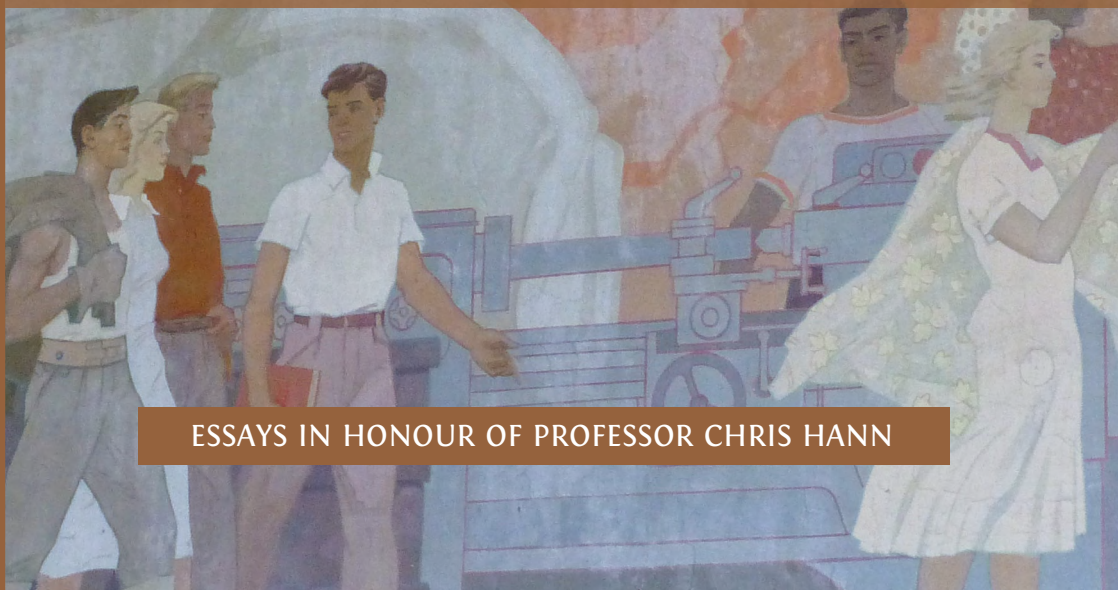




EDITED BY JURAJ BUZALKA AND AGNIESZKA PASIEKA

# ANTHROPOLOGY OF TRANSFORMATION

From Europe to Asia and Back



ESSAYS IN HONOUR OF PROFESSOR CHRIS HANN



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Cover image: Lenin mural, House of Culture, Temirtau, Kazakhstan (2014). Photo by Tommaso Trevisani. Cover design by Katy Saunders.

# 9. Swimming against the Tide

## Right-wing Populism, Post-socialism and Beyond<sup>1</sup>

*Agnieszka Pasieka*

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### Introduction

“Why are we still discussing post-socialism?” was the question numerous scholars and commentators were asking, with annoyance, when the first decade of the twenty-first century was coming to an end. The fact that ten countries from the former Eastern bloc joined the European Union (in 2004) and that many of them were run by centrist governments which embraced neoliberal policies were to them sufficient proofs of the successful—and completed—transition. The most painful effects of the drastic reforms linked with the post-1989 “shock therapy” seemed to have been overcome and some incidents on the way to liberal democracy were treated merely as “hiccups along the way” or, rather, redefined through a linguistic equilibristic. Thus, millions of unemployed young Poles, Hungarians or Romanians who left for the “West” in search of employment, often well beyond their qualifications, were not to account for desperation but flexibility. Temporary political turmoils and low political participation meant that the Eastern European citizens were “still” learning democracy. And the growing share of foreign ownership in Eastern Europe was a sign of “successful” Europeanisation and “truly” open markets rather than of the power imbalance and the weakness of

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1 I would like to thank Tatjana Thelen, Laszlo Foszto and the anonymous reviewers for their very helpful comments on this text; Rafal Rukat for research assistance; and my research participants for their willingness to talk to me. Fieldwork was funded by the Austrian Science Fund grant.

local competitors. Authors of such enthusiastic claims seemed to have undergone their own “shock therapy” when a number of right-wing populists gained power in Eastern Europe. Importantly, they gained power after announcing that not only was it necessary to undo the ills of the transformation but also to bring *ordinary* people *real democratisation*. The question of post-socialism, and with it that of post-socialist victims/others/losers, once again returned to the fore.

Given his field of expertise and familiarity with numerous Eastern European contexts, it is far from surprising that Chris Hann has been vocal in the discussions on the recent developments, especially in Central-Eastern Europe. Even though right-wing populist (as well as far-right) parties have been on the rise across the continent, Central Eastern European societies became a target of particularly acute criticism for their unwillingness to welcome refugees during the so-called refugee crisis in 2015 and for supporting politicians who reached for xenophobic and Euro-sceptic rhetoric. Hann commented on these issues in a series of publications (2015; 2016; 2017), which can be succinctly described as imploring fellow intellectuals to take a more emphatic approach to the CEE, to recognise the profound disparities within Europe and to emphasise the post-socialist context. Later, he developed many of these thoughts in more extensive takes on populism, or rather on populisms, for instance when discussing the long road to populism (2019a; 2019b; 2019c) and populism’s relation to civil society (2020). Most importantly, he demonstrated the importance of a *longue durée* perspective for the understanding of the current moment, making it clear that post-socialism was but one moment on the “road to populism.”

Many of his arguments are in stark contrast with general feelings and tendencies, even those offered by anthropologists who admittedly are specialists in stating that “X is more complex” but who often forget about complexities when trying to understand their own societies, and especially when discussing concerns with which one cannot easily sympathise. Yet if we were to describe Hann’s attitude as “swimming against the tide,” we would need to emphasise that he has done it consistently. In the early 2000s, against the wave of enthusiasm for democratisation, he was analysing the growth of nationalist sentiments and exclusionary policies in the new democracies (e.g., Hann 1997; 1998). He persistently emphasised those social-economic aspects of transition,

which were ignored by the bards of democratic progress across the EU, and he engaged critically with certain EU policies. Apart from drawing on his established research contacts in Hungary and Poland, he referred to the works of doctoral students who studied developments in the region (e.g. Buzalka 2008; Fosztó 2009).

In short, the subjects Hann is tackling when grappling with the problem of populism and crisis of democracy reflect his attachment to a few themes that constitute *leitmotifs* in his scholarship. These are, among others, the questions of marginality and its different manifestations; broadly understood “East/West” dynamics; the relationship between morality and economy; property relations; and last but not least a critical engagement with the notion of “culture”. Central among them is the idea of work: an idea that not only shaped the discussions on post-socialist developments (see, e.g., Buchowski 2018; Pine 1995; Ries 2009; Thelen 2006) but which constitute one of the key anthropological notions, as a lens through which to study social organisation, hierarchies, and gender relations, to name but a few.

Hann has engaged with the idea of work in numerous publications, most recently in an article chosen by the editors of this volume as a key reference (Hann 2018). Drawing on his long-term research in rural Hungary, Hann demonstrates that “work” has remained a central value among Hungarian villagers and as such is a target of political manipulation. Discussing contemporary developments, he shows that the villagers’ deeply ingrained ideas of work have made them receptive to the xenophobic messages of the Hungarian government. Yet their responses need to be seen in a broader context than the usual recognition that lower classes see refugees as economic migrants, and hence as competitors for already scarce resources. The arguments of Tazlar’s inhabitants are related to the idea of fairness—fairness in relation to work opportunities (i.e., among local people who lack resources to go to work abroad and the newcomers’ resources), fairness among the European states (i.e., rich Germany vis-à-vis poorer CEE countries), as well as fairness in terms of provision of support and use of resources (i.e., the allowances received by the Hungarian workforce and by migrant-newcomers) (Hann 2018: 246). Hann further uses these examples to argue in favour of an approach which recognises the entanglement between the moral and the material dimensions of the economy (Ibid.: 251).

In this contribution, I draw on Hann's reflections on work, moral and ethical concerns, to discuss a case study of a Polish far-right youth movement, called 'Polish Labour'. Inspired by Hann's scholarship, I demonstrate the centrality of the notion of work in their agenda. I ask to what extent the perception of work—that is, what 'good work' means or who has the right to work—can be said to constitute a yardstick which the movements' members use to make judgements about other, sometimes seemingly unrelated, issues. Like Hann, I try to approach their often-despicable views as an anthropologist should, that is by providing a broader context of their actions and claims and trying to understand them without expiating them and paying attention to the language I use. To put it differently, I want to demonstrate that describing someone as "receptive to xenophobic messages" rather than a "xenophobe" is not a question of relativism, but an attempt at understanding.

### Right-wing Populism and a (Missing) Anthropological Perspective

Literature on right-wing populism in Europe is abundant and, as a result of recent developments, it has been growing very quickly. Rather unsurprisingly, political scientists and political sociologists dominate in discussions on the subject (for widely quoted studies, see, e.g. Mudde 2007; Muller 2016; Brubaker 2017). What is also rather unsurprising if we consider the parameters of the broader discussion is the fact that right-wing populism is often discussed in parallel with the far right and neo-nationalism (if not treated synonymously with them), rather than in the context of left-wing populism. This tendency has two problematic outcomes. First, carelessly throwing adjectives at quite varied political phenomena precludes the possibility of understanding what is actually at stake and understanding the difference between political phenomena as different as the Polish Law and Justice party, the German Alternative für Deutschland party, and the American Tea Party movement. (A careful scrutiny of differences would of course allow us to identify similarities, too—see, e.g., Samet and Schiller 2017). Related to that is the fact that the term "populism" seems to operate mainly as an invective, as a deeply-charged term which simply denotes an opponent and consequently loses its analytical quality (Comaroff 2009). Second, this reluctance

to situate right-wing populism within a broader context of populist politics precludes the understanding of the important economic basis of populism which links its left-wing and right-wing variations, as it links its historical and present-day manifestations. It also prevents us from recognising the strategic use of populist rhetorical tropes and agendas by politicians representing different fractions; consider, for example, Italy, where three rather different politicians, Matteo Salvini, Matteo Renzi and Beppe Grillo, can all be said to embody populist features (see Loperfido 2018).

Anthropology has the potential to address these shortcomings. Indeed, many anthropologists discussed the growth of populist sentiments in the context of globalisation and neoliberalisation as early as a decade or two ago, before commentators would use the notion of “populism” to explain the successes of Trump, Orban or Farage (see, e.g., Gingrich and Banks 2006; Kalb and Halmai 2011; Comaroff 2009). An important comparative lens may be found in studies of populism in Latin America and India (e.g. Albro 2000; Hawkins 2010; Hansen 2001). As Hann has argued, a broader—temporarily and geographically—context is necessary to understand what we are observing today.

Still, while it is clear that more anthropological works on populism are needed, in order to provide in-depth empirical evidence, it is still not recognised widely enough that such studies and such knowledge have implications for anthropology *at large*. The first is the recognition of populist currents within anthropology itself (Hann 2017; Mazzarella 2019); and that this somewhat inherent populist stance cannot but affect the ways we interact with our interlocutors and fellow scholars within the field. The second is the acknowledgement of the persistent hierarchies of knowledge. Wary of the problem of Eurocentrism (and at times even Western-Europe-centrism), anthropologists are in the position to demonstrate a more complex political background of current political debates. To show that, as Paula Chakravarty and Skirupa Roy (2017: 4074) point out, “[t]he current scholarly interest in the topic of populism reflects the familiar Eurocentric practice of granting world-historical significance and generalizability to a phenomenon only when it occurs in Europe and North America—hence, the ‘global age of populism’ is pronounced to be upon us only after the election of Donald Trump to the U.S. presidency in November 2016.”

In light of the above premises, anthropologists seem to be best positioned to deliberate (and take seriously) ideas on economy and society that our interlocutors engage with in their everyday lives, including alternative socio-political scenarios they put forward. This means opening up the discussion on populism, rather than closing it off by assuming populism to be just an “accident” on the way. In the following, I am offering a glimpse of one such socio-political project which, although quite marginal, can be said to account for increasingly widespread sentiments. My analysis complicates widespread analyses of populism by demonstrating that in our research into participants’ accounts and experiences, the line between criticising “the system” and blaming “the others” is often blurred.

## Polish Labour

The material I am drawing on here comes from my ethnographic project on the European far-right youth (Pasięka 2020; 2021; 2022; forthcoming). One of the project’s aims is to demonstrate the diversity of personal trajectories of the activists dubbed “far-right” as well as the organisational agendas. The project problematises the very term “far right” in that it points to the socialist component in activists’ agendas and their embrace of what are perceived as “traditionally” left-wing agendas and modes of action. In emphasising this, I do not mean to repeat the well-worn cliché about the blurred boundaries between left and right or to question the fact that numerous far-right actors continue to promote hardcore neoliberal policies. On the contrary, the project shows that rather than “blurring” the left/right distinction, my research participants purposefully emphasise the “left” components—in the main anti-capitalist sentiments—and strongly accentuate what makes them different from the neo-liberal right.

One such group is Polish Labour [*Praca Polska*, hereafter: PP] founded in 2017 by Krystian, a former member of the oldest Polish far-right organisation, National Radical Camp. Within the last four years, Krystian has managed to gather several dozens of activists and establish structures in several Polish cities. At the moment, the movement is composed of several dozen people. Krystian and his girlfriend, Maria,



likewise a former member of the National Radical Camp, are the leading figures. Both are in their early twenties and combine studies with work.

PP shares with other radical nationalist organisations the belief in a sovereign nation-state, criticism of the EU and the US, and a rejection of foreign capital. Nation, in their view, has an ethnic basis, and migration to Poland and Europe is to be stopped. What makes them stand out among similar organisations is a very detailed programme of social economy, which includes advocating for progressive taxation, availability of social housing, widespread workers' unions, and a reformed labour code. Even though the PP members do not remember socialism, they advocate correcting the mistakes of the transformation era. For example, they consider it vital to address the problem of regional marginalisation by restoring bus and train connections (removed in the post-socialist era due to their presumed unprofitability) and to support the mining industry. Some of their claims appear contradictory, if you consider, for instance, their emphasis on environment-friendly policies and care for nature along with the necessity to build nuclear energy and bring back heavy industry. Other policies, instead, may appear progressive in comparison with the kindred groups, in that PP promotes religiously neutral policies and widely available nurseries and daycare which would allow both mothers and parents in general to work.

PP promotes these ideas and puts them into practice through three forms of activism: "Social Campaigns"—which could also be labeled "informative campaigns"; "Events"—usually one-day-long conferences and fund-raising events; and "Library"—publication and promotion of contemporary and historical works on national and social questions, such as Kazimierz Dagnan and Engelbert Pernerstorfer.<sup>2</sup> Tech-savvy, they successfully use social media to promote their activities. Most of their conferences and lectures are streamed online. They put a strong emphasis on the design and aesthetics, making sure the materials produced are of high quality, eye-catching and different from "typical" nationalist propaganda materials. Their logo includes a simple graphic of an ant and in their promotional materials they rarely reach for national symbols.

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2 Dagnan (1891–1986) was a Polish politician and creator of a national socialist party in the interwar era. He argued in favor of non-Marxist socialism. Pernerstorfer (1850–1918) was an Austrian social democrat and journalist.

When I met with Krystian for the first time in a Warsaw café I quickly realised my unpreparedness: I had not read Piketty's *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* (2013), to which he was just re-listening as an audiobook. He noticed that I felt embarrassed and in order to cheer me up he said something like "Oh, don't worry, you specialise in ethnic minorities and religious pluralism," which made me realise *he* was well prepared for our conversation. As it turned out, before meeting me he spent a good few hours reading my freely available publications, especially those related to my doctoral project (Pasięka 2015). Knowing what my views were, he did not try to hide or tone down his statements.

This was clear in particular in relation to an issue that constituted the key subject of my earlier work: the plight of ethnic minorities in Poland (especially Ukrainian minorities) and the politics of multiculturalism. Krystian devoted a lot of time to this question, openly stating his opposition to a foreign labour force, which had drastically increased in Poland in recent years (1.5 million Ukrainians in 2019; a quadruple increase on the previous five years). Yet whereas other nationalist groups I have been studying tend to talk about the national government's actions or "EU" politics, he would emphasise that "*capitalists* bring immigrants."

He justified his objection to migrant workers on several grounds. The first was a recognition that he shares with Tazlar villagers (and numerous other people in Europe and beyond) that migrants lead to competition and wage dumping, hence, they are not beneficial for the local (Polish) population. The second was the fact that the situation was not beneficial for Ukrainians: they were underpaid in Poland and often worked in scandalous conditions. On a different occasion, he stated that "Ukrainians are less and less satisfied with the work in Poland. Poles treat them as serfs [*jak chłopow pańszczyźnianych*]." The employers were eager to employ them because they had to be more subordinate and dependent on them. In order to raise Ukrainians' awareness of this issue, PP created a poster targeting Ukrainian workers and informing them about the minimum wage in Poland, with the aim of making them realise that they were underpaid. The third reason was that by leaving Ukraine, migrants—usually young and skilled people—were slowing down the process of change in and transformation of their own society. As a consequence, they were also aborting the process of global change.

“Anticapitalism needs to be global,” says Krystian, “Ukrainians need to do it [act against capitalism] at home.”<sup>3</sup>

Generally, ethnic diversity does not go hand-in-hand with class/workers’ solidarity, Krystian claimed. He would corroborate this claim with examples from history, among them the case of Austro-Hungary discussed by Pernerstorfer. “In a factory, some sort of borderland comes into being,” he said, concluding that there was no place for national commissions within workers’ unions. He grinned when pronouncing the word “borderland,” as if to say: “yes, I did read your stuff on minorities in Poland and know all this terminology”. He was ironic at times, but throughout most of the conversation he was clearly and straightforwardly outlining their programme. If I objected to his claims, he never adopted a defensive tone but simply explained his position in the context of their broader agenda.

Krystian emphasises that their movement is only making its first steps and that they need to start as a sort of think-tank. “We need to arm activists with economic arguments,” he says. “We need to *economise nationalism* [zekonomizować nacjonalizm].” This is why, even though the organisation aims to express the interests of the working class, it is mostly represented by students now. He describes its profile as “*intelligencko-pracowniczy*” (of intelligentsia and workers)—a notion that brings to mind the discourse that was prominent in the discussions on the Polish anti-communist regime activism (see Kubik 1994). Krystian claims that PP attracts two kinds of people: those with high cultural capital and a positivist attitude, and workers or union members. What unites them is the belief in “reformism” and in a paced (step-by-step) revolution.

The audience of the events organised by PP supports this claim. One recent PP conference took place in Katowice, a mid-size town in the Silesia region, in a small venue rented for the occasion. Among the audience were university students and graduates as well as a few young men who seemed to have just left a football stadium. PP organises such events quite frequently, each time choosing a specific leading theme. The

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3 Due to the ongoing Russian aggression on Ukraine, the situation and basic number of Ukrainian workers in Poland has rapidly changed recently. It is too early to make any conclusive statements.

Katowice event was devoted to the situation of workers in the Silesia region.

The first part of the meeting was composed of a few short lectures. Among the issues discussed was the situation of Polish miners and the history of the national-socialist movement in Upper Silesia from the nineteenth century until the World War II. Krystian, who gave a talk on the latter issue, emphasised that the Silesians fought for values similar to those that PP represents: that is, they fought for better working conditions and they strove to defend Polish identity. When asked by the audience how much the historical dimension mattered, he said that PP could learn political pragmatism and realism from their forebears.

The second part took the form of a workshop, the aim of which was to discuss potential cooperation partners for PP. Activists and guests created a circle to facilitate the exchange of ideas and to emphasise the horizontal nature of the movement. The first group of potential partners discussed were entrepreneurs to whom PP wanted to reach out. A specific goal would be to make them sensitive to the issue of workers' rights as well as the benefits for the national economy: paying taxes in Poland and employing ethnic Poles.

The second group targeted as potential collaborators were local representatives of the governing right-wing populist party, Law and Justice. In emphasising their wish to cooperate with local party members, the speakers assumed these individuals to be less corrupt than high-level politicians and more genuinely concerned about everyday matters. Some activists objected, emphasising that cooperation could be difficult due to PiS politicians' clerical outlook. Others challenged those claims, in turn asking their opponents not to exaggerate the role of religious matters when it came to cooperation in other fields. Taking the floor, Krystian emphasised that what mattered more were PiS views on "social questions." Generally, however, he believes that the PP agenda evokes much more interest among left-leaning people, especially those who do not feel represented by the parties dubbed left-wing but in fact preoccupied only with issues of "sexuality" (i.e. gay rights, transgender rights, etc.). One of his mates added that yet another obsession of such groups is "anti-fascism". Instead of tackling economic issues and real problems, they sit at university conferences and ponder whether something counts as fascism or not. Krystian proposed, however,

to at least try to establish cooperation with those students studying economics.

Yet another activist spoke up about a potential alliance with football fans, in what appeared to be an inclusive gesture towards some of the guests. In trying to engage them in the discussion, Krystian asked the guests to say something about the social/class background of football fans. They confirmed that most of them were working class. However, they did not seem keen to engage in discussion; instead, they eagerly took part in the martial arts training that concluded the conference.

### Work and Populism, Work of Populism

Many of the activities carried out by PP might just as well be found among left-wing groups. They offer free-of-charge school tutorial for children from needy families and legal advice in the domain of labour law, social assistance, or house rentals. What PP activists do and claim is centred on the idea of work and on the plights of working people, and what prompted many of them to act were precisely different work experiences. Asked about his reasons for leaving the National Radical Camp and establishing a new group, Krystian says: “Well, I got onto the job market—and realised something had to be done.”

Krystian’s rationale is far from unique. Similar discourses and forms of activism have been common for numerous social movements across Europe; those movements which combine nationalist, exclusionary rhetoric with a vision of a socialist state and some sort of “welfare chauvinism.” Hogar Social in Spain, Casa POUND in Italy, early Golden Dawn in Greece—all of them offer a radical critique of the status quo. Operating at times (only) as movements and at times as political parties, they emphasise their role as carriers of a new political message and new forms of activism, including attempts to colonise the previously left-wing political terrain. They talk about the needs and voices of average people, betrayal of the elites, and abandonment of the working-class by left-wing parties. Does this make them “populists”?

Krystian is eager to offer an answer to this question. In discussing the Polish case, he says that the ruling party, Law and Justice, won the 2015 elections thanks to a generous social programme and promises of redistribution but has by now abandoned strictly populist claims

centred around social issues. However, their initially generous social spending awoke societal aspirations, especially among what he calls the “*klasa ludowa*”—“popular class.” And this is where movements like his step in. “The demons like us come now,” he says with an ironic smile. It would be stupid, he observes, not to embrace the opportunity and try to fill the existing gap and to put forward their view of a nationalist-socialist order.

In talking about the aspirations of the “popular class”, Krystian at the same time sheds light on the trajectories of the PP members. The young people who support movements as PP members are not necessarily unemployed, nor have they been forced to accept any job offer available. More commonly they are underemployed—they have jobs beneath their real qualifications, whether in their home country or as seasonal migrants in Western countries. Many of them are fed up with being second-class workers in foreign firms and resent the working conditions offered, for example, by multinational corporations in Poland. They realise the discrepancy of earnings in their home country and in Germany, France or the UK.

Is there anything unique for the post-socialist context about such activism and such claims? PP activists’ peers in Southern Europe invoke a very similar vocabulary, complaining about exploitation by the West and brain drain. Like Hungarians and Poles, they complain about their state being reduced to “a new state of peripheral dependency” (Hann 2019b). Across Europe, young people talk about unfulfilled promises and a lack of perspectives. We could hear similar rhetoric expressed by Hann’s interlocutors (2018).

It is thus perhaps not about uniqueness, but about the relative weight of promises that the youth in post-socialist Europe have at the back of their minds when assessing today’s situation. The “happily ever after” narrative of post-1989 development, and the political-economic mechanisms that accompanied it, were particularly consequential in shaping both expectations and opportunities. Thus, rather than being seen as an odd case—as incubators of populism (Hann 2017) and regions inhabited by nationalists and xenophobes—Eastern Europe is an important, comparative case whose analysis sheds light on a much broader terrain.

## Conclusion

In a recent analysis of civil society and populism, Hann observes that his research participants in rural Hungary vote for Orban not because they became “rabid nationalists” but “because no other party has made a comparable effort to speak to their concerns, following a generation of postsocialist insecurity in which they have been systematically marginalized at the expense of a new national bourgeoisie” (2020: 479). Indeed, the incapacity to reach voters is an argument that has been made often by those who have tried to explain the shifting sympathies—the growing support for far-right and right-wing populism in the European cities’ peripheries, the predominantly working-class areas, and the popularity of liberal, left-wing ideologies in the bourgeois city centres—whether in Slovakia, Italy or the UK. In Poland, even scholars have begun to admit that the language of the left has become so impenetrable and obsessed with political correctness that they are stressed about their own vocabulary being not *en vogue* (Matyja 2020; see also Loperfido 2018).

Hann further quotes data provided by Piketty to demonstrate persistent inequalities between Western and Eastern Europe. The young founder of PP would likely welcome reference to Piketty, as he would agree with the importance of language. He might be a student and a self-acclaimed think-tank founder but he works at the reception desk in a hardware store. “I meet *these people* everyday,” he says, by “these people” meaning the underpaid construction workers (Ukrainian and Polish) and industry employees. “These people” are at the same time the people he aims to reach through the PP agenda, through the posters which inform them that an employer is obliged to provide an employee with water, as well as those which warn against a wave of migrant workers from Belarus.

Statements of this sort clearly demonstrate that a genuine preoccupation with the plight of the working-class, as well as a consideration of work as a key value may go hand in hand with exclusionary rhetoric. It would be simplistic to see the latter only as the result of economic conditions, just as it would be paternalistic to “expiate” Eastern European xenophobic rhetoric, which comes to the fore once their beloved working-class members have a foreign passport.

It would equally be simplistic to romanticise the new generation of activist-volunteers who dig up the Marxist language of capitalist exploitation but turn a blind eye to the fact that they use this language to perform exclusion. Hann's work prompts us to do something else: he reminds us that this exclusionary rhetoric linked with the (imagined or real) competition on the job market needs to be situated in a wider context of deep-seated ideas and values, including moral ideas—which may include both local constructions of community and universal human strivings. In talking about a populist tradition within anthropology, he rightly observes that anthropology specialises in the study of persisting sociocultural traits, not only change but also continuity (Hann 2017). The problem of populism, as analysed by him, is thus a very good illustration of critical anthropological issues: the tension between certain universal patterns and local specificities, and specifically between the conflict produced by neoliberal economies and the different expressions of “countermovement.”

Seen in this light, it may seem that what we are facing today is not even a mis-understanding of populism—its causes, its appeal, its main actors—but a refusal to engage with it. We note here yet another analogy with the discussions on post-socialism: although anthropologists have talked about the complexity of the post-socialist transformation (and especially its “less bright” sides), since the early 1990s, it took quite some time until their insights were acknowledged. Commenting upon his recent (and yet another) critical engagement with the “export” of Western civil society to Eastern Europe, Hann expressed that he is embarrassed he keeps making this point all over again, and has been for over thirty years now (Hann, private communication). Apparently, swimming against the tide requires not only skill but also endurance.

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