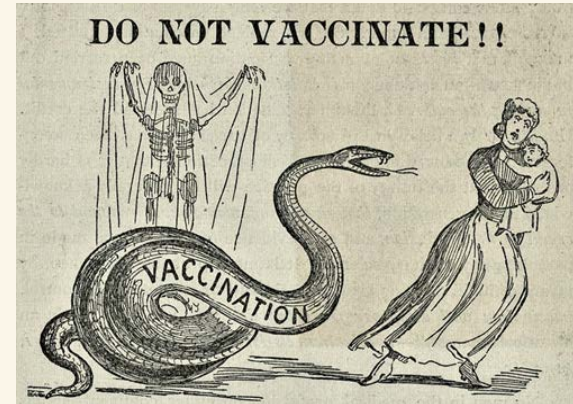


Disconnection of science from competence through populism



@ilariacapua



Setting the scene



Source: <http://bostonreview.net/>



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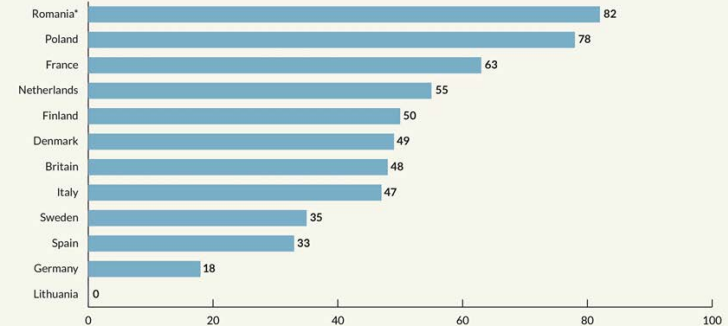
Definitions - Populism

- Political ideas and activities that are intended to get the support of ordinary people by giving them what they want (<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/populism>)
- Populism is a “thin ideology”, one that merely sets up a framework: that of a pure people versus a corrupt elite.

(Cas Mudde, University of Georgia, 2004)

FIGURE 1: Authoritarian populism (AP) across Europe

% of voters with AP views



* all AP groups in Romania are pro-EU

Source: yougov.com, October 2016

| BertelsmannStiftung



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Definitions - Post-truth

(Adj) Relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief

Source: English oxford living dictionaries



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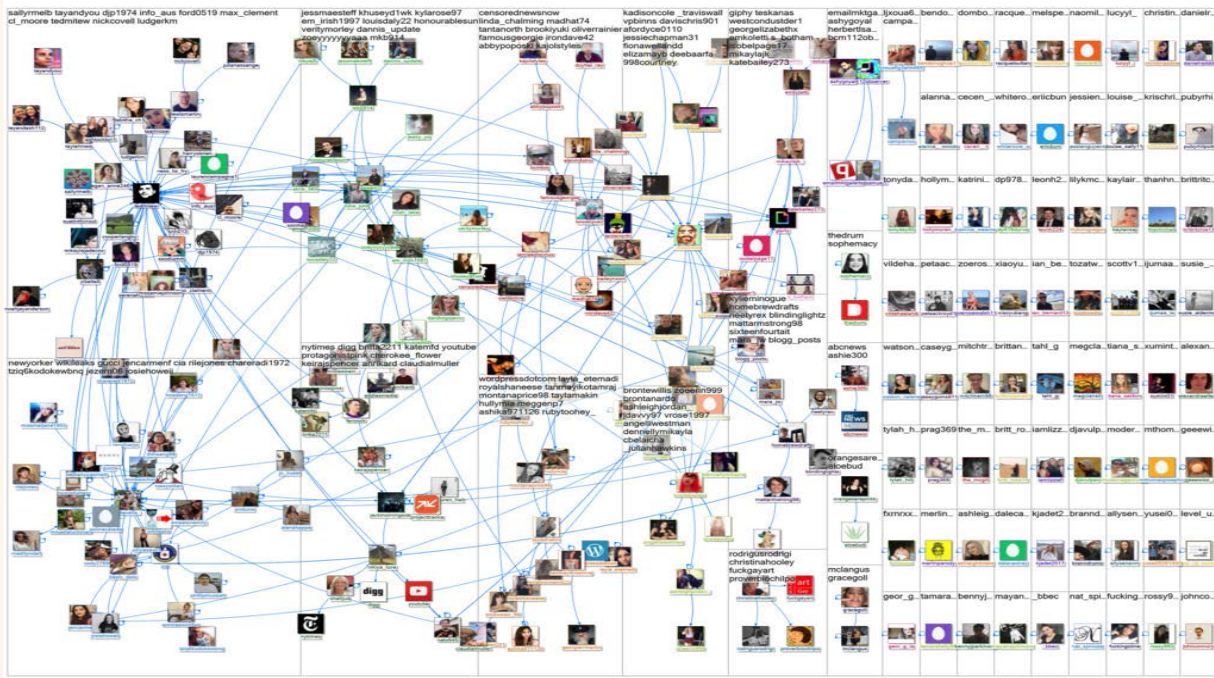
Populism, post-truth and science

- Populism provides a framework for polarization between «the pure and the corrupt» and post-truth provides information that is governed by the influence of emotions rather than facts.
- Devalue competence

- Science does not provide black-and-white answers, it is subject to error and is influenced by facts rather than emotions
- It relies on competence



Speed



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Anti-vaccine sentiment



Italian populists 'put lives at risk' with vow to change child jab rule

Italy
Tom Kingston Rome

Two populist parties have promised to scrap mandatory vaccines for measles in March, drawing accusations of pandering to conspiracy theorists and putting lives at risk.

The anti-migrant Northern League promised to repeal a law passed last August which compels parents to vaccinate their children against six illnesses, including measles. "Yes to vaccines, but no to making them compulsory," said Matteo Salvini, leader of the Northern League. His party is part of the right-wing coalition fifth Silvio Berlusconi that pollsters expect to win the March 4 election.

The anti-establishment Five Star Movement, Italy's most popular party at about 28 per cent, has followed suit, opposing the six mandatory jabs. The other five are whooping cough, German measles, mumps, chicken pox and adenovirus influenza type B (Hib).

"We are in favour of persuasion," said Luigi Di Maio, Five Star's candidate for prime minister.

The law was rushed on to the statute book during an epidemic of 5,000 cases of measles which claimed four lives last year. The outbreak was triggered by a sharp drop in the number of vaccinations following publication of theories linking the jab to autism.

"The League is gambling for a few extra votes against the health of Italians and of our children," said Beatrice Lorenzin, the health minister. "Italy needs a vaccination against incompetence."

Mr Di Maio said he would leave in place four vaccinations — diphtheria, tetanus, hepatitis B and polio — which were already mandatory before last year's law, but make the other six optional.

He added that if

Luigi Di Maio wants 'optional' jab for measles

vaccination rates for the six dropped to dangerous levels, he would make them obligatory — prompting critics to point out that they were already at dangerous levels.

In 2016 the take-up of measles vaccinations in Italy fell to 87.26 per cent from 90 per cent in 2015, well below the 95 per cent safety limit recommended by the World Health Organisation.

At the time Five Star politicians were theorising about the dangers of vaccines, and a paper by a British doctor, Andrew Wakefield, linking the measles, mumps and rubella vaccine (MMR) to autism, was going viral. That paper has since been discredited.

"Conspiracy theories about pharmaceutical companies making fortunes from vaccines despite the risks were swirling around the internet, and renowned experts were given the same credibility

as any Facebook user with an opinion," said a health ministry source in Rome.

The MMR vaccination is not obligatory in the UK, but 95.6 per cent of children are given it.

The Italian law change has led to the vaccination of 30 per cent of the children born between 2011 and 2015 who had not been vaccinated, officials told *The Lancet* in December. Measles jabs were up 2.9 per cent overall.

Matteo Renzi, the former prime minister whose government passed the law, said: "The health of our children is in the balance here not a handful of votes."

Paolo Gentiloni, who succeeded Mr Renzi, blamed the fall in vaccination on a "spread of anti-scientific theories".

The paper published by Mr Wakefield is behind much of the so-called anti-vax movement. Mr Wakefield was struck off the UK medical register after he "dishonestly and irresponsibly" claimed there was a link between the MMR vaccine and autism and bowel disease in children.



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News of professional relevance

- Ignorable
- Concerning
- Worrysome
- Alarming



Vaccination and autism in dogs



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Concerning

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying a Reuters news article. The browser's address bar shows the URL: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-bulgaria-ppr-protests/bulgarian-farmers-protest-against-mass-livestock-slaughter-idUSKBN1K81EP>. The article is categorized under 'ENVIRONMENT' and is dated 'JULY 18, 2018 / 7:38 AM / A MONTH AGO'. The main headline is 'Bulgarian farmers protest against mass livestock slaughter'. The author is listed as 'Angel Krasimirov' with a '3 MIN READ' indicator. The article text states: 'SOFIA (Reuters) - Hundreds of farmers from around Bulgaria rallied in the capital Sofia on Wednesday against the government-ordered mass slaughter of livestock following the first outbreak in the European Union of the highly contagious Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR)'. Below the text is a video player showing a protest with Bulgarian flags. To the right, there is a 'SPONSORED' section with three advertisements for business guides in Canada. The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the date as 05:14 on 27/08/2018.

Corriere della Sera - Ultimi x Bulgarian farmers protes x

Sicuro <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-bulgaria-ppr-protests/bulgarian-farmers-protest-against-mass-livestock-slaughter-idUSKBN1K81EP>

App UNIPD Inbox - Outlook Web http://www.corriere.it WIFI di bordo di Tele e.europa.eu/food/f... Browser Chrome Rivedila7 New Tab Search Browser Chrome

ENVIRONMENT JULY 18, 2018 / 7:38 AM / A MONTH AGO

Bulgarian farmers protest against mass livestock slaughter

Angel Krasimirov 3 MIN READ

SOFIA (Reuters) - Hundreds of farmers from around Bulgaria rallied in the capital Sofia on Wednesday against the government-ordered mass slaughter of livestock following the first outbreak in the European Union of the highly contagious Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR).

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Bulgarian farmers...html

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Worrysome



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Alarming



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Alarming

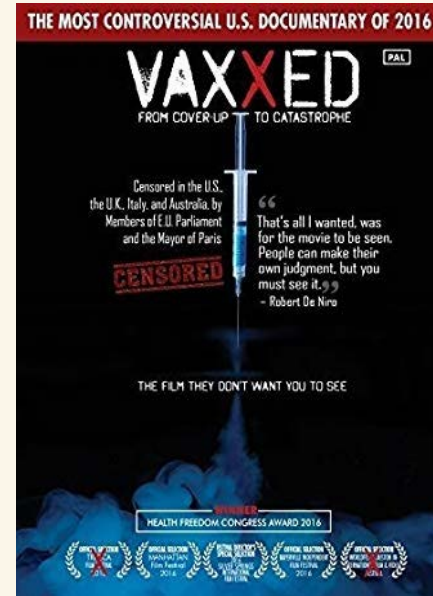


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Conspiracy theory

- Several «anti-science» movements are based on the conspiracy theory
- Competence is devalued and shaken and bizarre theories are proposed





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More than an Emerging Threat

- Science, scientists and scientific institutions are under attack from populist movements worldwide
- The biggest risk that we are exposed to is that our personal and institutional scientific credibility is shaken
- Prejudice, biased criticism and slander are the new emerging «viral» pathogens we will have to fight.



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Preparedness and response



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Isabel Minguez-Tudela (1956-2011)