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From the Global to the Everyday: Anti-Globalization Metaphors in Trump's and Salvini's Political Language

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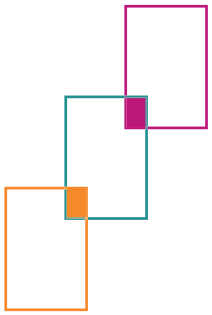

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Katja Freistein, Frank Gadinger, Christine Unrau

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Preface

It is our pleasure to present Global Cooperation Research Paper No. 24 titled 'From the Global to the Everyday: Anti-Globalization Metaphors in Trump's and Salvini's Political Language' by three of the GCR21's research group leaders Katja Freistein, Frank Gadinger and Christine Unrau. While globalization is often addressed as a fragmented and thus highly complex economic, social and political process, right-wing populists are rather successful in pinpointing what the problems of globalization are for 'the people.' But how do they manage to translate global complexities into an easy-to-understand critique of globalization, which seemingly is so convincing as it arguably generates broad approval? To approach this problematique the authors ask 'how' the populists deliver their message to make anti-globalization appealing and point us to the right-wing populist's use of metaphors such as 'the house' and 'the wall.' The Research Paper argues that it is by way of emotional narratives that right-wing populists attempt to further the rejection of globalism among their followers. By drawing on recent theoretical and methodological innovation in the social sciences, and especially the so-called performative turn, the authors establish a new focus in the study of populism. They turn to the everyday narrative workings of right-wing populist politics.

Philip Liste (former member of the Editorial Board)

From the Global to the Everyday: Anti-Globalization Metaphors in Trump's and Salvini's Political Language[1]

1 Introduction

We have all become familiar with populist modes of political storytelling. As populist parties and movements gain more attention, we have witnessed their growing success in different liberal democracies in 'the West'.[2] An interesting parallel exists between European countries and the US regarding how populist right-wing movements in particular mobilize support, even though the US' Republican Party, to which Donald Trump belongs, would not generally be considered right-wing. One of the larger issues that apparently unites different groups within the public is the opposition to what has been called 'globalization', across various processes and outcomes. The ideas of global capitalism, global governance or international law, as we know them, refer to remote and often highly complex phenomena that seem to have little relevance to the everyday life of people. Yet, rhetorical tropes like 'globalists', mockery of climate 'hysteria', or 'asylum industry' have become well-known figures in right-wing populist speeches that seem to resonate with their constituency (Wodak 2019: 196). In this paper, we seek to explore how – by what narrative means and particularly with what kind of metaphors – right-wing populist movements have made anti-global sentiments appealing. The appeal, we would argue, refers to the overall success of right-wing populists, which remains puzzling to ordinary citizens as well as to political scientists. Since we are concerned with the performative nature of narratives, the observations we make are restricted to utterances and their potential to evoke certain kinds of responses, for instance affective reactions. Our aim is thus to account for a small piece of a puzzle, namely how anti-globalization motives in populist narratives have contributed to bringing them closer to a public not particularly interested in globalization as such. Therefore, we will study narratives of right-wing populists in Europe and the US to trace how they translate globalization critique from the global to the everyday, and how they reduce the widely acknowledged complexity of globalization to rather simple, at times formulaic, anti-globalization tropes. In particular, we demonstrate these nar-

[1] Earlier versions of this research paper were presented at the research colloqium of the Centre for Global Cooperation Research (May 2019) and at the first GCR21 annual conference (April 2019). We thank all participants for their helpful comments. We are especially grateful to Angela Benkhadda, Victoria Derrien, Philip Liste, Tobias Schäfer, Christopher Smith Ochoa, Eva Marie Trösser, Sigrid Quack and Taylan Yildiz for close readings, very helpful comments and support in editing.

[2] 'Success', in our understanding, refers to both recent election results (including the elections to the European Parliament in May 2019) and general polls (e.g. Eurobarometer).

rative operations by using two recent cases of 'successful' right-wing populist, anti-globalization storytelling, which build on strong metaphors. One is the metaphor of the 'House', used by former Italian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior Matteo Salvini, and the other is U.S. President Donald Trump's metaphor of 'The Wall'. The 'Wall' and the 'House' have been used by other politicians in Europe and the US as well. We chose here to focus on Salvini and Trump because both politicians used them effectively both before and after their electoral victories. Both cases give a good impression of how metaphors can be used in populist storytelling to closely interlink existential crises of the people with the more abstract dangers of globalization. Even more, metaphors, we argue, serve to make different negative aspects of globalization more tangible than they would be in a factual mode of political communication, particularly by portraying globalization as a threat, let us say, through mass migration or the massive influx of foreign goods. By the same move, a metaphor can create an inside/outside distinction (similarly Campbell 1998) that externalizes threats that are possibly internal to a polity but can be blamed on the abstract idea of globalization through the use of metaphors. Messages of cultural racism, which warn for instance against an 'exchange of population', can be thereby camouflaged. What is more, metaphors can be utilized to construct a crisis, which in turn makes it possible for populists to adopt the saviour-role of an energetic hero, who alone is able to resolve the supposed crisis.

Our paper contributes to recent debates on practices, narratives, and discourses in populism studies around the so-called performative turn (e.g. Wodak 2015, 2019; Moffitt 2016; Moffitt and Tormey 2014; Brubaker 2017; Freistein and Gadinger 2019; Jansen 2016). Moreover, our methodological framework, which foregrounds the still underexplored role of metaphors in political language, touches upon major research concerns of IR and political sciences around storytelling, images, cultural identity, and the deeper reasons behind the distrust in the liberal international order. We develop our argument as follows: First, we elaborate on our methodological framework, which is built around the concepts of narratives, metaphors, and emotions, and explain its analytical potential in studying populist storytelling. We suggest the usage of guiding metaphors as analytical entry points to reconstruct the underlying messages of populist narratives. Second, we demonstrate through two exemplary cases of metaphors-in-use how populist actors operate with imagery and emotions to convey political messages. Third, we reflect on our results of narrative analysis and suggest a broader empirical scope of the emerging interdisciplinary research program.

2 The Performative Turn in Populism Studies: Developing a Conceptual Framework

Our interest in the localization or normalization strategies of anti-global sentiments by a selected number of right-wing groups results from both a general interest in political narratives as well as an interest in the emotive (or affective) dimension of political storytelling as it has been recently discussed in IR and political science (e.g. Oppermann and Spencer 2018; Gadinger et al. 2019; Galai 2017; Miskimmon et al. 2013; Ravecca and Dauphinee 2018). While the description of right-wing movements has often been reduced to nationalism, we focus more specifically on the use of anti-global tropes, how they are narrated, and how this complex relationship is made emotionally appealing to gain political influence. As we would argue, this appeal can be traced to the close interlinkages of anti-global narratives with people's everyday life. The 'everyday', seen from a narratological perspective (Groth 2019), unites the political sphere with the sphere of personal human experience – and thus manages to bridge the divide between abstract problems, such as globalization, and the lifeworld of individuals. As narratologists remind us, this bridging of complex events into a single meaningful story with a temporal sequencing of beginning, middle and end works through emplotment (Somers 1994: 616). To put it simply, narratives are the key device for making sense of social action and for organizing our experiences in everyday life (Czarniawska 2004: 11; Bruner 1991: 4). This broad claim of narration as a pervasive human practice of making sense of reality (Fisher 1987) becomes possible through various narrative means such as metaphors, roles, and plots (see Bal 2009), which we will explore in the following, as instances of performativity in the study of populism.

Populism is not a completely new phenomenon. For at least two decades, populism studies scholars (e.g. Canovan 1999; Taggart 2000; Mudde 2004) have pointed to the normalization of populist strategies and techniques within the everyday governing practices of Western democracies. These scholars argued that populism should not be misleadingly understood as a pathological mode of politics, but rather as a political style and expression of new forms of political communication and representation, which can also be observed in the development of established mainstream parties. Populism 'accompanies democracy like a shadow', as Margaret Canovan (1999: 16) famously remarked. Therefore, the research challenge for scholars (and beyond) is to trace the ambivalent character and consequences of populist governing practices in democratic societies. Against the background of recent developments such as the election of Donald Trump, Brexit, widespread fear among the public and scholars about the end of the (liberal) international order and eroding practices of global cooperation, the relevance of populism for political science and IR scholars has increased significantly. Populism was formerly

a specific issue of comparative politics and parties research, which sought to identify its ideological core. This has now shifted towards an interdisciplinary exchange, including also IR scholars, that aims to understand the global rise of populism (e.g. Wilson 2017; Muis and Immerzeel 2017; Hozic and True 2017; Šimunjak and Caliandro 2019; Magcamit 2017; Mudde and Kaltwasser 2012; Judis 2016).[3] The recent performative turn in populism studies is more interested in the various practices, styles, performances, narratives, and discourses of populism (e.g. Moffitt 2016; Wodak 2015; de Cleen et al. 2019). These scholars accept the ambivalent features of populism, which does not follow a universally adoptable strategy, but rather seems to be flexible in different cultural contexts. However, it remains puzzling how populist actors are able to develop a broad variety of political narratives around such 'a thin-centred ideology' (Mudde 2004: 544) that 'considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogenous and antagonistic groups' of '"the pure people" versus the "corrupt elite", and which argues that politics should be an expression of the volonté générale (general will) of the people' (Ibid: 543; similarly Müller 2016: 42). Not surprisingly, populist movements make use of creative storytelling to renew and reproduce the core message of this constructed antagonism to mobilize their supporters and reach a wider audience. Common populist narratives centre on founding myths of the true body of the people, conspiracies of a corrupt establishment (the press, the ruling class etc.) against the people, the romanticization of a glorious past, the superiority of everyday knowledge against academia and intellectuals, the glorification of patriarchy, and, as has been observed by others (e.g. Heitmeyer 2018) a strong rhetorical stance on the repercussions of a globalized world.

Of course, opposition to 'globalization' is by no means unique to right-wing populists. We are familiar with the critique of globalization which was articulated by movement organizations like *Attac* or at gatherings such as the World Social Forum, which was founded as a counter summit to the Davos World Economic Forum (cf. De Sousa Santos 2006). Many protagonists of this heterogeneous social movement, which flourished around the turn of the millennium, developed alternative visions of a 'globalization from below' (Falk 1997), 'global justice' (Della Porta 2007) or 'alter-globalization' (Pleyers 2010). By contrast, both right-wing and left-wing populists are currently urging to retrieve 'sovereignty' and 'national identity' (cf. Crouch 2019). While

[3] The focus of these recent debates is mainly on the question of whether and how populism is a threat or corrective for liberal democracy. One result is, from our point of view, that populism is not per se anti-democratic, but rather anti-liberal. Whereas the camp that interprets populism as a threat for democracy put emphasis on the anti-pluralist stance (e.g. Müller 2016: 44), another camp, which underlines its corrective function, argues that (leftist) populism can mobilize criticism against pathologies of liberalism such as rising socioeconomic inequality under capitalism (e.g. Mouffe 2018). Although there are many attempts to differentiate between 'good' left-wing populism and 'bad' right-wing populism, the normative criterion of differentiation remains often vague. Following Ruth Wodak (2015: 2) a major difference lies in the nativist concept of the nation, combined with chauvinistic and racist notions of 'the people'.

there is some overlap in the nationalism of right-wing and left-wing populists, they differ with regard to the mode and target of exclusion. While in left-wing populism (e.g. Podemos or Syriza) the emphasis on national sovereignty is only symbolically exclusive in so far as it excludes certain elites from the nation, radical right populism is characterized by the urge to exclude anyone who is regarded as 'foreign' not only on the symbolical, but also on the material and political level (cf. De Cleen 2017). [4]

Populism studies scholars have invested much intellectual energy to define the ideological core of populism. Although minimalist definitions, such as Cas Mudde's above-mentioned suggestion of two homogenous, antagonistic blocks between 'the people' and 'the elites', exist, and provide at least some general guidance for conceptualizing populism, any attempt to define populism in terms of ideology fails. As Canovan (1999: 4) argues, this is because the anti-elitist mobilization may be reacting to a different ideological environment. Populism is therefore 'not just a reaction against power structures but an appeal to a recognized authority'. As Canovan (1999: 4) further argues, 'populists claim legitimacy on the grounds that they speak for the people: that is to say, they claim to represent the democratic sovereign, not a sectional interest such as an economic class'. There is a consensus among populism studies scholars that populism is a 'thin-centred ideology', which is, however, able to connect in a parasitic relationship with more comprehensible and historically powerful ideologies across the whole political spectrum. The reason for populism's adaptability in line with progressives, reactionaries, democrats, and autocrats, from the left and the right, lies in its 'empty heart' and its lack of a commitment to key values, as Paul Taggart (2000: 4) famously argued. Thus, 'populism has an essentially chameleonic quality that means it always takes on the hue of the environment in which it occurs' (Taggart 2000: 4).

Besides this notion of populism as ideology, other understandings have also gained traction in the research agenda of populism studies. In particular, notions of political mobilization, and distinct forms of a political style performed and enacted in changing governing practices and discourses are highlighted. Whereas populism as a mobilization strategy is mainly understood as a normatively desirable rationale of leftist movements (e.g. Mouffe 2018), the latter strand of research is in the midst of developing a promising interdisciplinary programme across communication studies, cultural studies, political science, sociology, discourse and gender studies. Scholars here are less interested in identifying a generic sense of populism and instead trace the 'chameleonic quality' of populism by understanding it as a rather flexible

[4] Rhetorical and narrative rejection of globalization is not necessarily reflected in strictly isolationist policies. On the contrary, we often find protagonists of the populist radical right who actively pursue financial or economic policies which contradict their motto of 'my country first'. Some politicians, including Donald Trump, have personally profited from a liberalized global economy. These and other contradictions are made less salient by narrative strategies.

discursive and stylistic repertoire (Brubaker 2017: 360; see also Jansen 2016). Their research explores how populist actors and movements perform populist strategies, techniques and practices across different cultural settings and how they operate by drawing upon storytelling devices such as narratives, metaphors and imagery to shape discourses with political authority. The puzzling question is how populists work in everyday governing practices and how they manage to develop appealing populist stories, which reach and mobilize support in the public. This research agenda has stimulated completely different accounts, which use different theoretical backgrounds and concepts, but are mostly rooted in the tradition of interpretive research methodology.

Although these scholars put emphasis on different concepts, they share the core premise, underpinned by the linguistic turn in social sciences, that language does not work as a neutral instrument, but rather as a medium of construction of social reality with all its performative effects on power relations. While political scientists often focus on the strategic use of arguments and their content in the normative tradition of discourse ethics, the linguistic insight that narration is a basic human practice has gone largely ignored. Most importantly, narration always operates between fact and fiction and produces sense and confusion. This makes it an unreliable medium of communication (Koschorke 2018: 12). Populists, however, are well aware of this creative space of storytelling through rhetorical devices such as excuses, calculated breaches of taboos, and the narrative play with images and numbers (Wodak 2018). Of course, politicians from mainstream parties are also storytellers and use populist strategies such as glamorous performances (e.g. French President Emanuel Macron in Versailles or in a French military uniform on an aircraft carrier) or the emphasis on emotions over programmes (e.g. New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern appearing first pregnant, then with her baby in public, while holding office – thus performing the compatibility of motherhood and professional life, which was both criticized and lauded). The difference is a matter of degree, as most mainstream politicians are still interested in a conversation about arguments, in contrast to most right-wing populists who aim at destroying the belief in democratic institutions (Levitsky and Ziblatt 2018). Their mode of communication explicitly resists the logic of rational argumentation and works with subtle messages in normative ambivalence. As Wodak (2015: 29) has argued, right-wing movements do not use a consistent narrative or coherent ideology. Instead, they use a broad repertoire of slogans and statements, which are often contradicting, but nevertheless form narratives that might be appealing for the audience. This 'ontological indifference' of narratives reminds us that other criteria of judging a story exist besides evidence-based truth claims (Koschorke 2018: 17). As Hendrik Wagenaar (2011: 212) argued, 'the audience will judge the story's coherence, plausibility and acceptability. If it fails on any of these counts, it will suggest adjustments or suggest a different story altogether'. Thus, the mediation of narratives is contingent on social status and political orientation and the cur-

rency of trust plays a crucial role in deciding whether the audience believes the narrator (Groth 2019: 5). We would argue that populist actors in particular understand this interplay between narrator and audience and interpret it as a permanent game of flexible adaption, as Wagenaar described it, which makes our methodological suggestion to consider narratives and emotions as significant concepts to explain populist communication on globalization promising.

3 Doing Narrative Analysis: Guiding Metaphors As Analytical Entry-Points

We draw on an interdisciplinary set of approaches to narratology in order to describe what political stories – the object of our interest here – refer to. International Relations (hereafter IR) has recently explored narration more systematically, pointing to the importance of fiction (Devetak 2009), myths (Bliesemann de Guevara 2016), and in a more general sense 'low data' (Weldes 2006) in the analysis of politics. Political narratives can refer to both strategically developed official stories (Miskimmon et al. 2013) as well as to more everyday practices of reconstructing meaning in puzzling local events such as urban riots (Gadinger et al. 2019). In our understanding, narrative analysis can account for various types of political stories, but does not presuppose strategic control over content and form. Rather, cultural context, for instance in the provision of metaphors, images, or even characters, is vital for 'success', i.e. public resonance of (but not necessarily agreement with) a story. Political stories function as normalizing, legitimizing and/or scandalizing instruments that can create, silence, or perpetuate various interests and claims. Narration is therefore not a harmless exercise as it entails power relations, provides sources of (de-) legitimacy and produces binding energy for collective identity (Eder 2006).

Some of the core elements of narratives, taken from narratological approaches, are 'plot', 'roles' and 'imagery' or 'metaphors'. Both ontological narratives, i.e. stories individuals tell in order to understand and communicate situations in their personal lives and political narratives feature sequentiality, causality and temporality, all of which are categories that refer to the way in which single elements of a story are ordered to form a plot (Polkinghorne 1988: 19; White 1987: 9). Making sense of events and experiences, speakers attribute a certain logic – e.g. as temporal or causal sequences – to their stories, which need not be derived from the actual order of events or the exact experience (Patterson and Monroe 1998: 316). Plots often follow a culturally shaped reservoir of possible choices, such as tragedy or comedy, reflecting familiarity with shared ideas in a given context. However, these classic plot patterns, in the tradition of Hayden White (1973), also constitute a central element of

political storytelling in international politics. The blurred boundaries between fact and fiction – central to narrative studies – point to the close interrelation between our knowledge of fictional stories such as fairy tales or fables and the stories we encounter in various other contexts, including politics. Taggart's (2000: 96) case of 'the heartland' is a prime example for how populists work with myths to construct narratives around ideas of inward-looking (national) organic communities, which provide justifications 'for the exclusion of the demonized'. Such metaphors, which often follow fantasmatic logics of creating vague imaginations of a better world in the glorious past outside the political sphere, are still significant in populist storytelling as the Brexit campaign underlined (Freistein and Gadinger 2020).

This also influences how speakers conceive of their own roles and that of others. The formulaic attribution of roles such as tragic hero, comical sidekick, or purely evil antagonist are not restricted to literary genres, but also reappear – in different guises – in stories about more remote spheres such as world politics, party competition, or climate negotiations. Think of state leaders portraying themselves as cowboys (former U.S. President George W. Bush) entrepreneurs (like Trump or former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi), strong men in wildlife (Russian president Vladimir Putin, often shirtless) or working-class guys (former German chancellor Gerhard Schröder, who stressed his explicitly proletarian preference for beer). Populist actors, in particular, take this role-playing to the extreme by combining extraordinariness with ordinariness to create a political persona that can be taken seriously, but is never too remote from 'the people'. They make strong efforts to fulfil the role of extraordinary figures between strong leadership, heroic attributes and the interesting, 'accessible' and entertaining personas of celebrities (Moffitt 2016: 55-57). Here, it is important to note that the repertoire is not unlimited. Successful political storytelling draws on these culturally conveyed patterns of plots and roles in order to tap into recipients' cultural knowledge or 'cultural repertoires', as the different characterizations nicely illustrate (see Lamont and Thévenot 2000: 8).[5]

Finally, different from content analysis, an interest in narratives presupposes an interest in the imagery, metaphors, symbolic representations, and even numbers that are part of storytelling (Stone 2002). In particular, metaphors and images provide shortcuts to much larger narratives, which can be traced and connected with other stories (in struggles, overlaps etc.), raising the further issue of 'polyphony' not pursued here. It refers to the various kinds of

[5] This notion of culture as 'repertoire for action' goes back to a seminal article by Ann Swidler (1986). Against essential notions of culture (fixed values and dispositions), a practice-oriented approach puts emphasis on the constraining and enabling tool-kit structure and the interactive negotiation of 'culture in action'. The often-mentioned question: under which conditions a political/populist story reaches a wider audience and successfully connects to cultural repertoires, cannot be answered per se, but needs to be studied in every single empirical case 'in action', see Jansen (2016).

interactions between potentially competing political narratives that strive for dominance over each other. Coming back to imagery, we are particularly interested here in the use of metaphors, films, images and the like because they do not only function as analytical entry points for us, but also may be vital in offering affective triggers. Narratives and emotions are deeply intertwined (Mayer 2014: 138). Narratives can trigger emotions and emotions contribute to the powerful effects of storytelling. For our analysis we draw on the insights from interdisciplinary research on emotions, with a focus on the debate concerning the relationship between politics and emotions in general and the emotional or affective turn in IR.

One possibility to systematize the vast and growing literature on the nature of emotions is to distinguish between those approaches which – building on William James' famous essay (1884) – ultimately equate emotions with bodily perceptions such as hunger or pain (cf. Damasio 1995; Prinz 2004) and those which emphasize their character as value judgements and their inherent intentionality (cf. Solomon 1993; Nussbaum 2001). However, there is also a convergence in understanding emotions as 'hybrid' forms of experience which comprise both a physical, bodily, and a cognitive mode of getting in touch with reality (cf. Jeffery 2011: 147). These approaches thereby acknowledge that emotions clearly have a cognitive component without, however, denying that there is a difference between emotional experiences and non-emotional judgements. The most convincing way of describing the object of emotional experience is as a significant change in one's situation (Ben-Ze'ev 2010: 42; 44). Since the change of situation does not necessarily concern the experiencing person herself, storytelling – which essentially conveys changes in people's situations – can be a powerful source of emotional experience.

IR scholars, too, have emphasized that emotions are not purely private irrational phenomena. As Roland Bleiker and Emma Hutchison (2008: 123) argue, 'emotions help us make sense of ourselves, and situate us in relation to others and the world that surrounds us. They frame forms of personal and social understanding, and are thus inclinations that lead individuals to locate their identity within a wider collective'. With our focus on right-wing populism, appeals to emotion become relevant in several ways. The divide between technocratic and populist styles of politics has been described with reference to 'emotional and passionate performances' (Moffitt 2016: 46) by the populists as opposed to the display of 'rationality' by the technocrats. Apart from this particular style of politics, populist storytelling both stimulates and channels emotions in the audience. On the one hand, it picks up on negative feelings such as fear of outsiders and indignation against the 'elite', elevating them to 'feeling rules' (cf. Hochschild 1979) and identifying a lack of such emotions as pathological. At the same time, they stimulate countervailing positive feelings of belonging, attachment and even love – especially towards populist leaders themselves. The growing relevance of narrative analysis is also 'rooted in its ability to serve as a tool for describing events and develop-

ments without presuming to voice a historical truth' (Shenhav 2006: 246). A narrative analysis switches between the process of narration (e.g. statements) and the surrounding narrative structures in cultural repertoires. An ambitious narrative analysis should therefore not only consist of a mere description of different stories around the subject of investigation (a controversy, a puzzling event, a policy problem etc.) but also point out how these narratives affect the respective social order in terms of power relations (Kreiswirth 2000: 301). An interpretive study of narratives can start from different methodological entry points and adopt different approaches (see Czarniawska 2004 and Wagenaar 2011: 216).

Following the insights of previous narrative research (e.g. Oppermann and Spencer 2018; Gadinger et al. 2019), we have been interested in metaphors, since political storytelling – of all different camps – has often tended to address matters in terms of urgency. Accordingly, we identified instances of metaphors-in-use, which we systematically traced in public statements by populist leaders. The inductive search for metaphors guided our case selection, whose narratives we wanted to analyse to illustrate our broader points. While there may be many other images and/or metaphors that express resilience against the alleged threat of globalization, we have identified two related metaphors-in-use across countries and contexts, namely 'The House' and 'The Wall', which belong to similar semantic fields and embody the everyday in very fundamental ways.

As a research strategy, we first analyse our material by identifying the guiding metaphors used in connection with various aspects of globalization and interpret them with a focus on their characteristics and embeddedness in cultural repertoires of the respective audience. We then analyse the role these metaphors play in connection with certain plots, i.e. the sequencing and relating of events. These may follow certain patterns, such as decline, rise, rise-and-fall, or resurrection, and are connected to characters such as victims, villains, and heroes (Oppermann and Spencer 2018: 275). Further, we examine how the use of particular metaphors embedded in certain plots contributes to channeling and legitimizing emotions. A reconstruction of narratives that starts by contextualizing metaphors and images can add layer upon layer of interpretation in thick descriptions (Yanow 1997: 53). Metaphors and narratives are complementary ways of knowing, as a 'metaphor can bring a point to a story while a story can exemplify a metaphor' (Czarniawska 2004: 108). Following Rainer Hülsse (2006: 404), we are not interested in 'the thinking behind metaphors', the terrain of cognitive linguistics, 'but in the reality that follows from the metaphor use, hence with the effects of metaphors on social reality'. For doing narrative analysis by using metaphors as entry-points, the insights of classic metaphor analysis (Blumenberg 2010: 1-5) are still relevant. That is, metaphors are more than ornamental substitutes for original words, which help to describe puzzling events, moments of crisis or confusing policy problems. They do more than fulfilling the void of meaning through 'objec-

tive' descriptions of the case. Instead, by constituting the object they signify, metaphors create reality and provide descriptive and normative functions for further action. The power of metaphors and symbols in more general terms lies 'in their potential to accommodate multiple meanings' (Yanow 1997: 8). Therefore, we aim at grasping the meanings with which they are imbued in the specific contexts of populist right-wing anti-globalization storytelling. Looking at metaphors from such a perspective comes closer to research objectives of discourse analysis than the aim of recently popularized cognitive frame research (Lakoff and Wehling 2016), which promises to give access to the hidden structures of our thinking.

4 Studying Metaphors in Right-wing Populist Storytelling on Anti-globalization

The objective of our two case studies is not a systematic comparison to identify differences and similarities. We are rather concerned with identifying modes of narration across different kinds of political, cultural and historical settings, pointing to varieties in political contexts and cultural repertoires. What our cases have in common is that they focus on political storytelling by individual leaders – in particular Donald Trump and Matteo Salvini – who started their campaigns from relatively marginal positions and succeeded in winning large shares of the vote – or even, as in the case of Trump, becoming heads of states. These successes were surprising for most observers, especially in view of the blatant contradictions which their voters had to fend off, such as Trump's benefits from and contributions to neoliberal globalization as well as Salvini's former embrace of Northern Italian secession. While we do not claim that narrative analysis can causally explain these surprising victories, we do aim at showing how storytelling is an important ingredient of the success of these actors and movements, not least in the field of an alleged battle against 'globalism'. It is no coincidence that each of them uses variants of a strategy that seeks to build relations to 'ordinary' people by using simplified language, affective triggers and, most importantly for this paper, imagery catering to the everyday experience of even the most apolitical person.

4.1 Inside the house: How Matteo Salvini keeps the world outside

Across Facebook posts, tweets, TV and live performances by right-wing populist leaders from Italy, Germany, France, the US, Austria and Brazil, one metaphor recurs whenever issues of globalization are mentioned: the house. For example, Heinz-Christian Strache of the Austrian Freedom Party, arguably a

forerunner to European populist success refers to Austria as a 'house' already in 2006, by saying that

> *The house Austria is a beautiful house. We Austrians and Austrian nationals are the exclusive owners of the house Austria. Only the owners – that is we Austrians – have the right [sic] whether and if yes how many guests we let into our house, viz, our guestroom.*[6]

References to the house as a metaphor of the nation can also be found in numerous tweets, speeches and performances by Marine Le Pen[7]. Similarly, Brazilian president Jair Bolsonaro compared Brazil to a house in his tweet against the Global Compact on Migration (Bolsonaro, 2019). The use of the house metaphor is not specific to right-wing populists. In fact, it is also used in the context of the EU to describe the community's identity and to legitimize decisions about (non-)membership, for example in the case of Turkey (Hülsse 2006). In our view, this adaptability of the metaphor attests to its rootedness in the respective cultural repertoire and contributes to its appeal when used in the context of the right-wing populist narrative of anti-globalization. In the following, we will concentrate on one successful populist politician who uses this metaphor constantly, namely the Italian head of the Lega Party, former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Matteo Salvini.

Inside/outside: The nation as a house

In numerous tweets, Salvini claims that unchecked migration means bringing 'human bombs into our house' (cf. e.g. Salvini, 2016 May 9). This goes hand in hand with a warning that if politics 'continues like this' Italians will be 'unwanted guests in their own house' (Salvini, 2015 September 27) or even 'refugees in our own house' (e.g. Salvini, 2016 April 13). Once in power, he launched the political project and hashtag 'chiudiamoiporti' ('Let's close the ports'), he explicitly justified his policy of 'closing' Italy to the ships carrying shipwrecked refugees with the claim that 'a casa nostra comandiamo noi' – 'in our house we are in command' (Salvini, 2018 June 16). Thus, the house clearly becomes a guiding metaphor for the nation, a space from which the dangers of a hostile world can and must be kept out.

Besides metaphorically calling the nation a house, Salvini also connects the 'protection of the nation' with the protection of actual houses. For example, in a tweet in which he reports on his speech in front of members of the State Police, he honours those who 'defend our territory and our seas, for the sake

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[6] See https://wiev1.orf.at/stories/136746. Unless otherwise noticed, all translations into English are ours.

[7] E.g. in her interview '15 minutes pour convaincre' on the TV channel France 2 in the run-up to the presidential elections. See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vDXCATj74F4.

of the serenity of our houses and the dignity of our lands' (Salvini 2019 April 16). He emphasizes that he expresses this praise 'primarily as a man rather than as a minister' (ibid.), thereby foregrounding his own humaneness and the importance of the 'serenity' of houses. 'Serenity' – the feeling of relaxed happiness associated with a private life inside the house – becomes the most desirable emotional state, which is at the same time in constant need of being defended against dangers coming from outside.

He takes this reference to the actual house one step further in another campaign which he ran on Twitter, Facebook and on TV: 'Legitimate Defence', a call to make the shooting of any intruder into private property no longer liable to prosecution. Already in 2017, Salvini legitimized this project with the 'sacred' character of the house:

> *If you are ATTACKED in the most SACRED place, in your house, in the midst of what is dear to you, you must be able to DEFEND yourself.*
> (Emphasis in original, Salvini, 2017 March 16)

In the context of the project of the Lega/Cinque Stelle government to decriminalize 'legitimate' defence, the use of the expression 'casa mia' is very frequent. Although the connection is hardly ever made explicit by Salvini himself, the parallelism is significant: the nation is imagined as a house – from which intruders must be kept out. At the same time, it is rendered legal – and an obligation – to violently defend actual houses against intruders. Here, an emotion norm or feeling rule (Hochschild 1979) of love, fear and indignation is established through the image of the house: Fear is presented as the adequate consequence of the love you feel for 'what is dear to you' and must be protected. However, as the story continues, it is made impossible for you to guarantee this protection, e.g. through rigid arms control or liberal immigration, which in turn leads to adequate indignation. Since the most basic emotion in this chain is love of the family, it implies that failing to prove that fear of the attacker and indignation against the 'do-gooders' means a lack of love for the family. This feeling rule is then implicitly applied to the nation, the house of Italians as a whole. Conversely, supporting the Lega is presented as a choice of courage, an adequate emotion induced by the protective instinct:

> *I am asking you to make a choice of courage. A vote for the Lega this Sunday means more power to close the ports and control the borders not only in Italy, but in all of Europe. More power to defend Italian businesses and workers through the protection of 'Made in Italy'.*
> (Salvini, 2019 May 26a)

While presenting it as a natural human instinct to protect one's house, Salvini also emphasizes the typically Italian respect for the sacredness of the house:

> *They would like to cancel the 'Security Decree'. When in doubt, they just add a 'Salvini Racist'. How sad. In Italy you enter if you have the right, in Italy you enter on the tips of your feet, asking 'permesso' ['may I'] and 'per favore' [please].*
> (Salvini, 2019 April 9)

This is one of the few instances in which we see an explicit connection between the house as the nation and the physical house, which is expressed through the double meaning of the sentence. It can be read as 'In Italy you enter into a private house after asking "permesso"', which would be an ethnographic (and accurate) description of habits expressing the special value attributed to the private space in Italy. At the same time, it can mean: 'You can only enter Italy as a nation after asking "permesso"' – making it clear that whether or not refugees or anyone else is let in is at the discretion of the 'owners'.

The metaphor of the house is appealing on various levels. On the one hand, it alludes to deeply engrained cultural repertoires regarding the sacredness of the private space, which can be found, for example, in popular fairy tales such as Grimm's 'The Wolf and the Seven Young Goats': the house symbolizes the protected space of the family of the seven little goats, which is constantly threatened by the presence of the wolf. The catastrophe is brought upon them when the wolf succeeds in convincing them through deceit to let him into this space. The structure reappears in many different political and literary texts, including the famous play 'The Fire Raisers' (1948) by German playwright Max Frisch (also known as 'The Arsonists' or 'The Firebugs'): it tells the story of 'Biedermann' or 'everyman', a naïve, petty, bourgeois inhabitant of a town which has recently been attacked by firebugs. In an attempt to evade such a fate, he accepts two salesmen into his house and allows them to live on the attic. The two however, show ever more clearly by words and deeds that they themselves are the fire raisers, which, Biedermann constantly fails to realize. Eventually, after his failure to stop them from their evil intents, they set the house ablaze. While the play has often been interpreted as an allegorical rendering of the seduction of the naïve 'everyman' by the lures of fascism, it has also been used by right wing populists to instigate fear and hatred of immigrants, under the motto 'The do-gooder and the refugees-welcome', thereby assigning to the refugees the role of the abstract but imminent danger of destruction (cf. Warszawski 2016).

With these references we do not claim that each and every recipient of Salvini's narratives, or even Salvini himself, knows each singular text which takes up this deep-rooted tradition. Rather, we argue that his invocation of the 'House' as a metaphor of the nation taps into this rich cultural repertoire. Precisely its pertinence to this diffuse and deep-rooted *imaginary* makes it immediately plausible and helps to gloss over the more openly inhumane and racist agendas with which it is combined.

At the same time, the reference to the 'House' also plays with the role of housing as a basic human need, which is becoming ever more precarious. Given the links between a lack of housing and human misery, marginalisation and deprivation, the possibilities of conceiving 'housing' as a basic human right have been discussed (cf. Hohman 2013). The precariousness of housing has also been exacerbated by the 2007/8 financial crisis, in the course of which more and more families were threatened with eviction or could no longer afford to acquire real estate property due to restrictions on credit (cf. e.g. Di Quirico 2010). While none of this features prominently in Salvini's narratives, it is nevertheless part of the social, political and economic context which renders the importance and precariousness of housing immediately plausible.

The plot and the hero: Salvini makes 'control' possible again

The story told around the nation as a house follows the pattern of a 'resurrection plot' (cf. Mayer 2014: 60 f.): According to the story, the 'house' – or nation – was invaded by dangerous migrants and criminals in general and thereby almost destroyed. Importantly, Italians – 'inhabitants of the house' – were held back from closing their ports by hostile 'external' forces, such as the EU and naïve internal actors, called 'buonisti' or do-gooders. The same plot characterizes the parallel programme of introducing 'legitimate defence': In both cases, Salvini presents himself as the one who rendered 'defence' possible again – against intruders of actual houses through 'legittima difesa' and against migrants and 'criminals' from abroad – through the 'chiudiamo i porti' policy.

This concentration on him as the hero who guarantees and embodies the restoration of control is rendered in various ways. Before his electoral victory, he emphasized that 'everyone is silent' (Salvini, 2016 May 9) in the face of the dangers of bringing in 'human bombs'. After he assumed power he made sure that the 'closed ports' policy was directly associated with him personally: The hashtag 'chiudiamo i porti' featured a picture of him in the pose of a bouncer or customs officer, standing up straight with his arms crossed over his chest, making it clear that he will let no one in (Salvini, 2018 June 10).

This statement is reiterated in comments on the 'porti chiusi' policy suggesting that 'as long as I am Minister […] – rest assured, this policy won't change' (Salvini, 2019 April 20). With this 'rest assured' ('tranquilli') he literally tells people how to feel – insinuating, at the same time that he is needed as a guarantor for the policy of closed ports to stay in place. The same mechanism is used for alleged threats to private property of the house: 'As long as I am minister, there will be no hereditary taxes on the house or on savings' (Salvini, 2019 May 9a).

The notion of ownership and private property is in turn applied to the nation. In the context of requests by the Italian Marine to give them access to

Italian ports because of the shipwrecked refugees on board their ships, Salvini repeatedly emphasizes his refusal. In a statement reported in the daily newspaper Repubblica and repeated on his twitter account, he stated 'Porti non ne do' – 'I will not give any ports' – thereby presenting himself as the owner of the ports, who – just like the owner of a house – can decide entirely freely to whom he gives access and to whom he denies it (Salvini, 2019 May 9b).

This resonates with the worldview in which all threats are conceived as coming from the outside. For example, in connection with advertising his bill, entitled 'decreto sicurezza bis', Salvini states that the bill is concerned with 'human traffickers, camorrists, and delinquents' (Salvini, 2019 May 12), putting the clearly homegrown strands of organized crime such as the Camorra in one box with the 'traffickers' who bring migrants to Italy. In the run-up to the European Parliament elections, Salvini even coined a slogan referring to the entirety of external threats and adverse forces: 'Stop Burocrati – Banchieri – Buonisti – Barconi' (Salvini, 2019 May 26b). So 'bureaucrats, bankers, do-gooders and boats' are lumped together to designate the whole of what must be 'stopped' in order to resolve the problems Italy is facing. He created one of the personifications of this quadruple force of evil in Carola Rackete, who in June 2019 docked the rescue ship 'Sea-Watch 3' at Lampedusa harbour without authorization. In numerous posts, he stylized her into his villain antipode, calling her 'criminal', 'rich', 'spoiled' and a 'pirate'[8].

While immigration features most prominently in this pattern, the 'Burocrati …' slogan shows that it is also extended to the economy. Accordingly, Salvini tweeted: 'I want an Italy that grows, and in the last 10 years the absurd European rules have made debt and unemployment rise' (Salvini, 2019 May 29). Thus, the manifest crises of debt and unemployment are not negated, but externalized. The resurrection plot suggested in connection with immigration is repeated, but here clearly rendered as a promise for the future: 'I want to do with the economy what we have done with immigration' (Salvini, 2019 May 27).

Another layer of narrating Salvini as a 'hero' and gatekeeper who defends the house is added in connection with the 'legittima difesa' law: while on the one hand he emphasizes that the law spelled out a universal, even 'sacred' right, on the other hand, he constantly presents it as his 'gift' to the Italian people. Shortly after the approval of the respective law he declared himself to be 'PROUD to have given to Italians the sacred right to defend themselves in their own house' (Salvini, 2019 April 3, emphasis in original). The verb he uses is not 'dare' (to give) but 'regalare', which explicitly refers to the act of giving a gift. The tension between the 'sacred right' and the fact that he 'gave' it to Italians as a gift seems to go unobserved in the context of a strong resurrection plot and a convincing hero character.

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[8] See https://www.liberoquotidiano.it/news/italia/13482427/sea-watch-3-carola-rackete-angela-merkel-rifiutato-soccorso.html.

Besides celebrating himself for turning that law into a reality, Salvini also narrates instances of individual caring. This can be seen in the case of a tweet reporting a phone call with Fredy Pacini, a tire dealer who had killed a 29 year old intruder on his property and had faced charges of bodily injury. Although the proceedings against Pacini were ultimately closed and he himself declared to be 'heart-broken' after what happened – Salvini still stylizes him as a hero of 'legitimate defence' and celebrates himself for calling Pacini on the phone (Salvini, 2019 May 15). This story, as well as others, portray him in the role of the caring 'father' of the citizens. This idea is reinforced by the numerous tweets in which he expresses 'affetto' (affection) for his followers, thanks them for their support and tells them that he 'loves' them (Salvini, 2019 February 3).

This invocation of 'affetto' is combined with images and stories which conjure up an atmosphere of serenity, such as in countless tweets and Facebook posts which contain pictures of typical Italian food and drinks, as well as animals, children and flowers. An example is the following picture:

Image 1: @matteosalvinimi [tweet]
https://twitter.com/matteosalvinimi/status/1092186194379792384/photo/1, 3 February 2019

Here, we see a diagonal close-up of Matteo Salvini, smiling happily through the twigs of a bouquet, posing in front of a simple, shiny beige wall. He is wearing a black jacket, which, thanks to its label saying 'Polizia Penitenziaria', can be identified as belonging to the uniform of the Italian prison guards. The image, while at first sight looking almost naïve and less-than-heroic, nevertheless caters to the role he is constructing for himself : on the one hand, it suggests the intimacy of a Facebook post or WhatsApp message, normally directed at one's family or friends instead of citizens and voters: The sunflowers of the bouquet look a bit battered, the diagonal perspective is typical of smartphone snapshots as opposed to official photography and the background suggests an interior setting. At the same time, however, his display

of the prison guards' uniform continues the long series of images featuring him wearing a police uniform, which sends several political messages: beyond symbolizing his support for those who ensure law and order 'on the ground', it also aims at blurring the boundaries between him as an individual and the state institution of the police, insinuating not only that he 'personifies' legality and security but also that the police belongs to him (Saviano, 2019).

We can add another layer of interpretation by taking into account the text with which the image is combined in the same tweet and which takes up the theme of the 'house':

> *Thank you for the affect you are showing me every day [heart-emoticon]. Now about to go home, shower, pyjama, salami sandwich, a beer and … Super Bowl in TV.*
> (Salvini, 2019 February 3)

Therefore, Salvini clearly stylizes himself as the 'normal guy', who, after a day of hard work is longing for the comfort of a home, which provides rest, food and distraction. Importantly, his evening activities are not sophisticated, he does not read novels or eat sushi, but are very 'down to earth'. The mentioning of 'pane e salame' or 'salami sandwich' is not random: It refers to an Italian, pork-based snack, which, as he mentions on other occasions, is delegitimized by those he labels as the 'politically correct' (Salvini, 2017 July 2). All in all, however, his joyful anticipation of an evening of rest at home, conjure up the 'serenity' of the house, which, as already mentioned, he constantly presents as threatened and in need of defence.

In parallel to stylizing himself as the loving father of the nation, he also emphasizes his role as an actual father, regularly posting short stories about him having dinner with his family, his son doing well at school or him spending time with his daughter. These demonstrations of 'affect', however, are strictly confined to his actual family and the circle of his supporters. For all others, he reserves his fearlessness and determination, emphasizing that he is constantly being attacked by 'strong enemies' (Salvini, 2019 May 17).

This dichotomized self-stylization reflects the separation of a world into an inside and an outside: Salvini is the loving 'father' in his relationship to the 'inside' – the family, the nation – and the fearless 'defender' vis-à-vis a hostile world outside the house. In some instances, this juxtaposition is illustrated through respective tweets following directly after another: For example, shortly before the elections for the European Parliament, he first posted a picture of himself, carrying his daughter Mirta on his shoulders, posing behind a cow on a green meadow, the caption reading 'Me, Mirta and our friend, the cow. What a splendid day' (Salvini, 2019 26c). The tweet was followed immediately by one featuring a video on the deportation of a criminal foreigner, the screenshot of the video showing a close-up of the criminal, his eyes staring directly at the beholder. The comment in the respective tweet reads:

> *Everything but humanitarian protection! Thanks to the Salvini decree this DELINQUENT (who had declared himself underage in order to ask for protection) will be sent back HOME. With a strong Lega on Sunday ZERO TOLERANCE for those who do not flee from war but bring it to us in Italy instead.*
> (Emphasis in original. Salvini, 2019 May 26)

Taken together, the two tweets make for both a resurrection plot and a subtle menace: the bucolic landscape of the green meadow and the 'friend cow' stands for the restauration of a life in harmony and ease under the guidance of 'Salvini the father' – which – however, is only possible thanks to the aggressive actions of 'Salvini the defender', who 'keeps out' and 'pushes back', and it will last only as long as he is supported: Failure to do so will inevitably lead back to a situation of insecurity.

As is well known, in late August 2019, Salvini maneuvered himself out of power. In a sort of failed Machiavellian coup, he broke the alliance with the Cinque Stelle party, hoping to provoke immediate elections that would endow him with what he ominously called 'pieni poteri' or 'full-fledged power'. Instead, it led to a change of alliances in the parliament, which relegated him and his party to the opposition. However, with this change of position, he shifted his rhetoric only partly. It remains characterized by the same metaphors, the plot now being extended by the motif of 'treason'. He continues to stylize himself as the defender of the nation against intruders from the outside, now also paying attention to their allies 'within the house'. One opportunity to insist on this personified friend/foe distinction was provided by a live interview by Carola Rackete in Italian TV. On this occasion, he called her the 'idol of our own leftists' (Salvini, 2019 September 19), thereby emphasizing that there are some 'sinistri', i.e. 'sinister' leftists, within the house of the nation. The whole tweet reads as follows:

> *Have you heard the idol of our own left preach live on TV? With an attitude of superiority she informed us about her indifference with regard to Italian politics: She is an 'ecologist' and wants to save the planet and humanity from rising temperatures.* (ibid.)

By ridiculing the connection she established between climate change and migration in the concerned interview, and by pointing to her refusal to engage with Italian politics, Salvini aims at downplaying her relevance. Not only is 'ecologist' put in inverted commas, but her interest in the world as a whole is presented as a sufficient proof that her agenda is irrelevant for Italy. In spite of her alleged irrelevance, Carola Rackete is, again, referred to as the perfect 'villain' in Salvini's narrative. This role is emphasized in the following image, which was posted as a collage:

Image 2: @matteosalvinimi [tweet]
https://twitter.com/matteosalvinimi/status/1174798828760895488/photo/1, 19 September 2019

Several elements underline the contrast between the two: While Salvini is surrounded by a cheering crowd of supporters, some of whom are wearing the Lega's typical green, reaching out to him and taking his picture, the screenshot from the interview shows Carola Rackete in front of an inhospitable mountain massif recalling a wavy sea. While Salvini is shown as smiling at his supporters, the chosen screenshot of the Rackete interview shows her with a distanced gaze. Thus, the dichotomy that is created is one between popularity and loneliness, between the humble and accessible 'worker' and the arrogant and remote activist, between the 'hero' who is part of a vibrant movement and the villain who has lost touch with reality. Importantly, the different backgrounds of the pictures stand for a community held together by Salvini within the 'house' of the nation, and a bleak and inhospitable world on the outside which must be prevented from interfering with the inside. The reference to the admirers of the 'idol' Carola Rackete even 'at home' (a 'casa nostra') only emphasizes the situation of threat and the necessity of a 'strongman' such as Salvini.

4.2 The Wall – Which might or might not be built

We find references to similar narratives in the use of the metaphor of 'The Wall' (see also Brown 2014), which has been a strong mobilizing element in US politics, at least during the time of Donald Trump's election campaign.[9] Although the omnipresence of the 'The Wall' is most perspicuous in Donald Trump's speeches before and after his election, it has also been referred to in Europe, notably by the leader of Vox, the Spanish populist, right-wing party, Santiago Abascal. Abascal not only emphasized the need for a physical wall to be built around the Spanish enclaves Ceuta and Melilla, he also called for the erection of a 'psychological wall' ('muro psicológico') against immigrants, which would prevent them from hoping they could ever gain access to the Spanish labour market or social security system. [10]

Under the Trump administration, the idea of building a wall has structured many recent debates, caused the longest government shutdown in US American history (in early 2019), and remains a key point of contention between the two political camps. The Wall – similar to the House – clearly refers to a very real, material thing, but at the same time functions as a metaphor with a variety of different meanings that can be accessed easily. These layers of meaning attached to the wall in its material and symbolic dimensions can be seen as instrumental in mobilizing support for the election of US President Trump. The following sub-chapter will show how the mutual dependence of both dimensions of 'the Wall' serves to strengthen the social meaning of the metaphor, which has been employed for a variety of anti-global causes but necessarily refers to a concrete and material thing that is meant to come into existence. Or, as has been stressed many times now, already exists in some parts of the US[11]. The mediation between the two, the symbolic and the material, causes an interesting friction in terms of narrative analysis that we will try to explore in the following.

A first step of approaching the Wall and its ambiguous meaning is by contextualizing the metaphor in the political framework of its use. For instance, we can look at the main proponent, President Trump. Trump represents a type of political leader with numerous stories about himself that seem to have an appeal to his voters beyond any political programme. These stories proclaim him to be a 'self-made man' (which is blatantly false) or 'intelligent' and many other things that would be hard to prove. Nevertheless, these strong claims seem to resonate with his constituents, as many campaign performances show enthusiastic audiences that applaud every bit of self-praise that Trump deliv-

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9 See, for instance https://www.bbc.com/news/election-us-2016-37241284.

10 See https://www.diariodesevilla.es/espana/Vox-Abascal-Muro-Ceuta-Melilla-pague-Marruecos_0_1340866052.html.

11 See https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/01/05/us/border-wall.html.

ers. His political agenda similarly builds on a few selected stories, some of them election campaign promises, which seem to have exerted a strong impact on voting decisions. Interestingly, some of the key stories can be identified as anti-global in our understanding. Among them, there is the promise of building a 'wall' against immigration (and various other activities) across the Southern Border and, extending the metaphor, references to the strong preference for a traditional system of national tariffs on foreign goods stand out. Others, such as 'draining the swamp', i.e. changing the corrupt state of politics in Washington, or getting rid of 'Obamacare', have a lesser connection to our understanding of globalization.

The material and the symbolic dimensions of the Wall

Seen by political opponents as a 'vanity' or 'pet' project, the Wall has been instrumental for Trump's overall agenda of America First or 'Make America Great Again' (MAGA), precisely because of its double meaning. Many objections to the Wall as a material entity have been made, but seem to have little effect on the charisma of the metaphor. The 'ontological indifference' of metaphors, as said earlier, allows for such inconsistencies. For instance, on the level of discussions about the potential usefulness of a border wall on the Southern end of the US, data supports the assessment that concerning the perceived threat of drug and arms trafficking, not much will be achieved by fencing off further parts of the terrain. Most of the illegal trafficking is conducted via the existing borders, circumventing the present control mechanisms. Even illegal immigration, projections have shown, cannot be managed more effectively simply by building a border fortification, since neither deterrence nor the prevention of factual crossings could be achieved. More even, as a recent article in Forbes magazine puts it:

> *However, there appears to be a logical disconnect between insisting a wall will stop illegal immigration and at the same time increasing the number of Border Patrol agents. Simply put, if a wall was 99.9% effective in stopping illegal entry, then there would be little work for Border Patrol agents to do.*[12]

This logical inconsistency, however, is only one reservation that has been conveniently ignored and begs the question of why the claim that a wall can achieve all of these goals continues to be an important topic of Trump's public communications.

A next factual problem with the Wall concerns historical precedent, as alluded to in the above article. The claimed effectiveness of walls in recent history

[12] See https://www.forbes.com/sites/stuartanderson/2019/01/28/nobody-believes-a-wall-will-stop-illegal-immigration/#576f04b13b16.

is, evidently, exaggerated – no wall is 99.9% 'effective' in preventing illegal border-crossings. Whether numbers even exist on how successfully a wall can achieve what it was meant to do or not, is also unclear. The claim to the contrary, therefore, possibly has a different rationale. This seems to be emotional rather than factual, in the sense that a wall needs to suggest maximum security to those inside (once a clear outside has been demarcated), which makes it a promise of guaranteed protection, not unlike that of a parent to a child.

A third, but somewhat different factual problem with the Wall[13] is the material nature of its construction. In terms of implementation, the concrete plan of building a wall has now been transformed into building a steel barrier or fence, and yet the idea of a wall – in its many connotations – is being kept alive. Furthermore, the Wall's main proponent, Trump, seems unfazed by the incommensurability of his claims. Trump, in the news agency picture below, is seen sitting behind a desk in an office, possibly in the White House. He is seated between what seem to be two members of the US military, wearing a black suit, a red and black tie and a pin of the US flag on his lapel. Caught mid-talk (his mouth forming the now well-known moue), he holds up a paper in landscape format, apparently to underline a point he wants to make about his plan to have a border wall built. The paper shows a rather old-fashioned printout colour picture that depicts the construction of a barrier, exemplified by a construction vehicle and muddy ground, foregrounding a long fence on the right-hand side, going into a bleak, light horizon. The heading that introduces the picture of this steel barrier reads 'Typical Standard Wall Design'.

When we start interpreting this headline that introduces the picture within the picture, the most interesting insight is that it proclaims not only what is 'typical' but also what is 'standard' design. Obviously, the redundancy of using both words that roughly mean the same thing is not coincidental. Another thing that stands out is that we read 'wall', even though we clearly see a barrier made of steel. Notably, the text thus claims that we, in fact, see a 'wall', and, even more, that this 'wall' is standard, while actually being a steel fence. In order to understand why these highly illogical and, to add, false claims can be made without provoking major contradictions, we need to include the symbolic layers of the Wall into our interpretation.

In the combination of the picture and its caption, we can identify attempts to render commensurable the metaphorical idea of the Wall with the actual project of erecting a steel barrier, evidently for reasons of feasibility. Since using redundant adjectives creates a tautology and since calling a barrier a wall is simply a false claim, we can assume that this is a classic attempt at interpretive closure, i.e. a case of overriding concerns about reality by presenting a strong fantasy. A steel barrier is neither a typical nor a standard type of a wall, but

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[13] Henceforth, we will refer to the Wall when talking about the metaphorical project, and to wall when talking about walls in general.

just a completely different thing. In terms of the narrative context, we learn that maintaining the impression that there is still a plan to build a wall – in spite of all technical, financial, political adversities – and that this Wall – that is not a wall – will achieve what it promises, is crucial.

Yet, how can this be achieved? One way of stabilizing the symbolic meaning of the Wall has been the personal communications by Trump via his Twitter account that reaches millions of people, many of whom support him. An analysis of all tweets that contain mentions of the Wall, going back to the beginning of Trump's presidency (in the awareness that even before that point in time these tweets existed), shows that the motifs used to render the Wall a central political project are highly repetitive. As a first pattern, the attempts at reconciling the above-mentioned contradictions can be traced in many tweets, among them those written during the time of the government shutdown caused by Trump's demands for money to build the Wall, which was refused by the opposition (led by Nancy Pelosi and Chuck Schumer, who are mentioned in the tweet), which in turn led to a refusal by Trump to reopen negotiations. The tweet reads:

> *A big new Caravan is heading up to our Southern Border from Honduras. Tell Nancy and Chuck that a drone flying around will not stop them.* ***Only a Wall will work. Only a Wall, or Steel Barrier****, will keep our Country safe! Stop playing political games and end the Shutdown!*
> (Trump, 2019 January 15)

Re-emphasizing earlier utterances (i.e. tweets) about the necessity of building a Wall, Trump acknowledges that even though 'Only a Wall will work', this wall in fact is a 'steel barrier'. Pragmatically, these sentences make little sense. If only a wall will work, it is pointless to have a steel barrier. Yet, since the Wall will factually come in the form of a steel barrier, this contradiction cannot be resolved and must thus be overridden by symbolic, fantastic messages. One narrative reference of this fantastic dimension is the fictitious idea of a 'Caravan', threatening to cross the border; the nameless, faceless group of migrants moving towards the border has repeatedly been named as a key danger. A metaphor in itself, the Caravan could be exchanged for any kind of other threats (as logical equivalents) that have been referenced, including criminal gangs, drugs, weapons and so on, as long as the inside/outside divide is sufficiently invoked. Since the factual argument would not withstand further questioning, the metaphor of preventable threats can camouflage consistency concerns.

Even more things can be learned from this one tweet. The Democrat leaders 'Nancy and Chuck', are relegated to incompetent minor characters of the looming crisis. Their stupid ideas of 'drone flying' have not contributed to solving the 'Caravan' crisis. Instead, them 'playing political games' has created even greater urgency to act – i.e. to build the Wall. In this instance, the symbolic dimension of the Wall comes to the fore: it represents a crisis that needs little further description. The country's safety, and nothing less, is at stake, while the Wall is still not being built. Since the Wall has been a topic in Donald Trump's campaign for now roughly three years, the urgency is not entirely credible. The metaphor of the Wall, however, derives its strength from the symbolism of walls that represent strength and steadfastness, countering any situation of crisis. A more explicit reference to the fantastic dimension of the Wall can be found in the following image, tweeted by Trump:

Image 3: @realDonaldTrump [tweet]
https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1081735898679701505/photo/1, 6 Jan. 2019.

The above picture shows an arrangement of Trump posing as builder of the 'Wall', a larger-than-life figure seen against a dark purple background. In the front, at the bottom, we see a vast landscape cut horizontally by a steel fence, vaguely showing a landscape or settlement on the far horizon. Trump is portrayed with a dignified, earnest look, god-like and looming above the semi-transparent steel fence in a desert-like area. The accompanying text reads 'The Wall is Coming'. The text, we can assume, references the widely known HBO show 'Game of Thrones', which popularized the slogan 'Winter is Coming' and simultaneously featured a wall that plays a central role in the plot. Ironically, that wall proves unable to provide protection against the evil forces of the Night King and his army of undead, and is the battleground for various

bitter fights of different groups that, in fact, are never fully deterred or hindered by the wall (Benioff and Weiss, 2011–2019).

Again, even at a first glance, the cognitive dissonance of talking about a wall while showing a fence (or barrier) is striking. The presentation in a pop-culturally pleasing manner, however, contributes to distracting from this flaw. Using this strong slogan and the depiction of a, for once, presidentially arranged president serves to distract the viewers' attention away from the inconsistency.

On a more general level, the various dangers that could be blocked out by the Wall before they even reach the US are crucial to the success of the fantasy of the Wall. Here, the underlying assumption, that the inside/outside distinction automatically needs to favour the inside, comes to the fore.

> *...Remember this. Throughout the ages some things NEVER get better and NEVER change. You have Walls and you have Wheels. It was ALWAYS that way and it will ALWAYS be that way! Please explain to the Democrats that* ***there can NEVER be a replacement for a good old fashioned WALL!***
> (Emphasis in capital letters in original; emphasis in bold added.
> Trump, 2019 January 1)

This is underlined by recurring claims that walls are timeless, time-tested and always the right means. The formulations 'never' and 'always', again, are strong attempts at narrative closure. The tweet posits the wall as a major invention in human history, similar to the wheel (or in Trump's diction: 'wheels'). The strongly underlined use of 'always' and 'never' as markers of universal truth carry the specific project of Trump's wall across history – or 'throughout the ages' – to mean more than the actual steel barrier factually could.

There are several tweets in that fashion, for example:

> *The Democrats are trying to belittle the concept of a Wall, calling it old fashioned. The fact is there is nothing else's [sic] that will work, and* ***that has been true for thousands of years****. It's like the wheel, there is nothing better. I know tech better than anyone, & technology ...*
> (Trump, 2018 December 21)

Political claims that are anchored in generalizing narratives such as the historical (or, even stronger, ahistorical) value of walls pre-empt any form of criticism by denying their validity. Funny enough, while the tweet states that 'there can NEVER be a replacement for a good old fashioned Wall', the history of steel fences is much less impressive and thus, once more, a contradiction in terms. The opposition of old and new (as inside and outside) favours old over new, stressing that threats caused by newer phenomena such as migration (as

a consequence of globalization) can be countered by relying on old means. Moreover, a formulation like 'that has been true for thousands of years' suggests that Trump is knowledgeable and has expertise in the matter of walls (and beyond, a self-proclaimed expertise in technology).

Drawing attention to the fact that a wall could be considered 'old fashioned' (or outdated, as critics might want to add), Trump caters to traditionalists that seem to make up a good portion of his supporters, a conservative public, who by definition distrust change and newness. The Wall thus becomes a symbol of timeless, almost apolitical action and evidences that Trump alone has been able to understand and deliver a quality product like the Wall. The fantasy of walls as protective constructions is thus reinforced by the narrative context of timelessness, tradition and historical experience.

The narrative context

Now, why has it become so important for Trump to defend the idea of a wall? Besides the obvious, namely the output legitimacy of keeping a political promise, we seek for the answer in adding another narrative layer to understand the symbolic meaning of the Wall in its cultural context. In a next step we thus ask why the idea of a Wall is so central in Trump's political storytelling. There are several possible and plausible answers that have very much to do with the role that Trump plays as a key character in a narrative of heroism in the face of adversity (the decline of the US due to an evil, globalized environment), and can also be reasoned to provide a culturally accessible entry point to a more complex narrative. We would argue that there is an implicit anti-global stance in the narrative that creates the storyline of threat or danger needed to give the hero (Trump) a sufficiently evil adversary he can overcome. While we find rather explicit statements by conservative politicians in support of Trump about why globalization (in some of its facets) presents a threat to the US, and similar statements by Trump himself, for the purpose of this paper, we prefer the more indirect path of selecting elements that are only implicitly part of 'globalization'. At the same time, the heroic story of Trump as a protector of American greatness only makes sense against a background of believable threats, which need to be more concrete than the highly abstract globalization. Therefore, anti-immigration and anti-free trade, which feature in our analysis, are vital parts of an anti-globalization storyline.

The plot is a well-known one, in which a single man – the cowboy, the king or any such male figure of a lone leader – needs to act to protect his villagers/subjects etc. The threat against which he offers protection remains more or less faceless, but imminent. To some extent, there is even an interchangeability of different threats, as long as the hero remains the same. Again, drawing on Trump's numerous tweets, we find different adversaries on offer:

> *Border rancher: 'We've found **prayer rugs** out here. It's unreal.' Washington Examiner People coming across the Southern Border **from many countries**, some of which would be a big surprise.*
> (Emphasis added. Trump, 2019 January 18)

> *... The Steel Barrier, or Wall, should have been built by previous administrations long ago. They never got it done – I will. Without it, **our Country cannot be safe**. Criminals, Gangs, Human Traffickers, Drugs & so much **other big trouble can easily pour in**. It can be stopped cold!*
> (Trump, 2019 January 11)

> *Mexico should move the flag waving Migrants, many of whom are stone cold criminals, back to their countries. Do it by plane, do it by bus, do it anyway you want, but they are NOT coming into the U.S.A. **We will close the Border permanently if need be.** Congress, fund the WALL!*
> (Emphasis in capital letters in original; emphasis in bold added.
> Trump, 2018 November 11)

Migrants and crime, Muslims (hinted to by the reference to allegedly finding 'prayer rugs') and terrorists, drug and human traffickers, gangs etc. are equalized as threats without any further explanation, since there is no need for one. Anything beyond the borders of the US potentially presents a threat, particularly when there is a high likelihood that there is an imminent danger of border crossing. In light of an endemic opioid crisis and various recent instances of mass killings due to home-grown terrorism, which have both been acknowledged as being among the more urgent problems the US faces, it is striking that a wall on the Southern border should be able to do anything to counter these threats. As stated above, we would read this interpretation, which is conveyed in numerous tweets and public utterances, as an attempt at externalizing these (inherited) challenges to make them seem as though they did not originate inside the US but outside. Pointing to a vague, but imminent danger of all things foreign – as effects of globalization – thus exonerates Donald Trump of acting against domestic crises such as the opioid crisis. Instead, narrating these problems as belonging 'outside' allows him to propose the Wall as a cure-all against them and pushing away political responsibility.

On top of that, the general idea seems to be a suggestion that the world – everything outside the safety zone of a reinvigorated US – is dangerous and has to be kept out. Any influx – of goods, people, ideas, obligations etc. – needs to be controlled and adapted to the needs of Americans. In that, there is no real difference between the Wall and, to take another one of Trump's key promises, trade tariffs that also function as barriers to protect what is inside, what needs to be maintained and is too precious to risk.

> *We are either going to have a REAL DEAL with China, or no deal at all - at which point we will be* ***charging major Tariffs against Chinese product being shipped into the United States****. Ultimately, I believe, we will be making a deal - either now or into the future.... ....China does not want Tariffs!*
> (Trump, 2018 December 5)

> *... I am a Tariff Man. When people or countries* ***come in to raid the great wealth of our Nation****, I want them to pay for the privilege of doing so. It will always be the best way to max out our economic power. We are right now taking in $billions in Tariffs. MAKE AMERICA RICH AGAIN.*
> (Trump, 2018 December 4)

While there is a significant difference between tariffs and the Wall, which can be further discussed, there is a large overlap in the way that threats are presented, whether it is people and goods entering the US via the border, or 'people or countries com[ing] in to raid the great wealth' of the US. In narrating a story of danger and heroic protection, Trump makes little distinction between the two.

A closer look at the history and present state of walls in general, of course, reveals much greater ambiguity and internal contradictions to the simple story of success that Trump has presented. The plot and role construction go back to archaic patterns of stories we are familiar with. Builders of ancient walls such as the Limes in Great Britain (Hadrian's Wall) or the Great Wall of China, fortified by the first Chinese emperor Qin Shi Huang, outlive their human lives in the memory of their people. Therefore, building a wall serves to signal agency, and more specifically masculinity – since building is mainly seen as a male activity – as well as potential historical greatness. The fact that Trump's wealth stems from his construction business (in which he also failed several times) only adds to the personal appeal of building a wall, since this is his core area of expertise. The image of a builder and protector, again both inherently male preoccupations, characterizes Trump's role in his story about the wall and tariffs; he is in control of America's fate, whereas the rest of the world has only tried to take away the wealth and greatness of the US – and will fail to do so because of Trump's deeds. The vague hope that Trump will be remembered by name, since he succeeded with a project that helped to 'Make America Great Again' is part of the appeal and possibly a reason for Trump's insistence on building the wall against all resistance he has faced.

With regard to the Wall as a metaphor that allows for associations with anti-globalization, Wendy Brown argues (2014) that the idea of using walls to delineate and thus protect territory against perceived dangers has resurfaced and proliferated, also considering them means to address challenges to sovereignty as repercussions of globalization. Particularly, debates in Israel, which erected a border fence and new border posts towards the Palestinian terri-

tories, come to mind. In that case, different from the US example, an open, extremely violent conflict was given as justification (by the Israeli government) for the border fortification; the project remains highly contested, since violence continues and structural violence may have been exacerbated by the wall itself. As for earlier modern incidences of border fortifications, the Berlin Wall is certainly the most iconic one. Here, the smaller entity, namely the German Democratic Republic in the East sealed itself off against the larger, capitalist German Federal Republic in order to protect itself from the various detrimental outside influences. This Wall was also called the 'anti-fascist protective wall', owing to the idea that Western Germany inherited the legacy of Germany's national-socialist past, while Eastern Germany was politically pure and needed protection. The Berlin Wall was, however, commonly seen as a symbol of wrongful separation.

This perspective matters because the proposition of a Wall is clearly not an endeavour driven by concerns of functionality. Explicit references to the Israeli 'wall' in Trump's tweets evoke the interpretation that the US is actually involved in a conflict with its Southern neighbours or, at least, with any person trying to breach the borders of the US. This hint to an aggravation of political affairs resulting from the danger of a globalized world can be seen as a declaration of open conflict with Mexico (or any other Southern state), while simultaneously promising the eradication of threat. Heightening the sense of danger serves the purpose of keeping the project urgent, so that any political opposition can be portrayed as potentially anti-American.

To summarize, our argument is that the fantasy transported by the metaphor and contextualizing narrative is so appealing that it can overcome all kinds of logical flaws, inconsistencies and internal contradictions. The immediate response that people may have to the symbolic act of erecting a wall to protect them and keep their wealth and families safe is positive and allows them to neglect deeper questions about the validity of the argument – unless for reasons such as ideological position or due to prior knowledge they decide to fundamentally disbelieve the story anyway. The metaphor of 'the Wall' seems to help trigger affective responses and invokes fantasies, depending on which narratives it is embedded in.

5 Conclusion

In view of our initial question – how right-wing populists make anti-globalization appealing – we find that the analysis of metaphors, plots and appeals to emotion yields interesting results. We concentrate on the particular salience of two guiding metaphors: 'the House' and 'the Wall'. Both metaphors are based on the Manichean division of the world into an 'inside' and an 'outside'. The 'inside' is the nation-state, which is imagined as an entity – a house within which people belong to a community and problems are manageable. The 'outside' is constituted of a chaotic and unknown world inhabited by threatening individuals. This neat structure of inside and outside renders both metaphors appealing since they reduce the enormous complexity of a globalized world. They also neatly separate spheres of responsibility – of solving instead of simply banning these problems – into an inside and outside. The externalization of issues to an outside makes it possible to ignore the reasons and solutions for often long-term problems that are hard to counter by simply narrating them as excludable and foreign. In both cases, however, the perceived crises could be identified as home-grown rather than foreign – and yet, the contrary keeps being suggested. Anti-global imagery, therefore, helps to externalize problems in order to construct them in an inside/outside logic that evokes different affective responses favourable to the political projects of these populist leaders.

The metaphors seem to exude an appeal to even an apolitical public because they are based on very common objects, which everyone knows from their everyday lives. In the case of the house, its 'sacredness' is not only linked to the basic human need of housing, but also part of a shared cultural repertoire.

In the right-wing populist narratives, the two metaphors are interwoven into a resurrection plot, according to which the inside was once protected from the outside, but boundaries have been made porous and threats were allowed to enter. The populists competing for votes and support stylize themselves as the heroes who will restore the protective barrier towards the threatening outside world. This finding is in line with the interpretation given by sociologist Hartmut Rosa in view of the far-right movement PEGIDA in Eastern Germany, which he sees as the expression of a desperate attempt of a 'sclerotic society' to 'keep the world at bay' (Rosa 2016: 292). According to Rosa, this urge is a consequence of a general anxiety caused by hyper-modernity, acceleration and globalization, which render living and working conditions precarious. This urge to 'keep the world at bay' is picked up on by right-wing populist politicians – whether or not they themselves have profited from economic and political globalization in the past.

The stories in which the metaphors of houses and walls are embedded are also gendered in a specific way. For example, Salvini's self-ascribed role of making Italians the masters of their own nation 'again' and at the same time allow the

use of fire arms against intruders is mainly aimed at men, who are exhorted to become strong protectors of their houses and families. This resonates with the claim that Western men have lost their 'thymos' or virile energy derived from rage, which is widespread among right-wing populists (cf. Heins and Unrau 2019). The emotions which are involved here include fear and rage, which are picked up and turned into emotion norms by the right-wing populists: That 'we' have been rendered unable to 'defend our house' is presented as so obviously outrageous that it is only natural to be angry or indignant. However, the negative emotions are counterbalanced by positive ones, which are conjured up through the story of how the *house* will be made safe again and the anticipation of safety, harmony and serenity.

In this paper, we have shown that two powerful metaphors – the House and the Wall – are used by right-wing populists to structure the world and tell the story of how the separation of inside and outside was restored. By that we do not aim at demonizing any use of both metaphors as potentially dangerous or as an indicator for populist right-wing world views. Neither do we intend to reduce the politics of the populist right to the use of these seemingly harmless narratives. Rather, our aim was to illustrate how the use of precisely these metaphors from the realm of the everyday with their intuitive appeal and multiple associations serves as a vehicle or catalyst for the wider – and more openly inhumane – anti-global politics of the populist radical right.

In this paper, we have mainly concentrated on the policy field of migration, which was particularly salient across the performances and utterances of right-wing populists with a view to globalization. However, to render the picture more complete, it would be useful to extend the analysis to other policy areas as well, such as trade, climate change or international law. Another important question would be to investigate the way political competitors and other audiences have reacted to the anti-globalization narratives of right-wing populists: Did they adopt some of the images and plots or simply reject them? Did they develop counter-narratives and if so, how? These and other questions still remain to be answered by future research.

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Abstract

In this paper, we ask how exactly right-wing populists make anti-globalization appealing. We follow the growing interest in the ambivalent features of populist language and performances by suggesting a conceptual framework around narratives, metaphors, and emotions. We argue that right-wing populists skilfully present abstract phenomena of globalization and translate them to individual experiences of 'ordinary people'. Metaphors play a crucial role in populist storytelling, as they make sense of a complex reality through imagery. They mobilize collective emotions and reach a wider audience through a high degree of linguistic adaptability and normative ambiguity. We demonstrate these narrative operations using two recent cases of 'successful' right-wing populist, anti-globalization storytelling, which build on strong metaphors. One is the metaphor of the 'House', used by former Italian Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Matteo Salvini, and the other is US President Donald Trump's metaphor of 'The Wall'. We argue that these metaphors are used to create an inside/outside distinction that externalizes threats which are possibly internal (e.g. drug consumption) to a polity (e.g. external drug abuse or organized crime) but can be blamed on globalization through the use of metaphors. What is more, metaphors can be utilized to construct a crisis, which in turn makes it possible for populists to adopt the saviour-role of an energetic hero who alone is able to resolve the supposed crisis.

Keywords Metaphors, Populist Storytelling, Narrative Analysis, (Anti-)Globalization, Migration

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