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The Emergence of Regressive Heroism in Current Far-Right Populism

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Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to analyze the ways in which heroic leadership is manifested in current right-wing populism. Based on the distinction between heroic modernity and postheroic modernity, a genealogy of the heroic populist leader is proposed. This figure is analyzed by following the hero's life process in three moments: recognition of his charismatic exceptionality, the struggle to carry out his mission of salvation and the inevitable consequences of the struggle, which cannot be anything other than victory or defeat. Throughout these three phases of heroic action, the way in which the populist hero manages his charisma and intervenes in the culture wars will be shown. Finally, after accompanying him on this ritual journey, it will be understood why populist heroism adopts a regressive model of heroism. It is concluded that extreme right-wing populist heroism is regressive in character, both in its personal and institutional deployment. As a regressive force, it is a source of instability and conflict in postheroic modernity.

Keywords: heroism; postheroism; leadership; charisma; populism; regressive modernity



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*Sing, Goddess, Achilles' rage,
Black and murderous, that cost the Greeks
Incalculable pain, pitched countless souls
Of heroes into Hades' dark,
And left their bodies to rot as feasts
For dogs and birds, as Zeus' will was done.
Iliad (Homer 1997)*

1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the ways in which heroic leadership is manifested in current far-right populism. On the one hand, heroism is deployed in a specific way. On the other hand, heroism is combined with the characteristics common to the different types of populism. Among these characteristics are its dependence on charismatic figures invested with exceptional qualities, the existence of a direct connection between this type of leader and his followers, the appeal to an us-people versus them-elites dialectic, the existence of an organization tailored to the leader, and the emergence of a critical weakness of the institutional political framework of liberal democracies.

Currently, both classical populism, typical of European societies in which liberal democracy is in crisis, and new populism, characteristic of Latin American societies in which such a framework has not been sufficiently developed, are giving way to a global populism that takes to the extreme the identification of populism with a style of politics based on cultural performance (Moffit 2016). Like all populism, this type feeds on the increase in inequality, the crisis of political representativeness and the need for moral rearmament of the most disadvantaged groups expressed by the culture wars.

Although the identification between charismatic populist leadership and heroic leadership is in vogue, it is not easy to differentiate between these two types¹. As Bröckling points out, “heroism and leadership are very close: those who impose their will have a good chance of being revered as heroes; and conversely, those who are elected heroes can count on followers” (Bröckling 2021, p. 147). Therefore, this paper first addresses the nature of heroism, and, more specifically, the social meaning that the hero and his actions receive throughout modernity. This meaning unfolds on different planes.

In the foreground emerge the significant sociological consequences involved in the modern view of heroism, especially with regard to the conception of society and politics. In different ways, heroism is seen as a switch that turns conflict on and off, as a driver of change and, in some authors, as the basis of social structure. A secularization of the conceptualization of the hero—as far as it ceases to be conceived as a link between the earthly and the divine—can also be found in the modern semantics of heroism. In the meanwhile, historical change understood as the result of the acts of Great Men is progressively abandoned and replaced by the protagonism of the great processes and structures.

Secondly, one cannot ignore the importance of warrior and militia heroism, whose historical transformation, in addition to driving the modern military paradigm, reveals a parallelism with the processes of resolution of the political and social conflicts of a given historical moment. In this sense, the distinction between heroic and postheroic warrior and militia leadership (Keegan) can be extended to the differentiation between heroic and postheroic modernity (Bröckling, Hernández-Pacheco). Even so, this difference is reversible in the sense in which Eisenstadt conceived the processes of modernization. Populism brings significant heroic regressions to post-heroic modernity. Both populism and the culture wars are clear manifestations of what are known as regressive modernities, reactions to a situation in which a world based on secular consensus with no room for transcendence opens up to what Sánchez-Capdequí considers the exclusionary dominance of small transcendences that leaves the world without narrative articulation and existential sympathy (Sánchez Capdequí 2022).

Thirdly, in the background lays the religious substratum of heroism. Classical heroic myths and their modern secularized translations reveal the way in which the members of a collectivity fuse the profane with the sacred. That is to say, heroic action, as well as charismatic action, are modes of social action that possess religious significance insofar as they give life to collective representations of a transcendent order. As Durkheim stated in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, religion is a set of beliefs and practices concerning sacred things that unite a moral community around them. Both heroes and charismatic leaders embody what is sacred to a community of believers, and ritual practices maintain the social validity of these beliefs. In ritual moments of collective effervescence, the fusion of believers with the heroic or charismatic figure who represents the sacred occurs. This epiphanic moment takes place whether the sacred is the expression of the divinity worshiped in the cults founded in the pre-axial civilizations, or whether it is the monotheistic God of the axial civilizations, or the new forms of the sacred, such as the Nation or the Human Person in the modern post-axial civilizations.

Finally, in addition to the secularization of the religious significance of heroism, in modernity there is a transition from the ritual expression of heroism to its expression as performance, a fact of singular relevance in any staging of heroic populist leadership. The populist hero resorts to cultural wars to stage his political performance, trying to impose the moral vision of a particular group—often together with deeply conservative religious beliefs—on the whole of society, suppressing democratic pluralism.

Starting from this framework of analysis, we approach the life process of the populist hero by following the phases of their ritual journey. This journey begins by establishing a genealogy of the heroic populist leader. The genealogy describes the traits that characterize the hero, as well as the passage from the heroic to the postheroic model, the substitution of ritual for performance, and the way in which the sacred manifests itself in both transitions. We then highlight the exceptionality and charisma of the hero as a further manifestation

of the sacred. On the one hand, we point out that the creation of the charismatic leader can be revealed, as Weber posits, or manufactured—the case of the populist leader on the campaign trail. On the other hand, charisma entails a mission of salvation, which in the case of the populist hero requires the fabrication of functional substitutes of his numinous attributes.

Secondly, different heroic modes of confronting the struggle are analyzed with emphasis on the role of the individual duel. The goals that the populist hero pursues in his struggle and the way in which he performs the duel explain the regressive nature of this kind of heroism. The populist hero needs the culture wars to extract from them the binary differences required to present himself as a hero-savior against those who represent evil, as perceived in the relationship of Donald Trump and Jair Bolsonaro with evangelicalism.

Finally, in the last stage of the journey, the hero must assume the inevitable consequences of the struggle, which cannot be anything other than victory or defeat. The outcome of the electoral struggle confronts the populist leader with a dilemma: to maintain the charismatic bond with the followers or to transfer it to the political institutions. This transference entails molding these institutions to the same values and interests of his particular group with which he stirs up the culture wars. Insofar as he has attained the status of hero, the populist leader inscribes himself in the realm of the sacred as one more collective representation, a situation from which he can erode the sacred institutions of democracy.

2. The Construction of Modern Heroism as the Genealogy of the Heroic Populist Leader

Political heroism is not new. Every time and place has constructed its own type of heroic leader. The evocation of Campbell's (1993) myth of the hero and the adventure that an ordinary individual must go through to become extraordinary are consubstantial with most narratives about political heroes. This hero has the mission to save himself and others from the dangerous, evil, cruel or harmful (Ortiz Osés 1995, p. 385). One of the conditions for this narrative to be effective is that the hero has certain qualities that attract devoted followers. This is what we generally call "charisma" in the sense indicated by Weber. But the existence of an ambiguous, unstable or conflictive social context in which to generate the right kind of communication is also necessary for potential followers to be seduced by the charismatic qualities of the leader (Eisenstadt 1973, p. 79).

2.1. *The Transition from the Heroic to the Postheroic Model*

In this paper we approach the way in which modern Western culture has reinterpreted the heroic figure. Starting from authors as significant as Thomas Carlyle, Joseph Cambell, Jeffrey Alexander and Ulrich Bröckling, we will show how the semantics of the hero has undergone its own process of secularization, progressively stripping itself of religious and metaphysical connotations. Consequently, the symbolism associated with the myth is gradually detached from the divine order and oriented towards the mundane realm, either maintaining its transcendent spiritual connotations or being reduced to a merely instrumental level.

In the mid-nineteenth century, Carlyle argues that great men, heroes, are the engines of world history. This is how he describes the hero:

They were the leaders of men, these great ones; the modellers, patterns, and in a wide sense creators, of whatsoever the general mass of men contrived to do or to attain; all things that we see standing accomplished in the world are properly the outer material result, the practical realization and embodiment, of Thoughts that dwelt in the Great Men sent into the world: the soul of the whole world's history, it may justly be considered, were the history of these (Carlyle 1962, pp. 2–3).

However, in his lecture on paganism, he laments the disappearance of hero worship in his own time, considering that his era denied the existence of great men. However, as corroborated by leadership theorists, history explained through the acts of great men is still alive (Nye 2013). This is shown in Henry Kissinger's recently published book on the

subject, in which he explains how Konrad Adenauer, Charles de Gaulle, Richard Nixon, Anwar Sadat, Lee Kuan Yew and Margaret Thatcher determined the course taken by our civilization (Kissinger 2023).

Carlyle considers religion the main virtue of man and of the nation. Religion is what moves man inwardly, a sort of manifestation of transcendence that he describes as what man feels in his heart and what he has as duty or destiny in his relationship with the world (the “mysterious universe”), and which creatively determines the rest (Carlyle 1962, p. 4). Thus, the first historical type of hero worship that he identifies is linked to paganism as an expression of such feelings in the relationship of primitive man with the mysteries of nature, so that hero worship arises as a deep admiration of the heroic, as submission to a nobler and divine form of human life. That submission, moreover, constitutes the basis of society, which Carlyle considers to be founded on hero worship. For him, all forms of human association are heroarchies, governments of heroes. Thus, heroes are not only engines of social change, of history, but the foundation on which every social structure is built. At this point, the mythical nature of figures like Odin is unimportant. Accepting that there may not really have been a man who at his death was elevated to the status of myth, what is really relevant for Carlyle is that mythical condition that tradition turns into a cult. Here is a first glimpse of the institutionalization of charisma proposed by Shils and Eisenstadt, even if it is not expressed with this concept, but in terms of love, veneration or admiration, a *pathos* of exaltation that becomes more intense and aggrandized with the passage of time.

The construction of the hero as divinity is typical of a primitive past and gave way to various types of hero throughout history, Carlyle believes. These include the prophet, the poet and the priest. The prophet is the great man who is inspired by God rather than directly incarnating him. The poet is the hero whose voice expresses the divine mystery in song. The priest is the prophet of daily life who connects the people with the invisible and holy. Later a new type of hero appears, characteristically modern. This hero is the man of letters, who exposes to the public the intimate sphere of things, the general situation of the world and its divine substratum. Lastly, he approaches the one who assumes command, the hero as king, who is the compendium of all forms of heroism.

Carlyle considers it necessary to find the most skilled and capable man to exercise government “and, once found, to invest him with the attributes of skill, with worship, reverence, the symbols of courage, merit, sovereignty, all dignity, all royalty . . . ” (Carlyle 1962, p. 394). That is to say, updating the terminology, it refers us to the great modern political leader, the one who, displaying these high capacities, takes on or is invested with the charismatic attributes of power and command.

In the twentieth century, new interpretations of the hero and heroism appear with the purpose of offering a secularized version of the heroic mythical story. A first attempt is the hero of a thousand faces, who, under Joseph Campbell, emerges as a gnostic manifestation of mystery, symbol and the sacred (psychagogic, according to Ulrich Bröckling’s skeptical commentary). The hero is no longer a manifestation of divine mystery, as Carlyle maintained, but a “human cultural manifestation” product of “the inexhaustible energies of the cosmos”. For the analysis of this manifestation, he uses both an anthropological approach that emphasizes the ritual significance of heroism, and a psychoanalytic reading of the layer of mythical and religious symbols that have historically obscured its deeper meaning.

Warrior, lover, emperor-tyrant, redeemer or saint, the hero is the man of self-attained submission. The hero “is the man or woman who has been able to fight and triumph over his or her personal and local historical limitations and has attained the general, valid and normal human forms”. His first mission is to purify the local culture of distorted archetypal images by assimilating the archetypes valid for humanity as a whole. The second task is to be reborn to return to the transfigured world and “teach the lessons he has learned about the renewal of life” (Campbell 1993, pp. 17–26).

More recently, Alexander and Bröckling offer fully secularized readings of the figure of the hero in modernity. The former does so from the perspective of his cultural sociology,

from which he analyzes the heroic dimension of political leaders who participate in the electoral political struggle as candidates. The second addresses the fate of the hero in the contemporary scenario by developing a theory of heroism and post-heroism that stands out for its systematic ambition. From this starting point, he undertakes an ambitious sociohistorical analysis of the figure of the hero that, instead of establishing a normative definition of the hero and the heroic, asks about the narrative patterns that in each context establish to whom and to what such categories can be applied in a specific time and cultural setting (Bröckling 2021, p. 31). Thus emerges a wide repertoire of traits of the heroic referring to the qualities of heroic figures (exceptionality—a trait that includes charisma, transgression, agonality, masculinity, power of performance, willingness to sacrifice), characteristics of heroic narratives (tragicity, moral affection, aesthetic staging, myth), perspective of discourse (pedagogy) and analytical tools (typologies, historiography).

The consideration given to the heroic in the discourse of early modernity is contradictory. On the one hand, there are those who believe that modern institutionalization presided over by a strong State will leave little room for individual action, especially heroic action. And on the other hand, there are those who consider that it maintains its validity and believe in the great heroes of history. Among the early moderns, only Hegel assumes the contradiction, Bröckling observes. Hegel believes the early moderns to be anachronistic, but still present (Napoleon) and indispensable. The mythical heroes of the heroic age are borderline figures who fulfill a historical mission: to found the order whose institutions will make heroic action superfluous. In contrast, the task of modern heroes comes when the existing order languishes without a new one having been established (Bröckling 2021, p. 93). In the heroic portrait of the common soldier traced by Hegel—characterized by his virtuousness, sense of duty and spirit of sacrifice, but lacking charisma and autonomous power of action, the common soldier appears “depowered, deindividualized and integrated into an organization hero”; he is a postheroic hero, although Hegel does not call him so (Bröckling 2021, p. 95).

Bröckling proposes, in this sense, to distinguish between a heroic modernity and a postheroic modernity. In the former, following Kittsteiner (2006), it is possible to evade or fearlessly confront the crises of the present (Weberian iron cage), as well as stoic resistance or the radical abandonment of modernity (warrior *ethos* of the collective hero in Jünger’s total mobilization). Postheroic modernity can refer to modified forms of subjectivation, to new models of management or transformations of war². In the first case, the postheroic personality displaces the heroic self; it is psychically relaxed, guided by sensitivity to context and does not repress its impulses, but is in continuous dialogue with them. In the second case, the profile of the heroic leader with charisma who dominates all the processes of the company, whether entrepreneurial or managerial, is replaced by a postheroic leadership. The new profile is based on issues such as team responsibility, the development of employee competencies and the assignment of overall company objectives. Finally, war is the original domain of postheroic leadership. War is the natural habitat of the warrior hero as an extraordinary and glorious figure, capable of the greatest exploits, ready for self-sacrifice. However, in the postheroic war, inherited from the cold war and the nuclear threat, such qualities are not necessary and a postheroic hero appears whose primary task is to avoid it. In parallel, the need to avoid own casualties and the need to attack the enemy at a distance by means of increasingly technologically sophisticated weapons (such as drones), which apparently guarantee safety, precision and effectiveness, are imposed (Zulaika 2022).

Hernández-Pacheco points out that this heroic model begins to present postheroic features in ancient Rome, when the unlimited individual will of the hero in the face of challenge is dispensed with in order to limit the disposition to self-sacrifice through military discipline at the service of the Republic, of the political community. This two-faced heroic military paradigm runs through the Middle Ages, which inverts the sense of the heroic in the chivalric model, in which the knight ceases to be an exaltation of power and force to resolve disputes through deliberation and gentleness. Already in the Modern Age, with the introduction of modern professional techno-efficiency driven by the development of

firearms, the modern military paradigm, as it is known today, takes shape. Thus, the new efficiency merges with the public and disciplined character of the Roman soldier and with the medieval chivalric sense (Hernández-Pacheco 2012, p. 26). Its influence exceeds the limits of the military sphere; this author suggests that it can be the instrument for a pacifist postheroic policy and alien to war understood as a continuation of politics (Clausewitz). In such a scenario, war would be anomalous, “a relapse into heroic models” (Hernández-Pacheco 2012, p. 27). Understood in this way, the difference between the heroic and the postheroic paradigm acquires new nuances. The former alludes to a way of resolving conflicts based on force and violence and in which victory leads to individual self-affirmation. The latter approaches conflict through deliberation, pursues service to the community, and, ultimately, to humanity as an ideal³.

2.2. Heroism from Ritual to Performance

Achieving hero status requires facing a transcendent struggle or experience that possesses ritual meaning and structure. This is the case in heroic modernity, in which the heroic experience may consist of facing a challenge or, as Campbell points out, following the pattern of the journey as adventure. Underlying the form of this experience is a ritual structure that accommodates, as Ortiz Osés (1995) indicates, the preliminary (separation from ordinary life), liminal (struggle against otherness by undoing one’s limits) and postliminary (death or return to everyday life) phases. However, in postheroic societies, more differentiated and complex, ritual loses the capacity to maintain social cohesion as the different social spheres become progressively differentiated. As Jeffrey Alexander (2017) argues, ritual is replaced by cultural performance, which differs from ritual in that its effects are not long-lasting. The ritual experience fuses participants in experiences of collective effervescence that sacralize and harmonize with each other the collective representations that define the meaning of different areas of social life. In other words, it is a matter of fusing the participants around a common narrative.

Cultural performance is a quasi-ritual experience in which an actor dramaturgically enacts a script in which the meaning of a set of primordial collective representations is laid out before an audience. The performance will be successful if the actor succeeds in convincing the audience of the authenticity of that meaning, which requires a script that effectively articulates the binaries that shape the collective representations and their careful staging. In the political arena, Alexander argues, social performance requires the establishment of binary differences between a pure, sacred and civic “us” and its opposite, a polluted, profane and anti-civic “them”, as well as the emergence of heroic figures capable of making audiences feel the authenticity of these binary differences until re-fusion is achieved. For Alexander, following Kantorowicz, “to become a hero is to enter the myth. It is to cease to be a mere mortal and to develop a second immaterial body..., an iconic envelope that provokes in the audience an overwhelming sense of connection with the transcendental realm of the idealistic political life of the nation that underlies it” (Alexander 2017, p. 159).

3. The Self-Referential and the Relational in the Exceptionality and Charisma of the Hero

The heroic life is a concept opposed to everyday life, since it supposes its abandonment in order “to struggle and achieve extraordinary goals, the quest for virtue, glory and fame, which contrasts with the lesser everyday pursuit of wealth, property an earthly love” (Featherstone 1992, pp. 164–65). The exceptional nature of the heroic figure gives rise to the power and charisma that characterize the hero. On the one hand, the hero is a self-referential figure, since his destiny is to be a leader and to exercise power because of his exceptionality while demonstrating his exceptional qualities.. On the other hand, heroism is a relational category. The exceptional being needs an audience of non-heroes to worship, admire and venerate him. It requires both a disposition to adore and an object to adore. This reciprocity constitutes the charisma of the hero (Bröckling 2021, pp. 33–38).

Furthermore, heroes transgress the limits of the social order. In this sense, they are ambiguous figures, since, on the one side, the virtuous hero can stabilize the social order by embodying its norms to the point of self-sacrifice. On the other side, the rebellious hero can destabilize the social order by not submitting to those rules to which others must submit. “The charisma of the rebel hero is nourished, especially in traditionalist societies, by his opposition to the established order, whose legitimacy he questions in the name of another supposedly original right” (Bröckling 2021, p. 41).

3.1. *Charisma between the Sacred and the Manufactured*

Weber defines charisma as the extraordinary quality by which supernatural or super-human forces are attributed to a personality and he/she is considered to be sent by God or leader/leader (1984, p. 193); and, he adds, refers us to “bearers of specific gifts of body and spirit considered as supernatural (in the sense of not being accessible to all)” (1984, p. 848). The supernatural, understood as magical or heroic qualities, would be proper to any event situated outside the everyday. Situations such as these, Weber admits, do not occur only in pre-industrial societies. They also occur in modern and secularized societies, producing a modernization or secularization of the charismatic, although it “continues to belong to the sphere of the numinous” (Giner 2003, p. 161).

We can thus speak of an extended conception of the charismatic as a property referring to the vital force that connects us with that which is central to human existence (Shils 1965, p. 202), which refers us to the sphere of the sacred. However, due to the consecration or sacralization of the profane in secularized societies, we find these numinous features in other spheres, such as civil religion when it exalts society itself or patriotism. In the name of the sacred, public rituals, collective liturgies or other manifestations are performed to reinforce identity and order in the community (Giner 2003, p. 162). In this context, specialized agencies and the media appear capable of manufacturing these charismatic characters. These specialists use real or perceived crisis situations to identify those characters with the values of divinity and myth in order to arouse collective emotions or feelings framed in a narrative of salvation (Deusdad 2003; Giner 2003). In this way, a party’s propaganda apparatus, image consultants and the media participate in the manufacture of political leaders turned heroes (Deusdad 2003) and in that of their charisma (Eatwell 2002). Walter Benjamin did not believe that the aura of the work of art, its charisma, could be reproduced along with its copies. But there comes a time when it is possible to do so with the charisma of a political leader.

The attribution of extraordinary qualities to a person is not enough to consider him or her a charismatic leader. According to Weber, it is also required that the leader possesses, even superficially, a radical sense of mission, being the subject of a mass follow-up based on an affective bond, and the possibility of routinizing a fleeting phenomenon (Eatwell 2002, p. 1). However, Bröckling and Dow Jr. point out the importance of relationality. For those authors, the charismatic relationship or connection between the leader and their followers would constitute an independent form of charismatic authority, establishing a mutual need between them. The leader offers an image or ideal that transcends the immediate and reasonable reality. Followers affectively believe in this promise of salvation and in the leader’s extraordinary qualities (Dow 1969, p. 315).

Of course, the devotion of followers to their leader can give rise to a charismatic relationship based on manipulation, such as that exercised on masses exalted by the mere presence of the leader (Deusdad 2003, p. 23). History offers several examples of manipulation. However, the strength with which the populist spirit is emerging in many societies today makes the risk of manipulation of charismatic relationships even greater (Mudde 2004). In this context, the charisma of the leader is crucial to legitimize the political party to which he or she belongs, since “the people” prefer to place their trust in the leader rather than in the party.

Weber already pointed out about this risk that “the fact that the emotional impression on the masses necessarily offers certain “charismatic” features means also that the growing

bureaucratization of the parties and the electoral business, just when it reaches its peak, suddenly has to be put at the service of charismatic hero worship" (Weber 1984, p. 864). As an example, this author refers to Roosevelt's campaign in 1912, in which the charismatic heroism of the future president came into conflict with the routine power of the party apparatus. However, "only extraordinary circumstances can cause charisma to achieve a victory over organization" (Weber 1984, p. 866).

Certainly, there has been a tendency toward greater personalization of politics in recent decades, favored by the trend toward *de facto* presidentialism (Poguntke and Webb 2005). Consequently, the party itself reinforces personal political leadership. However, the presence of a strong leader is not enough to be considered charismatic. In this regard, Eatwell proposes downplaying the political relevance of the massive affective bond with the charismatic leader and paying more attention to clique charisma and into the way in which some leaders become the personification of politics (Eatwell 2002, p. 21). Since it is up to the leader to attract voters and carry out the program, there would be a clear willingness of the party, or the part of the party loyal to the leader, for the party to merge with the charismatic leader.

In the campaigns for president of Trump (2017, 2021) and Bolsonaro (2018, 2022), the greater weight acquired by the charismatic leadership of these candidates with respect to their corresponding parties was evident. The Republican party primaries constituted a form of charismatic acclaim for Donald Trump, as described by Weber. Bolsonaro, for his part, has never tied his political activity to a single party; he joined the Social Liberal Party to participate in the 2018 presidential campaign (Da Silva and Machado Rodrigues 2021). Bolsonaro's frequent changes of party did not hurt his image. That polls pointed to Bolsonaro as the only candidate with a chance of winning the election over Lula da Silva's Workers' Party imbued him with a charismatic aura above any party.

3.2. The Hero's Mission

The "success" of charismatic performance does not occur in a vacuum, but also depends on the material conditions and circumstances in which they occur. Nevertheless, what leaders who stir up the collective representations in the culture wars achieve is shifting the frame of the public debate. The shift is part of the heroic mission, as well as the source of their charisma. As Eisenstadt states, the test facing a great charismatic leader "is not only to create a single event or great movement, but also his capacity to leave a continuous effect on an institutional structure" (Eisenstadt 1973, p. 75). For this author, this implies opening up possibilities of symbolic and cognitive reorganization. In addition to constituting a personal attribute, for Eisenstadt, charisma can characterize political roles, symbols, institutions and certain collectives, which, therefore, acquire a sacred character (Pérez-Agote 2017).

In other words, the mission of the charismatic hero in the context of culture wars concerns the core of meaning of society, what Eisenstadt calls the central zone of society by virtue of its sacredness (Eisenstadt 1973, p. 94). Even if the hero pursued only their self-aggrandizement and their mission was of little importance, Eatwell adds, the hero would retain their charisma if he managed to keep intact the bond with his followers. Therefore, the link between the leader and their followers is the main element of charisma (Eatwell 2002, p. 18).

Social situations are thus generated in which leaders, presented as heroes, fulfill the functions of charismatic communication to which Eisenstadt alludes. They set themselves up as moral beacons and prescribers of appropriate behavior, facilitating at the same time collective identification (Eisenstadt 1973, p. 79). By connecting with the sacred core of society and presenting themselves as heroes who convey confidence that change is possible, these characters also offer possibilities for charismatic deference. Thus, the ability of these leaders to establish connections between institutional charisma (mass organization of authority) and the transcendent order through their heroism is presumed (Shils 1965).

4. Struggle and Duel: The Regressive Heroism of the Populist Hero

As we said at the beginning, a hero is one who faces a struggle and is willing to succumb to it in order to triumph in the mission of salvation to which he feels predestined. The need to overcome superhuman challenges in the face of antagonists who incite him to evil or who seek to destroy him, adds Bröckling, presupposes a constitutive conflict in the social realm that obliges the heroic overcoming of these antagonisms. From a warlike point of view, the type of struggle that the hero undertakes varies throughout history. Applying Clausewitz's war terminology, Bröckling distinguishes between the hot hero, who confronts violence with courage and contempt for death, and the cold hero, who resorts to technical means (arms race) to impose himself on his adversary.

Warrior heroism, or hot heroism, demands willingness to self-sacrifice in symmetrical confrontations in the form of duels in which the hero exposes himself to the same risk as his adversary does. Only in this way is the "killing" acceptable, even glorious. "The risk of being killed suspends the general prohibition against killing" (Bröckling 2021, p. 46). The unconditional willingness to put one's own life at risk is the supreme criterion by which an action can be considered heroic.

4.1. The Duel

Understanding the struggle as a fundamental element of heroism requires penetrating the mythical origin of the warrior hero. For the military historian and introducer of the concept of postheroism, John Keegan, the warrior hero is embodied by Alexander the Great and Achilles, his referents are the Homeric heroes or demigods, and his destiny is the agonizing horizon that leads to immortality (Keegan 2015).

For Keegan, the extraordinary qualities that adorn the hero are as important as the way in which they are presented to the society to which he belongs. Leadership and command are staged by means of artifice, in battle as well in teaching and politics, Keegan adds. Therefore, among Alexander's qualities, along with his reckless courage and his contempt for death, Keegan highlights his great gifts as an actor and as an orator, which ensured his dominance over men by influencing their minds and their moods (Keegan 2015). That is to say, Alexander was very capable of self-managing his charisma, for which he had a natural talent as well as having been trained for it.

In short, Hernández-Pacheco argues, in the current military paradigm there are two senses of heroism. On the one hand, the hero of the Homeric model, such as Achilles or Alexander, achieved immortality by dying at the hands of another hero who would have questioned his divine origin and, therefore, his immortal destiny. The duel is inevitable because he considers himself a god on earth and, as such, he cannot accept a power that limits him. On the other hand, the postheroic hero has no interest in glorious death, but will expose himself to it only if his own life is endangered in defending the community he serves. The goal of the former is victory, service that of the latter. These senses of heroism, Hernández-Pacheco adds, correspond to two senses of honor. The honor of the warrior-hero is indistinguishable from arrogance and bragging, because, Hernández-Pacheco says, "it consists in the absolute eagerness not to be limited, to always win, to be above; and in the end to despise the stranger, the poor and the loser" (Hernández-Pacheco 2012, p. 199). On the contrary, chivalric honor is more about honoring than demanding honor, and more about being right than winning a victory.

Clausewitz said that war is the continuation of politics by other means. Reversing the proposition, J. Alexander argues that the political struggle is a symbolic war. In his analysis of the 2008 presidential campaign, Alexander presents Obama and McCain as dueling heroes following Redfield's interpretation of the *Iliad*. The fact is that McCain represents Achilles, whose greatness resided in his great capacity to oppose and kill in the face of death; a hero who asserts himself in himself and in his victory (Redfield 1994). Obama is Hector, a human being concerned about the fate of his family and fellow citizens, who risks his life in the service of others (Alexander 2010, p. 74). That is, Achilles-McCain is a Homeric warrior-hero, the prototype of the heroic; but Hector-Obama is a postheroic hero.

For McCain, Alexander adds, duty, honor and country come first; for Obama, democratic ethics come first (which does not suggest that McCain had a problem with it).

Candidates face each other in individual duels following the Homeric warrior model (although some may pursue postheroic goals), armed with the most “technologically” advanced binary rhetoric and wielding sharp scripts manufactured by expert political communication professionals. They take care of designing the image to be presented in their public interventions and social networks and shape the binary differences that merge the candidate with his audience. In this way, the victorious hero forges a pure and sacred “us” while constructing his antagonist “other” as the essence of evil, an impure and profane figure. Like Alexander the Great, Bolsonaro possesses a natural talent for staging, to the point that Steve Banon traveled to Brazil to learn his performative techniques first-hand.

Trump represents Achilles, the brutish, rough and boastful warrior who resolves conflicts by violence, disdaining the limits imposed by the democratic ethics represented by Joe Biden on the campaign trail (Jiménez 2023). Trump pursues victory rather than service and represents the hot, rebellious hero whose sense of honor is indistinguishable from arrogance. On the contrary, Joe Biden is a postheroic hero, a cool, virtuous hero with a chivalrous sense of honor.

As Bröckling concludes, with populist leaders “another kind of hero returns to the stage: the loud-mouthed energizer who comes along to tell the establishment off, clean up the national Augean stable and lead his country to a new or old greatness” (Bröckling 2021, p. 24). He seems to have Donald Trump in mind by singling him out for his display of wealth, his aggressive machismo, his bluster, and his disdain for the weakest. Against him, President Biden has recently presented his presidential campaign “as a moral battle that focuses on values and “the soul of the nation” versus the threats to democracy and rights that he identifies with Trump”, as he did in the previous campaign (Jiménez 2023).

4.2. Binary Differences: Evangelism and Culture Wars

The main strategy in the political struggle is to construct the antagonism of the hero versus the villain: the candidate who aspires to become a myth must preserve the purity of his clean and democratic image while tarnishing that of the rivals by identifying it with the stigmas considered most undemocratic (Alexander 2010, 2017). This is a relentless struggle. However, it should be noted that there is a huge difference between that which takes place in the political theater of traditional party systems typical of liberal democracies and that which takes place in scenarios involving far-right populist parties. In the first case, the struggle is confined to electoral campaigns, which, insofar as they conform to the preliminary, liminal and postliminary ritual structure, do not extend the deleterious effects they could have on the hygiene of the democratic system beyond this period of suspension of ordinary life.

However, in the second case, the struggle is not restricted to electoral periods, but fiercely invades ordinary life, incorporating the culture wars into it. This phenomenon, first identified by Hunter in the United States, is spreading globally with right-wing populism. The political struggle becomes a struggle for the monopoly of moral authority, that is, for the control of the “fundamental assumptions that guide our perceptions of the world” (Hunter 1991, p. 119). The aim is to impose the system of moral interpretation proper to one group or community onto the totality of those coexisting in society, suppressing its pluralism (in addition to Hunter (1991), see Gorski (2020), Reckwitz (2017) and Kozlarek (2017) on culture wars). This creates a context of political polarization that erodes democracy and points towards an authoritarian drift. In their attempt to transfigure themselves into mythical heroes, far-right populist leaders appeal to binary differences by codifying collective representations that express their primordial convictions on family, sexuality, education, abortion or euthanasia, to which must be added the defense of identity, patriarchy, religion and nation. In this way they inflame the culture wars in their public speeches and interventions in social networks in order to oppose a pure and sacred “us” against an impure and profane “them”. The success of the heroic performance fuses the hero with

their followers in moments of collective effervescence that sacralize the hero as just another collective representation.

For example, the introduction of sex education into the educational curriculum is a widespread case of the populist use of culture wars to generate binary differences that codify a candidate as a savior hero who opposes an impure and anti-civic antagonist. This is the case of the campaign that brought Bolsonaro to the presidency in 2018. With Lula imprisoned, the Workers' Party proposed Haddad as candidate, whom evangelical pastors had already attacked when Haddad sought to introduce a guide against homophobia in school while Minister of Education in the Rouseff government. Evangelical pastor Silas Malafaia denounced what he called "gay kit", attributing to Haddad the intention of turning children into homosexuals. Bolsonaro, a deputy at the time, made the measure the symbol of the "depravity" of the government, before which he had to back down. In this regard, Oualalou concludes that "the strategy was so successful that the government had to back down. But it was too late. The expression has been used repeatedly since then and during the campaign gave rise to a multiplicity of *fake news*, such as images distributed on social networks showing babies fed in public nurseries with penis-shaped bottles" (Oualalou 2019, p. 69)⁴.

The alliance of Donald Trump and Jair Bolsonaro with evangelicalism, mostly akin to conservatism and authoritarianism, further radicalizes this mode of symbolic warfare to the extent that they assume its ultraconservative ideology in their staging of binaries in their campaigns for the presidency. This ideology has been nurtured by the fear of losing the culture wars. In Gorski's words:

"Convinced that they have "lost the cultural wars", that American liberals are their mortal enemies, and that Christians are now the most persecuted group in America-, some evangelicals have concluded that they need a ruthless "protector", someone who will comfort the "libs", and that God Himself has sent them Donald Trump" (Gorski 2020, p. 3)⁵.

As Katherine Stewart points out, in evangelicals Trump finds the faithful followers required by any self-respecting divine and immortal hero. He does not have to follow rules, because to Christian nationalists Trump is the law, a miracle sent straight from heaven to bring the nation back to the Lord. What they really want is a biblically masculine king, and, for them, it is King Cyrus, the first Persian emperor, who liberated the Jews.

"This isn't the religious right we thought we knew. The Christian nationalist movement today is authoritarian, paranoid and patriarchal at its core. They aren't fighting a culture war. They're making a direct attack on democracy itself" (Stewart 2018).

At a Trump rally in Louisiana, Arlie Hochschild observes how Trump focuses his performance on the emotions of an audience made up of people who feel the country no longer belongs to them; a country that has abandoned them economically, where, as white Christians, they feel part of a harassed minority and marginalized culturally. "Their views on abortion, gay marriage, gender roles, race, and the Confederate flag were ridiculed in the national media, which considered them backward" (Hochschild 2018, pp. 311–12). Thus, Trump's discourse is not about expounding a government program, but about provoking emotional reactions in his audience to the point of reaching a state of collective effervescence. This state is achieved by affirming the internal cohesion of the attendees around symbols such as the cross, the flag, or himself transmuted into just another collective representation, and ultimately employing binary differences to incriminate an "other" alien to them as the cause of their ills. But it is not only groups such as Muslims or Mexican immigrants that are singled out as impure, says this sociologist: at virtually every rally, he stages a purification ritual by singling out an attendee as a scapegoat. By demonizing him on any pretext, such as an alleged membership in Daesh, and requesting his expulsion from the event, he not only constructs a scapegoat, but purifies the attendees by generating "a shared feeling of

being the good guys, the majority. And so they cease to be strangers in their own land” (Hochschild 2018, p. 318).

On the other hand, it should be borne in mind that performance is not reduced exclusively to the use of binaries—for it is also about staging the attributes of charisma—nor do all binaries refer to the culture wars. In cases such as Trump’s, keenly observe Karakaya and Edgell, the contrast between producers and parasites is especially relevant. It is a classic American cultural binary that brings into play the populist dialectic between the people and the elite and that Trump stages as the businessman versus the experts, technocrats and professional politicians. His charisma is that of a “strong male hero figure”⁶. On the one hand, he makes use of an irreverent and rough-hewn sense of humor with which he lacerates the elites, immigrants and political correctness, generating bonds of solidarity in the audience. On the other hand, the use of sports metaphors portrays his character as a winner at all costs (Karakaya and Edgell 2022).

5. The Hero and the Transfer of Charisma in Victory and Defeat

Populist leaders who know how to listen to the people and how to make people believe that their wishes will materialize, can become heroes capable of establishing charismatic connections between themselves and the institutional order. However, as we have seen, they cannot suspend the struggle and return to ordinary life at the close of the campaign. After their victory or defeat, they must face the problem of maintaining the charismatic connection with their followers and with the institutional order. The case of the United Kingdom is telling in this regard. In 2016, Prime Minister David Cameron used the Brexit referendum to strengthen his leadership and that of the Conservative party by opening up new ways of linking the government and his party with the people (Alexandre-Collier 2022, p. 531).

5.1. Charismatic Connections and Permanent Performance

It can be affirmed that fabricated charismatic characters provide surrogate charismatic connections of the numinous to their followers. The nature of charismatic bonds is as ephemeral as the performances that stage them, so achieving the permanence of charisma through its routinization or institutionalization becomes more difficult. Therefore, when charisma is manufactured, it must be raised to the altars through a constant renewal of performance. The charismatic qualities of leaders like Trump, Bolsonaro or Johnson were invigorated by their electoral campaigns. As they ruled, these leaders continued to use forms of direct communication with their followers to maintain the charismatic bond. Populist leaders must constantly make visible who the leader is. On the one hand, charismatic leaders have to “create and recreate the legitimacy of their own authority through direct and constant discursive appeal to their followers” (Casullo 2019, p. 59). On the other hand, these leaders appropriate symbols that belong to the whole community to reinforce the charismatic bond with their followers.

As an example, in September 2022, Bolsonaro took advantage of the bicentennial parade of Brazil’s independence from Portugal to spread his ideas and turn the parade into an electoral event (Galarraga 2022). During his visit that month in London to attend the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II, from the balcony of the Brazilian embassy and with the Brazilian flag flying, he improvised a rally to charge against the liberalization of drugs, abortion and gender ideology. Bolsonaro supporters also sang the Brazilian anthem and prayed an Our Father (Mur 2022). The mobilization of supporters remained active through social networks and WhatsApp even after winning the elections in 2018, whether to deny the losers the right to exercise democratic opposition, or to follow information about the new government (Cesarino 2020, p. 114).

The charisma of these leaders is reinforced when they come to power. Like any ruler, these victorious leaders benefit from the charisma of office. The legitimacy of democratic systems, Shils adds, emanates from popular sovereignty, which is the bearer of charisma (Shils 1965, p. 205). Heroic populist leaders, however, further extol the participation of

the people to reinforce their own personal charisma. One way of doing this is to call referendums for the people to express their wishes. However, referendums in populist contexts tend to become instruments for overcoming elite power rather than favoring a more participatory or deliberative democracy (Mudde 2004, pp. 558–59). Thus, instead of being strengthened, democracy is weakened.

5.2. Charisma Transfer

Coming to power is neither the beginning nor the end of a process that seeks to achieve a symbolic and cognitive reorganization of society. The setting of normative boundaries around values is always in dispute. So, the culture wars are the exacerbation of that struggle in secularized and pluralistic societies. Thus, to understand the success of the culture wars narratives being spread by populist leaders today, one must go back to the movements and media groups that began to spread these narratives decades ago⁷.

Moreover, exercising power allows the use of institutions to impose a particular narrative. An example would be the case of abortion in the United States. According to Maier (2016), in recent years a dispute has arisen around the meanings of abortion that constitutes one of the most controversial points of the culture war⁸. The author notes that:

During the last five years, the forces against the decriminalization of abortion have shown effective activism, based on a dynamic, persistent and coordinated state and national strategy. Their achievements have limited the right of women to decide on their reproductive capacity, legally guaranteed since 1973 by the Supreme Court ruling in the case of *Roe versus Wade*, which legalized abortion in the country. Since then, both sides of the contest have gone through stages of greater or lesser momentum in terms of the effectiveness of their agency and influence on political discourse, legislation and public opinion (Maier 2016, pp. 24–25).

The author also identifies a geo-biopolitics that divides the country according to its position on abortion. In a growing number of states, the decriminalization of abortion is conditioned by multiple laws and public policies, making “the Supreme Court’s determination to legalize the voluntary termination of pregnancy on a national scale increasingly become a legal fiction” (Maier 2016). During Trump’s tenure, anti-abortion positions have been imposed on such important institutions as the Supreme Court. By appointing three justices using his power, Trump imposed a Republican majority of six conservative justices against three Democrats facilitating a change in the position of the Supreme Court (Ruiz 2022). Thus, “on 24 June 2022, the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, eliminating the constitutional right to an abortion after almost 50 years and clearing the way for bans on the procedure in states across the country” (Schoenfeld Walker 2022). For Maier (2016, p. 49), the abortion dispute is part of a struggle to redefine the boundaries separating the state from religion. Conservative sectors of American religious fundamentalism would be taking advantage of the moment of transition from the industrial to the post-industrial era in order to expand the religious presence in the public sphere, which would entail a reconfiguration of the nature of the modern state.

5.3. Creativity or Charismatic Destruction: The Problem of Democracy

As we have seen, democracy makes use of charismatic heroes, often manufactured *ad hoc* for electoral campaigns, in order to attract the electorate. But this does not mean that democratic institutions can control such charismatic heroes. In fact, the evolution of the legal treatment of abortion in the United States shows how victories in the culture wars can be won from within the institutions themselves. Since it is so evident that the election of conservative justices to the Supreme Court has influenced the decision on abortion, the impartiality of the Court and its capacity to impart injustice are called into question. Thus, the legitimacy of this institution and its quasi-sacred aura are undermined. Although the

institution continues to function, the principles on which it is based are weakened, which erodes its ability to maintain the stability of the moral order.

Giner (2003, p. 170) points out the need for “secular rituals to keep the charism safe from excessive trivialization”. The guarantee for this not to happen, according to this author, would be the measures of liberal democracy itself. Thus, the values (freedom, equality, justice, popular sovereignty) and institutions that form the backbone of democracy have been incorporated into the sphere of the untouchable, acquiring a quasi-sacred character. On the one hand, institutions would be situated in the sphere of the sacred, of what cannot be profaned. On the other hand, institutional charisma would be based “on the function we attribute to it as a safeguard of the social order and the moral integrity of the community” (Giner 2003, p. 171). There would thus be a certain compatibility between the emergence of charismatic personalities and democracies, as long as the former do not dare to profane the sacred core of liberal democracy. Conversely, when narratives mobilized by the culture wars are the source of charisma, charismatic leadership will most likely come into conflict with democratic institutions. As recently argued, the death of democracy occurs when the legal system, the press, and traditional political norms are eroded (Levitsky and Ziblatt 2018).

This conflict also weakens the institutional charisma from which the legitimacy of a function holder derives (Shils 1965). While this author recognizes that “the demand for justice (...) derives from the demand for a social order consonant with a transcendent moral standard” (Shils 1965, p. 207), the connection with a transcendent order should contribute to strengthening and maintaining the social order rather than weakening it. However, the charismatic legitimacy of the democratic order is weakened when the charismatic hero himself is the symbol that unites the group, especially if the hero becomes the representation of the narratives he mobilizes. This legitimacy is transferred to the rational-bureaucratic system, as the hero places himself above democratic values to cater only to the demands of his followers.

Moreover, charisma refers both to the capacity to destroy existing institutions through charismatic attraction, and to reorganize and institutionalize the symbolic and cognitive order (Eisenstadt 1973, p. 82). In some of the examples used, institutions have not been destroyed, but they have been affected. As Levitsky and Ziblatt note, “since the end of the Cold War, most democratic breakdowns have been caused not by generals and soldiers, but by elected governments themselves” (Levitsky and Ziblatt 2018, p. 11). According to these authors, “legal” government measures have been taken that, in reality, strip democracy of its content. In a way, they have learned to play with the procedure to change the substantive, which refers to the symbolic and cognitive order. Thus, in Brazil, Bolsonaro justified his “crusade” in the need to put an end to the political and moral corruption that he attributed to the left (Da Silva and Machado Rodrigues 2021).

5.4. The Defeated Hero

One of the peculiarities of democratic systems is, precisely, that they have solved the problem of charismatic succession through elections. Nevertheless, elections are not an obstacle for democratic regimes to leave room for the leader to awaken an emotional devotion to himself and succeed by making more spectacular promises than his rivals (Runciman 1963, p. 152). But, as we have argued, the cultural wars can be used to undermine democratic institutions, including the electoral system itself. In short, the probability that democratic institutions enter into crisis will depend on the characteristics of the democratic system and its political parties.

It cannot be said that the behavior of the heroic leaders we have referred to pursues social stability. The cases of Trump in 2020 and Bolsonaro in 2022 are examples of how the charismatic hero tries to impose his figure and his narrative in the quest for victory and immortality, although victory requires questioning democratic institutions. None of these leaders explicitly recognized their electoral defeat, but, on the contrary, they questioned the result of the elections.. During the electoral campaigns, they had spread among their followers that if they lost the elections it would be due to fraud, extending these suspicions

to the electoral authorities. This narrative allowed them to draw a scenario in which only their victory was possible. Neither these heroic leaders nor their supporters would ever be defeated. The defeat, although narrow, was digested neither by the candidates nor by their followers. None of these two defeated heroes attended the handing-over ceremony, in which the charisma of the office is transferred to the new presidents. In the vision of the heroic populist leader, participation in this ritual would weaken the constant performance of victory. Defeat should not be staged.

The assaults on the Capitol in Washington in January 2021 and on the Three Seats of Power in Brasilia on 8 January 2023 represent a further step beyond the manipulation of procedure to empty democratic institutions of their content. It was a violation of the taboo, a violent desecration of the temple that symbolizes the sacred center of democratic society. The apparent ability of these heroic leaders to lead “their people” to the limits of the forbidden “without anything happening” and remain immune is presented as another extraordinary quality. Thus, the heroic leaders will gain the loyalty of their followers, even their organizations, in return for the hope that all of them will be kept safe from their greatest fear, their own extinction.

6. Conclusions

The balances and consensuses that structure the social order in postheroic modernity are tottering under the effect of the forces of regressive modernity. On the one hand, the populist hero adopts a regressive model of heroism. The heroic character of this leader is neither postheroic nor secular, but comes directly from God or some other manifestation of the sacred. The populist hero’s performance of the dueling struggle is not limited to the period of suspension of ordinary life, as it happens during the campaign, but extends beyond this period and invades everyday life. In contrast, the postheroic leader returns to ordinary life, thus aligning with the play rules of democracy. Postheroic leaders are helpless in the face of the polarization that arouses in everyday political life a state of permanent symbolic warfare to which they can only oppose the deliberative processes of liberal democracies, which affect neither the populist hero nor his followers.

On the other hand, the heroic regression is also an institutional regression. Insofar as charismatic authority is transmitted to the body from the institutions, the victory of the populist hero is a return to personal charismatic authority that weakens the institutions. The defeated populist heroes do not understand that their defeat is not the defeat of the institutions. From the point of view of democratic institutions, victory is achieved when the succession process of the charismatic leader is assured. It is a triumph of the system over personal ambitions and of the political parties that gives the measure of their institutional strength. On the contrary, when a candidate does not recognize the victory of his adversary, he desecrates the sacred center of democracy, of which respect for electoral results is an essential part. But only through the authority and strength that the populist hero acquires through his own sacralization can he erode, even destroy, the institutions that liberal democracy considers sacred and which impose their sacredness on the sacredness of the human person.

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Notes

- ¹ Although the problem of leadership would be separated from charismatic authority (Runciman 1963, p. 149), the idea of political charisma is often associated with some aspects of political leadership (Deusdad 2003, p. 22).
- ² Fatalities in international military engagement have invoked a sense of post-patriotic heroism instead of a post-heroic crisis, and argues that the social order of modern society has underpinned, rather than undermined, ideals of military self-sacrifice and heroism, contrary to the predominant assumption of the literature on post-heroic warfare (Frisk 2018).
- ³ See Beriáin and Gil-Gimeno (2022) for an expression of the postheroic centered on its anti-sacrificial features and the sacredness of the human person.
- ⁴ Likewise, the evangelical bishop Marcelo Crivella won the mayoralty of Rio de Janeiro wielding anti-pepticism, the war against gender ideology and against the promotion of Marxism and sexual decadence in school (Oualalou 2019, p. 75).
- ⁵ Gorski builds this idea with elements taken from Fea (2018) and Denker (2019).
- ⁶ Biblical masculinity is an essential attribute of the heroic political leader for the American evangelical community. See Kobes du Mez (2022) for a full discussion.
- ⁷ See Carapanã (2019) on the relationship between capitalist realism and the obsession with cultural issues in the new right.
- ⁸ See its historical contextualization in Gorski (2020, pp. 90–95).

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