative strategy that substitutes emotions for facts and rationality. According to Wirz, this communication strategy is “the reliance on gut feelings rather than on rational facts” [32].

The key emotions are fear, anxiety and anger. Populist politicians have a tendency to frame society in danger with the use of othering and narratives of crisis [33]. This danger could be economic, cultural or military threat. Scapegoating and alienating are the most common tools to build a fearful image of an individual or outgroup that could serve as the main cause of the crisis. It could be the elite, but one of the rhetorical characteristics of populism is the out-group/in-group narrative. The people, “us” that is in danger because of the threat from another group.

Differences help to identify the others without too much effort, the more visible the more effective. This can be cultural, religion, financial status or ethnicity. Otherness not only could trigger suspicion but also makes it easier to dehumanise and reinforce the attachment of negative emotions. The usage of certain terms to describe these groups could serve as shortcuts to the formerly created negative meanings (for example *immigrant/refugee*).

Safety and certainty are basic human needs. When people have to face an unknown or uncertain situation that they have no control over or the cause of a threat cannot be determined nor nobody can be accountable, they will experience fear and anxiety. However, if there is an actor to blame for a crisis people could feel anger [34]. The powerful symbols of the enemy created by the populist communication strategy can be used in any argument, shifting fear to anger, from an intangible or unknown root of a problem to an identifiable actor. Expressing stability and capability to protect the people and fight against enemies creates certainty. If the brand of the political actor can be built by a communication strategy, then the image of the enemy can be, as well. These not only serve as a tool to misdirect the attention of the public from the actual problems in the society, but as a community cohesion force and to confirm leadership. A scapegoat and the aforementioned in-group/out-group narrative could be used to stabilise the community and increase the cohesion force [35]. The leader of a community united against the enemy will be the source of protection.

In the polarised world that is created by the populist communication strategy, everything is more comprehensible. There is something mythical in this constructed reality, binary oppositions that make categorizations and evaluations easier, and all-time heroes fight against enemies. This is a schema, widely known from folklore to pop culture and an important mediator of all this is political advertising. Political advertising significantly focuses on emotions to influence the audience and they could evoke fear with threatening imagery or music [36]. Negative ads or attack ads trigger anger to mobilise the followers. However, there is a specific emotion that political ads tend to trigger, the *Kama Muta*. The Sanskrit word describes the feeling of being moved by love, and this type of content focuses on the intensification of the community, more specifically on communal interactions [37].

## 9. Constructed realities

Political communication tries to pursue the public, creating myths that are not what the audience perceive about the world, but what they are perceiving through. These are different from ideologies in the sense that the latter is based on reasoning, while the former is about evoking emotions. Political myths are a type of social myths, constructed by an actor, and when they are disseminated successfully by the media, the educational system or cultural institutions, people will internalise them. The persuasive power of these lies in its starting point, a shared event that has an emotional impact on the whole community. It is often suffering or a sense of injustice. The narrative created around it is fortified with rituals (e.g., commemorations) and is connected to symbols (places, objects or individuals). Bringing up a traumatic event is not for healing in this context, but to evoke the emotions connected to it, then offering a solution that it will not happen again. Political myths are not necessarily deceiving, but they could be used to gain control over the reality of the people. Fighting against these constructed myths is difficult because that would mean the delegitimization of the emotion, the suffering or the injustice [38].

Political myths could divide society based not on logical reasons, but pure emotions. This polarisation can be reinforced by the media, if the new outlets seek to satisfy their consumers by showing them the exact point of view they want to be confirmed. This could create the sense that the reality they perceive is the only true understanding of the world. People want to avoid the cognitive dissonance caused by pointing out the bias of their reality. The case of the flat Earth believers may seem a banal or stylized example, but very illustrative. One cannot convince them by simply saying that the Earth is round. Their perception about the world should be overwritten step by step. Myths may disappear on their own if their elements are corrupted. Fighting against them is not easy, one has to target the symbols that convey their meaning. Moreover, they can be overwritten by creating a new one.

A deliberate construction of a political myth requires a careful selection of the archetypes, schemas and symbols that are already familiar to the community and effective dissemination tools. This is why it is so challenging in a sphere where equal access to the public is undermined.

Populist communication strategies and political myths could be good tools to demonstrate a more understandable but realistic point of view about the political sphere. Democratic values can be reinforced in the society by presenting them in an understandable manner based on emotions that evoke positivity, hope and a sense of belonging. In an area filled with powerful emotional triggers, disinformation and polarisation, we cannot rely on the assumption that people will make choices based on logical reasoning. Instead, we have to find a balance in persuasion.

## **10. Conclusion**

A civil or deliberative public sphere is the fundamental starting point for freedom of expression and democratic media policy. This understanding of the public sphere provides an appropriate conceptual framework for the control of government power and democratic participation based on rational choices. However, this idealised theory of the public does not take into account the actual media environment and media consumption patterns. It ignores the limited way in which rational arguments shape public opinion and, as a consequence, its inability to describe and shape the reality of political communication. Meanwhile, the main aim of political actors is to achieve their political goals, and the media has given them the opportunity to get their messages across to the widest audience possible. In a sphere where emotional deception is accepted and even the most basic entry threshold, the reliability of information is in doubt, and logical decision-making is increasingly difficult for the electorate. With the tools of marketing and the strategies of political communication, a system was created where every message, word and emotional trigger is precisely measured to best influence the target audience. This system is the populist communication style, which is adapted to a certain cultural context and has the potential to naturalise itself into a political myth, responding to the needs of voters who want to make the “best” political decision with the least effort possible. Political myths create an alternative reality through which the political sphere can be easily interpreted and because of its emotional basis, can be used to frame information in a misleading way for political gain. There are many examples of this in contemporary political campaigns, which result in voters making emotionally based decisions to avoid constructed images of enemies and crises, rather than perspectives of human rights, transparency or economic considerations.

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