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## Juxtapositioning Populism and Professionalism

**Abstract:** By denigrating expertise and challenging the value of evidence-based statements, advice and policies, populism challenges professions and professionalism. Arguably it is imperative for the professions to meet the challenge: but how? Here we provide an approach by juxtaposing populism and professionalism; two complex, ambiguous and contested phenomena with different and rarely connected literatures. Ontic and ontological definitions of each are compared and a method is developed for juxtaposing elements of their ontic definitions. Elements compared are: Manichean distinctions; disintermediation; morality v. ethics; emotionalism v. rationalism; and transparency. These are used to further understanding of both populism and professionalism and to provide insights into different ways the challenge of populism can be met: fighting it head on, adjusting to reduce the import of criticisms and perhaps controversially, adopting or at least adapting certain populist elements.

**Keywords:** Populism, professionalism, disintermediation, morality, emotionalism, transparency, juxtapositioning

The populist challenge to professions and professionalism, particularly as a direct challenge to experts and to the very idea of evidence-based decision-making and policy, has grown considerably (Moffitt, 2016). Famously during the Brexit referendum campaign, then justice secretary Michael Gove declared in an interview for Sky News with Faisal Islam, that the British people “have had enough of experts” (Islam, 2016). The authority of traditional trustworthy sources of information are challenged, not by careful alternative analysis, but by declaration. Donald Trump declares climate change reports and even estimates of numbers attending his inauguration, to be fake news. He tweeted “Any negative polls are fake news” (Trump, 2017). This undercuts the authority of evidence-based or knowledge-based communications and practices. It undermines trust in professional advice and discourages reliance on professional services. So pervasive has this been that “post-truth” was declared the Oxford Dictionary’s international word of the year for 2016 (Oxford Dictionaries, 2016). Collins’ phrase of 2017 was “fake news” (Collins Dictionary, 2017). Both refer to circumstances where emotional appeals are more influential in shaping public opinion than verified or verifiable information.

According to Susskind and Susskind (2015), traditional professions and professionalism are challenged by the access that new platforms allow for practical experience and technical knowledge to bypass traditional professional expertise delivered face to face. They enable networked experts, self-help services and crowd sourced practical expertise to be acquired through machines. However, those technological innovations that threaten professions, also encourage populism. Social media and the Internet allow expanded exposure of individual moralities and particular populist

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**Received:**  
06 Feb 2019

**Accepted:**  
28 Jun 2019

likes and hates, thereby to challenges to professionalism. Here we analyze the populist challenge by juxtaposing populism and professionalism across certain attributes through which thought-provoking connections can be made.

It may seem odd to compare populism and professionalism. Populism is widely regarded as a political phenomenon, analyzed in relation to democracy (Canovan, 1999; Thompson, 2017). Professionalism is associated with work relations and market forms, and has been specifically compared with managerialism and consumerism (Evetts, 2011; Faulconbridge & Muzio, 2008; Freidson, 2001). However, both are widely regarded as ambiguous, complex and contested. Some question the analytical value of populism (Collier, 2001; Jansen, 2011) and of professionalism (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; McCulloch, Helsby & Knight, 2000; Roth, 1974). Many concepts are widely regarded as ambiguous, complex and contested. They generate large literatures, which follow deep paths within particular academic journals, stimulating self-reference juxtapositioning to their own literature trails; their own academic silos. Here we suggest a way to cross these silos, encouraging interdisciplinary working and potentially raising the analytical value of each concept as well as offering an approach to further develop other ambiguous, complex and contested concepts.

We begin by examining definitions of populism to develop comparative dimensions for juxtapositioning with professionalism. We introduce the distinction between ontological and ontic definitions and judge the latter as more appropriate for juxtapositioning. After reviewing definitions of professionalism the two phenomena juxtaposed according to five related elements of their ontic definitions: Manichean distinctions, political intermediation; morality v. ethics; emotionalism v. rationalism; and openness or transparency. We conclude that to meet the challenge of populism, professionals and their institutions can:

- directly challenge populist assertions,
- adjust to populist criticisms and, more controversially,
- adopt certain of populist attributes.

## Defining Populism

According to Laclau (1977, p. 143) “few [terms] have been defined with less precision’ than populism. For others, it is “notoriously vague” (Canovan, 1999, p. 3) and contested (Barr, 2009). Some despair of finding a single comprehensive definition (Germani, 1978): “to each his own definition of populism, according to the academic axe he grinds” (Wiles, 1969, p. 166). A substantial subfield of populist studies—analysis of definitions—has emerged (Taggart 2000). Following Laclau (2005, p. 2) we distinguish:

- a) Ontological definitions—derived from a theoretical perspective providing an “explanation” for phenomena in terms of their “essence”.
- b) Ontic definitions—identified empirically from materials produced by populists and commentators; associated with dictionary definitions containing sufficient information to impart understanding.

Ontological definitions of populism dominate the academic literature. The most common are:

1. Movement or crusade (Barr, 2009)
2. Ideology or set of values or ideals (Canovan, 2002)
3. Strategy (Weyland, 2001).
4. Syndrome or pathology (Jansen, 2011, p. 77; Wiles, 1969).
5. Socio-economic theory of economic development (Kitching, 1982).

Some ontological populist definitions are extremely abstract and are regarded as less clear for distinguishing its essence (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017). These are close to ontic definitions.

6. Discursive construct (Laclau, 1977; 2005) or mode of persuasion (Kazin, 1995, p. 3) or a frame or method of framing (Aslanidis, 2016)
7. Style (Moffitt & Tormey, 2014)
8. Anti-phenomenon (Panizza, 2005)

Some of these ontological definitions overlap, but many are proposed in contention with others (Aslanidis, 2016; Wiles, 1969).

Ontological definitions are occasionally proposed in opposition to ontic ones; referred to as “folk definitions” and judged “inadequate for social scientific analysis” (Jansen, 2011, p. 76-77) or the politics of the pub (Mudde, 2004). We contend that ontic definitions are preferred for the purpose of juxtaposition with another complex, ambiguous and contested phenomenon like professionalism. We are not looking to adjudicate among definitions to discern the true essence of the phenomenon or the connection with a particular general academic theory. The value of ontic definitions is that they can handle multiple versions without generating seriously threatening contradictions. There is no need to adjudicate the one truth as implied by ontological definitions. They can connect more widely with unanticipated comparators.

We may structure sets of ontic definitions by distinguishing a core of elements—almost always included—and a periphery of “fuzzy” elements—occasionally included. Fuzzy refers to concepts for which certain defining characteristics apply only to a certain extent or with a certain magnitude of likelihood, or where boundaries of application vary according to the way the concept is used or the conditions in which it occurs (Zadeh, 2013). Therefore the distinction between core and fuzzy is not a strict one. “Closeness” to core of any element among ontic definitions depends on how frequently it appears, which will change as new definitions are proposed.

Full analysis of ontic definitions is beyond the scope of this paper. Here we distinguish elements of populism according to how well they can be juxtaposed with professionalism; they may be core or peripheral elements. For example most ontic definitions would identify the Manichean distinction: People v. the Other as common core (Jägers & Walgrave, 2007; Deegan-Krause & Houghton (2009; Hawkins, Riding & Mudde 2012). Further elements are contained in fewer definitions, such as the people being homogeneous or the other being the elite and further that this elite is a conspiracy. A sizable source for peripheral elements is the 24 characteristics of populism identified by Wiles beyond his base definition (1969, p. 167-171). Most were specific characteristics of the “Other” (10 of the 24) or the “People” (4 of the 24). These were often expressed in emotional terms, the People being “fundamentally nostalgic”; the Other referring to “demonology”. Individual elements also included:

- “moralistic rather than programmatic”
- “throws up great leaders in mystical contact with the masses”
- “loosely organized and ill-disciplined”
- “anti-intellectual and abhors science and technology”

## Defining Professionalism

Contestation, ambiguity, and confusion also typify professionalism. Professionalism has been characterized by “deep-seated ambiguity” (Harrits, 2016, p. 14). It is “largely mixtures of unproved—indeed, unexamined—claims for professional control and autonomy” (Roth, 1974, p. 6). For Bourdieu and Wacquant professions are “a folk concept”, “uncritically smuggled into scientific language” (1992, p. 242).

Up to the 1960s, views of professionalism among sociologists were primarily positive: a force to counter individualism in an acquisitive society (Tawney, 1921); serving “public need” (Freidson, 1994, p. 13); altruism and service orientation for citizenship (Marshall, 1950). Associated with this is the ontological definition of professionalism: an occupational value (Parsons, 1939; Freidson, 2001) characterizing knowledge based occupations where knowledge is abstract, systematic and often esoteric (Torstendahl, 1990). Definitions of professionalism of this type are often published by professional associations in a “grey” literature of limited distribution newsletters and in member-only sections of websites. Associated with these definitions are elements contained in professional competency standards and ethical codes (Friedman, Daly & Andrzejewska, 2005). The ontic core for this approach would be based on the more frequently mentioned obligations in ethical codes or the more frequently mentioned characteristics of professionalism identified by the trait or attributes approach (Greenwood, 1957). Millerson (1964, p. 5) examined 23 traits in 21 academic accounts and found the three most frequently mentioned were: “adherence to a professional code of conduct” (13 of 21); “organized” (13) and “skill based on theoretical knowledge” (12). Some of the peripheral traits were: “best impartial service given” (2); “loyalty to colleagues” (1) and “independence” (1).

A second, critical view of professionalism gained traction from the 1970s, based on the ontological definition that professionalism is a form of occupational control (Larson, 1977). Professionalism is “strategies and rhetorics employed by members of an occupation in seeking to improve status, salary and conditions” (Hoyle, 1975, p. 315). It is founded on professionalisation: an occupational mobility project leading to market closure through barriers to entry (Larson, 1977). Proponents of this view consider theirs to be correct and the former view false. The ontic core in this view is striving to achieve legal closure. Peripheral elements would be specific restraints on trade such as prohibitions on advertising and restrictions on referrals as written into ethical codes up to then (Bloom, 1977).

A third view of professionalism is as discourse or style, used by management to responsabilize professional autonomy (Fournier, 1999; Troman, 1996). A variation on this is “hybrid” professionalism: professional/managerial combinations (Noordegraaf, 2015).

## Juxtapositioning concepts

Juxtaposition is usually thought of as a literary term by which two things are placed side-by-side, or at least in common view, for the reader to draw out links between them; generally in the form of metaphor. This can be extended as an analytical technique for considering multiple relations between those things. It can also illuminate neglected aspects of each. Metaphor has influenced organisation studies (Morgan, 1998). It has long been regarded as important in philosophy (Lackoff & Johnson, 1980), political studies (Mio, 1997) and recently been applied to analysis of the professions (Liljegren & Saks, 2017).

We interpret ontological definitions as examples of a particular kind of juxtaposition; containment. Defining populism as an ideology is to treat it as an example of a family of concepts with common characteristics. However, for some populism is so different from other ideologies as to classify it as a recognizable subtype: a thin-centred ideology (Freedman, 1996; Mudde, 2004), lacking characteristics of the prime exemplars. A similar argument could be made of populism as movement or strategy. We can interpret ontological definitions of professionalism as different forms of containment too; as forms of occupational values or occupational control.

Juxtapositioning is pervasive. New versions of familiar concepts are commonly identified with prefixes: neo (neoliberalism); post (post-industrial, post-modern) or new (the New World). All language involves juxtapositioning one word beside another, but metaphor has come to refer to a particular effect from juxtaposing certain

words or concepts. Metaphors can stimulate new insights that build on ambiguities and complex facets of concepts, that is, on their fuzzy edges. Here we use juxtapositioning as a way to link two concepts that are not normally considered together to reveal analysis possibilities and particularly to analyze responses to the populist challenge affecting professions and professionalism

## **Elements for juxtapositioning populism and professionalism**

We can connect populism and professionalism through the core and fuzzy elements we identified for populism. These have been chosen for: clarity of comparison with professionalism, potential for furthering understanding how compelling is the challenge to professionalism fuelled by the current wave of social and technological change; and demonstration of the possible effectiveness of different responses to the populist challenge. The populist elements chosen are:

1. The core Manichean distinction between the People and the Other
2. Disintermediation of structures between the People and the populist leader
3. Moral expressions.
4. Passion and views expressed emotionally,
5. Open politics based on common sense solutions

Asymmetric comparators from professionalism ontic elements are:

1. Manichean-like distinction between qualified and charlatans and between professional services and self-servicing
2. Intermediation in terms of pluralism and technocracy
3. Focus on ethics and ethical codes.
4. Objectivity, impartially, cool and considered rationally
5. Behind the scenes influence and opaque processes.

### ***1. Manichean distinctions***

One way of juxtapositioning populism and professionalism would be to take the core element of populism definitions, the Manichean distinction: People v. Other and juxtapose it with a distinction sometimes included in professionalism definitions: being qualified as distinguished from the unqualified and sometimes those claiming falsely to be qualified: charlatans (Goode, 1960).

A second distinction for professionals is between people being serviced by qualified professionals and self-servicing. Not taking professional advice as well as the risks of self-medicating and self-servicing have often expressed by professionals (Ruiz, 2010), though opposition is not part of a core definition of professionalism even if it is implied in the second, more critical, view of professionalism. Occasionally it is opposed with vigour publicly, as when it is presumed to endanger the public good (rejecting inoculation). However views toward refusing medical advice have changed; from the early 20th century view of those who do comply with professional advice on tuberculosis as “ignorant” and “vicious”, giving way to a less harshly judgemental view of patients who did not take new antibiotics for tuberculosis following World War II being labelled “recalcitrant” (Lerner, 1997) or non-compliant. More recently some recommend a more balanced view of patient relations to be more of a partnership with the concordance medical model (Vermeire, Hearnshaw, Van Royen & Denekens, 2001). However, this balance will arguably tip further away from professional monopoly of expertise if the trend towards AI-enabled servicing without individual encounters with professionals continues as predicted by Susskind

and Susskind (2015). Arguably in future professionals will need to be retrained to act more like coaches or consultants to support clients and patients armed with information gleaned from the Internet or social media. We can see this coming with the rise of coaching as a motif for servicing clients and patients. There is now a plethora of organisations training people to become coaches and traditional professions are introducing coaching skills to their qualifications and continuing professional development subjects (for example new Chartered Institute of Personnel Development coaching qualifications). This is one way to meet the populist challenge that professions disempower people by imposing their definitions of what clients need (Illich, 1977).

## ***2. Political disintermediation, pluralism and technocracy***

Populism favours disintermediation between leader and the people: free from political party, government bureaucracies and other agencies (Canovan, 2002; Weyland, 2001)—unless they are directly connected to the leader—rather than providing checks and balances (Barr, 2009). This means countering or bypassing party machines and media whose messages clash with or criticize the populist leader. A clear example is the use of Twitter by President Trump. Professionalism is not directly a target of populists here unless it is professional journalists and professionals who generate and support the policies of parties opposed to those of the populist leader. These would be key targets for the charge of unjustified influence from “pointy headed intellectuals” (Taggart, 2000, p. 94). More generally populists attack institutions that force obedience to rules and regulations that get in the way of the People living their lives, naturally.

The issue of intermediation in party political processes is not directly of concern for professionalism and it is not a common theme in sociological treatments of professionalism. Particular leaders of individual professions tend not to lobby for forms of political activity to achieve representative power for themselves, or for a party to represent the professions. This may be a weakness in Anglo-American professionalism. However, sensitivity to political intermediation does encourage attention to the ways professions engage with party politics. Rather than attach themselves to a particular party they agitate politically primarily at particular moments to win support of the law to protect their job territory or jurisdiction. Some professional associations get involved in specific political campaigns concerning their subject area, developing position papers arguing for certain policies to be pursued by whoever wins power, in fact studiously avoiding linking too strongly to any one political party as they will need to maintain their influence whichever party comes to power.

Professionalism is implicated more directly in populist concerns to de-institutionalize politics and society. However, here is a case where the professions could meet the challenge of populism by entering political debate concerning the way professions are organized. Professionalism is commonly underpinned by long-lived professional associations. They act as interest groups as part of pluralist society, even if they rarely officially argue as professions for pluralism. Instead they may be interpreted as arguing for technocracy. They aim to be treated as dispassionate rational purveyors of impartial knowledge that can underpin policy decisions. They aim to distinguish themselves from other interest groups who bid for government resources to support their causes. Rather the professions position themselves as providers of evidential bases for policies. This can raise their reputation and that of their subject. Individual professional associations not only publish research findings in their journals, but many fund research projects that will bear on policy issues (Evans & Abela, 2019; CIMA, 2019)

There is no direct debate between populism and professionalism on these issues. Populists argue trenchantly for disintermediation of politics and deinstitutionalization of political and social life, for uncluttering the people from rules and regulations

and from rule makers. The professions account for populating these institutions, advising those in positions of authority in them and, through their associations, are part of society's institutions. However, there is no professional voice on these issues because professionalism is not expressed in these terms at this macro political level. This may be a way that professionalism can be mobilized to meet the populist challenge. It would require professional associations to lobby, preferably collectively, on the macro political level for professionalism. However, there is a danger of losing legitimacy as dispassionate purveyors of reliable evidence if profession become embroiled in party political matters.

This aspect of juxtapositioning can contribute to understanding by highlighting different trajectories towards ideal political states for populism compared with professionalism. The ultimate ideal for populism would be for all communication channels involving power to be focused on the leader. Policy decisions would be confirmed through perpetual referenda. People would vote through their personal devices either hand held, or worn, or even hard wired into their brains. The professional political ideal would be some combination of technocracy and associative democracy (Hirst, 1994). In a more fully pluralistic society, different associations would have formal access to propose and amend legislation, but unlike the US Senate or the UK House of Lords, this would not be organized through political parties. The presumption would be that interest groups with most influence would be ones that have been sanctioned as having adequate training and skill behind them. New ones would have to apply for legitimacy perhaps in a two stage process, such as achieving first a Charter and then statutory protection.

### ***3. Morality and Ethics***

Some consider morality and ethics to be interchangeable (Copp, 2006, p. 4) or that they should be elided. We distinguish them. Morality concerns personal ideas or feelings of right and wrong; ethics concerns social norms of right and wrong. Making this separation can illuminate the distinction between populism and professionalism as between populist morality and the ethics of professionalism.

Populist leaders take a high moral position (MacRae, 1969). "Populism is moralistic rather than programmatic" (Mudde, 2004, p. 544). The core propositions of populism are expressed in terms of moral appeals (Müller, 2016). Taggart notes that it is the ordinariness and naturalness of the People that has moral value. The Other is immoral. It is abnormal and unjust (Hofstadter, 1964). According to the People's Party the nation was on the verge of moral, political and material ruin, due to the moral decay of the conniving elite (Taggart, 2000). They oppress the people by drawing more than their fair share of society resources, by imposing high taxes and complex rules on the People. Use of moral terms is often left out of lists of populism definitions; it is a fuzzy element. Ethics is differently connected to professionalism. For the positive interpretation, ethics is core and almost always mentioned. Ethics is either absent from the negative interpretation, or it is regarded as a sham, a smoke screen for self-interest (Parker, 1994) or as mere window dressing and ineffective, though the charge is mostly made against corporate ethical codes (Bowie, 1979). Taking both interpretations of professionalism together, ethics can be regarded as a fuzzy element.

The morality/ethics distinction in professions has changed. Eighteenth and early 19th century British professionalism was focused more on gentlemanly morality than ethics. Gentility was assumed to come with breeding; a gentleman would know what is right or wrong instinctively. For populists, ordinary people have this capacity. Ethical codes were not common in Britain up to the mid-20th century due to the tenacity of the gentlemanly presumption of professionals (Millerson, 1964). They have been more a feature of the professions in the USA (Wilensky, 1964; Abbott, 1983). Over the years, as entry into professions has become more formalized and as complaints and disciplinary procedures have developed requiring law-like adherence

to the code, the distinction between morality and ethics has grown, thereby moving further from sharing this ground with populism, even if the nature of the morality was always different.

We can relate morality/ethics juxtapositioning to differences in institutionalisation. Without a strong and sustained organisation to express and continue commitment to populism, it seems unlikely that an ethical code would be developed let alone enforced. This does not imply there are no rules to populism, rather that rules are not formally expressed in written codes.

Professional associations need to create a community infused with ethics as well as knowledge and competence. This is not a natural condition; individuals have to acquire professionalism, and increasingly professional associations have recognized this has to be maintained through continuing professional development policies and programmes (Friedman, 2012). For populists morality is a natural thing. It is inherent in the People and absent in the Other. It needs to be recognized, but not created or maintained.

Professionalism is clearly expressed by the nature of the obligations specified in codes as well as to whom they are owed. Ethical codes vary among professions and have changed over time. In the past obligations mainly concerned bringing the profession into disrepute, owed to other members of the profession and the professional association (Millerson, 1964). More recently obligations also concern integrity, competence and benefits to clients/patients, employers and the general public (Friedman, Daly & Andrzejewska, 2005). The basic morality of populism has not changed substantially except for a general movement from the morals of the People identified with those who work the land. There is a distinction between left and right wing populism in terms of who are the Other and what is the nature of their immorality. This is reflected in the recent rise of right wing populism.

This morality/ethics distinction may go some way to understanding the recent rise of populism and comparative decline of professionalism. Nowadays it seems more popular to express strong personal morality rather than what is taught in institutions like churches, schools, and universities as evidenced by social media. Brady, Wills, Jost, Tucker and Van Bavel (2017) found in a sample of 563,312 social media communications, that moral-emotional words in messages increased diffusion “by a factor of 20% for each additional word” and this “moral contagion was bounded by group membership” leading to “expanding models of social influence and group polarization as people become increasingly immersed in social media networks” (p. 7313). Personal morality, particularly expressions of moral outrage has been facilitated in this age of extended private space. People express themselves in the enclosed privacy of their cars, in bedrooms in front of screens and in private communion with their I-phones, less encumbered by social norms against vitriol (Crockett, 2017). Populism encourages people to raise personal concerns in media where they will be at one level removed from physical reactions. On the Internet and in social media platforms local groups are fed information shaded to cater for their prejudices and morality. Moral prejudices are “heard” more sympathetically within these groups, reacted to and thereby reinforced. There are now so many different sources of morality which are valorised by the ubiquity of “likes”.

A strategy for dealing with the raised influence of morality compared with ethics can be to incorporate moral elements more clearly into ethical codes as well as for professional associations to raise moral issues more forcefully on social media. Courage is one moral issue that can be emphasized around ethical obligations to support whistleblowing (ICAS, 2015).

#### ***4. Passion and emotionalism versus cool rationality***

Though not emphasized in many ontological definitions of populism, it is commonly noticed that populism is associated with high emotions, primarily hate directed

against the Other, but also nostalgic emotionalism for the People (Saul, 1969). The populist style is to “radicalize the emotional” constructing a moral struggle between people and other (De la Torre, 1992, p. 400). “Peronism is a question of the heart rather than the head” (Peron, 1952).

There are two ways of thinking of high emotion. One is as passion: strong and sustained feelings of extreme affection or hatred. Populists love the People, their customs and common sense approaches to life and decision-making. These are regarded honourable. They hate the Other as the elite for being corrupt and undeserving. They also hate immigrants and minority groups who are regarded as living off the hard work of the People and in many cases as purveyors of dangerous practices, unnatural mores and ultimately terrorism. A second way of thinking about high emotion is as irrationality: populism as a pathology characterised by the spread of irrational fears: “negative demonizing imagery of pointy headed intellectuals” (Taggart, 2000, p. 94).

Professionalism is associated with low emotionality, with objectivity and “cool”: dispassionate objectivity. Professionals are meant to give advice and make service decisions based on evidence and experience rather than emotion. They must guard against emotional connections with clients/patients; often grounds for disciplinary procedures. They are obligated to treat clients/patients fairly, to the same standards as they would their friends and relatives; foreigners to the same standards as their fellow country folk. Professional associations emphasize the importance of professional standards to be applied to all.

Juxtapositioning populism and professionalism in terms of emotion can be seen as an antonymic relation, depending on how emotion is interpreted. Emotion as irrationality distinguishes populism from professionalism from the professional perspective. Mudde (2004, p. 542) suggests it is common to regard populism as opportunism “rather than looking (rationally) for the “best option””.

Emotion as passion can be regarded as antonymic by populists against professionals. The phrase “No drama Obama”—originally coined by his own political advisor (David Axelrod)—has been taken up by the conservative media to defend Trump. Hillary Clinton was labelled as a cold fish during the presidential campaign. “Their [experts] lack of emotion, which was originally so crucial to their authority, opens them to attack for being cold and selfish” (Davies, 2018, p. 60).

Emotion as passion can help understand the rise in populism compared to professionalism. The general tendency in society towards celebrity is substantially founded on expressions of passion by ordinary people, such as in their public singing and dancing or their support of sports. A problem for professionalism is that it can become associated with emotional neutrality and interpreted as lack of caring. Professionals playing by laid down rules can be regarded as insensitive to individual situations. As with morality, the new celebration of passion can be taken on as way of meeting the populist challenge. More can be made of the passions involved in pursuing a vocational “calling”. Professional associations could do much more in emphasizing the thrill coming up with exciting solutions to difficult problems as well as the passion for caring so strong in many professions without crossing the boundary with misconduct for “inappropriate relations”.

### ***5. Open politics based on common sense solutions vs opaque influence, nuanced judgements, and confidentiality***

The populist style of political discourse is direct and in full public view. “Populists love transparency and distrust mystification” (Canovan, 1999, p. 6). Professionalism does not have a clearly recognized style of its leaders. However, style can be inferred from the logic of professional association political practice. This is largely behind the scenes, lobbying through personal influence with selected politicians and civil

servants, thereby feeding charges of conspiracies (Hawkins, Riding & Mudde, 2012, p. 3).

Professions' traditional opacity has many probable causes.

1. Professional association activities have been regarded primarily as internal to the profession, particularly to their own members.
2. Professional associations guard against those who would use professional techniques superficially, not understanding limitations and consequences of their application; thereby potentially devaluing qualifications.
3. Competition among professional associations for members, reputation and influence has encouraged reticence to make activities open to competitors.
4. The ethical obligation in many codes to maintain confidentiality of privileged disclosures can spill over to wider information.
5. Professions have often been pilloried in the public media. They have been reluctant to publicize disciplinary procedures—to expose their dirty laundry in public—for fear the few bad apples will be taken as representative of the whole profession.

Opacity of professional association activities has contributed to public perception of mystery and possible conspiracies which can easily be fanned by populist leaders. The path of knowledge development towards variegation and specialisms has encouraged individuals to display a “specified ignorance” of symptoms or factors not covered by specialist occupational standards (Merton, 1987). Medical specialists have been accused of not treating the whole person and prescribing drugs that though effective for treating particular ailments, collectively may have harmful effects (McKee, 1988). For Illich (1977) the professions have replaced citizen politics and the authentic felt needs of ordinary folk. Participatory politics has withered and been replaced by “self-centered competencies, a self-accredited elite which claims incommunicable authority to determine how needs will be shaped and served” (p. 16).

Populist leader style can be purposely imprecise, relying on rhetorical techniques, such as using metaphor and repetition rather than explanation; Trump's characterization of Hillary Clinton as tricky and dirty. Populism as a matter of the heart rather than the head can be interpreted in terms of greater imprecision or fuzziness. While fuzziness can be used as a strategic method by populist leaders, fuzziness in professionalism is different. The language of professionals is meant to be logical and precise. However, the opacity of professional processes, both the internal workings of professional associations and behind the scenes lobbying and other contacts with stakeholders, leads to fuzziness in the popular mind as to what professionals are up to. Here fuzziness through ignorance of what is in ethical codes for example, has been assisted—even created—by professional associations making it difficult, in some cases almost impossible for the general public to read. Codes have sometimes been placed in member only sections of websites or been difficult to find (measured by how many clicks it takes to reach them from the homepage of websites (Friedman, Daly & Andrzejewska, 2005). This is clearly something professional associations can amend. In addition greater transparency over disciplinary processes and outcomes can help meet the charge of the professions as elites protecting their own.

There is fuzziness in the public mind as to what precisely is meant by terms used by populist leaders arising from a metaphorical style of rhetoric. This seems to have been particularly effective. With professionalism, fuzziness arises from lack of discourse with stakeholders, particularly aimed towards the general public on what professionalism is and how it is intended to achieve the aims of its leaders and institutions. In part this is a common outcome of bureaucratic institutions. There is a difference between assuming things are known without saying for professionalism, and assuming things need to be said loudly and repeatedly, but in a fuzzy way for populists. The professions can go some way to meeting the populist challenge of being a

“self-accredited elite which claims incommunicable authority” by improving communication with external stakeholders.

## Conclusions

The touchpoints developed here for juxtapositioning populism and professionalism provide insights into different ways professionals and their institutions can meet the challenge of populism; in terms of fighting it head on, (directly countering populist positions, fake news, post truth), adjusting to reduce the import of the criticisms (improving transparency and taking more of a coaching role in practice and supporting self-management) and perhaps most controversially, adopting some populist elements (morality and passion).

Some professional groups have been arguing for various ways of directly opposing claims of fake news with clearer evidence to the contrary, and hate directed against conspiring elites, as well as against other groups such as immigrants, by emphasizing parity of access to professional services (Speed & Mannion, 2018). However, we contend that this straightforward response to the populist challenge is likely to be of limited success unless it is supplemented by other approaches.

Personal morality has grown as an influence in modern life compared with the notion of duty implied by ethics. This is tapped into and enhanced by populism. It is difficult to fight as it reflects the strongly ingrained individualism of Western culture which has been buttressed not only by the presumed triumph of free market economies and free market policies, but also by more recent technological developments which encourage expressions of personal morality on social media. Professions could respond by incorporating certain features associated with personal morality into ethical codes. This is beginning to happen with the introduction into ethical codes of obligations to show courage, following from concerns about the fate of whistleblowing.

On emotionality/rationality, though there are clearly limits to certain expressions of emotions which would compromise professional obligations to fairness, impartiality and independence; other expressions would not be so compromised. Some clients/patients may be reassured if professionals demonstrated emotional enthusiasm for the services they supply. Professionals can be, and many are, passionate about their work; regarding it as a “calling” as opposed to being passionate about particular clients or patients. More could be made of this publicly through more open celebration and promotion of such attitudes by professional associations. Connecting to young people’s desire to “make a difference” through the exercise of professional expertise could be emphasized more; highlighting work of Médecins Sans Frontières and similar agencies for other professions such as the less well-known Engineers Without Borders (<https://www.ewb-uk.org/>) or Professionals Without Borders (<https://www.seattleu.edu/pwob/>). In addition, incidences of Pro Bono schemes for the poor, particularly from professions other than the well-known schemes for lawyers could be publicized more.

While morality and passion represent common populist themes that professionals can adopt, or at least adapt, the populist charge of elite conspiracy may encourage a change in the traditional way of undertaking politics and a change in the level of transparency among professionals and professional associations. This is to some extent occurring. In recent years professional associations in the UK have been putting their ethical codes one or two clicks from their website home pages rather than being buried in members only sections. Disciplinary decisions are being made public. The rise of populism may have contributed to this change. Arguably professional associations need to raise efforts in this direction by making continuing professional development requirements more publicly available and to clarify means by which qualifications are being kept up to date. The public perception of such changes by indi-

vidual professional associations would be substantially enhanced if they were to pursue these strategies jointly.

New media provide platforms for practical information; providing alternative information sources to direct practical expertise from professionals, thereby threatening professionalism. Social media has obviated some of the net around communities controlled or at least developed by professional associations. This has led to rogue centres which lend themselves to the kind of “maverick” personalities that are populist leaders (Barr, 2009). One response is for professional associations vigorously to challenge rogue Internet sites such as those offering professional qualifications for payment without requiring training and assessment. Another is to step up professional associations’ own presence on social media.

These influences on populism and professionalism may be limited in future. The Internet and various social media platforms have become dangerous places; used to trap people into financial and sexual snares. According to Susskind and Susskind trust in those who deliver professional services will not be so important in the future as the need “for a reliable outcome” (2015, p. 237) for which they claim new machine technologies are well suited. However, inauthenticity threatens Internet reliability as an information source. Tim Berners-Lee, thinks that the world wide web he created is now broken (Schulze, 2018). Concerns about cybersecurity and authenticity may raise demands for professionalism in these areas. A response of the professions could be to develop accreditation for Internet site authentication.

Finally, juxtapositioning encourages attention to the strategies and customs of enduring institutions that support professionalism. In the UK this includes not only professional associations but also an increasingly complex range of regulatory bodies (Friedman & Hanson, 2010). Their relative neglect is striking compared with the interest of academics and journalists in trade unions. Addressing the populist challenge to professions and professionalism encourages attention to these organisations as more than merely expressions of professionalism or concerned only with strategic jurisdictional battles among themselves (Abbott, 1988).

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