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# THE MANY FACES OF ERIC ZEMMOUR: CONSERVATIVE, POPULIST, OR ILLIBERAL?



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At various times during the 2022 French presidential election, polls showed far-right media personality and provocateur Eric Zemmour in a three-way tie for second place, making the possibility of his advancing to the run-off round a viable one.<sup>1</sup> Ultimately that did not happen, though legacy far-right favorite Marine Le Pen did advance and lose to incumbent Emmanuel Macron. Even so, the specter of Eric Zemmour haunted the election discourse from the moment he entered the race.

Zemmour has long made waves within France, and outside it. Some media outlets have labeled him a “wannabe Donald Trump.”<sup>2</sup> But Zemmour needn’t be characterized in such shallow terms. In fact, understanding the Zemmour phenomenon may illuminate debates around the confluence of conservatism, populism, and illiberalism. While Zemmour gets classified as all these things by a media that tends to think of them as synonymous terms, this research builds on a growing literature that thinks of conservatism, populism, and illiberalism as at least somewhat distinct phenomena.

This work seeks to classify Zemmour and is structured as follows. First, I review the relevant literature on conservatism, populism, and illiberalism. Then, I assess Zemmour’s rhetoric and policy proposals in the context of the three concepts. Finally, I flesh out my conclusion that Zemmour is a chameleonic character who rhetorically represents a populist, illiberal movement while simultaneously embracing a neoliberal, conservative approach to the economy.

## **Conservatism, Populism, and Illiberalism: What Do They Mean?**

### **The Radicalization of French Conservatism**

Categorizing conservatism is difficult because it is necessarily parochial, based on upholding and protecting traditions, customs, and norms that are specific to the setting in which it operates. It’s largely for this reason that David Y. Allen argues that conservatism can be defined as an ideal type, but when attempting anything more “it soon becomes necessary to move from general definitions to describe conditions in particular countries and then depict individual groups and thinkers.”<sup>3</sup> Ideal types abound but Russell Kirk’s definition of conservatism an act of “prudence” rather than an ideology stands out. Kirk juxtaposed conservatives, who support only that which seeks “to preserve order, justice, and freedom,” with “ideologues,” who promise “mankind an earthly paradise; but in cruel fact” deliver “a series of terrestrial hells.”<sup>4</sup>

For our purposes however, it’s worth following Allen and looking at the case of French conservatism specifically. French conservatism has historically been tied up with bourgeois Catholicism and Gaullism, i.e. the particular blend of nationalism, paternalism, centralization, and commitment to French unity that characterized the man and the school of thought he left behind. However, the only movement with any teeth at present, that is worthy of the label “conservative,” is the so-called

*nouveaux réactionnaires* (new reactionaries). Though the phenomenon emerged twenty-plus years ago, the complete collapse of institutional conservatism (represented politically by *Les Républicains*) in 2017 and 2022 left a void that the *nouveaux réactionnaires* filled.<sup>5</sup> Thus, while in 2002 Daniel Lindenberg could proclaim that the new reactionaries “do not form, or not yet, a structured and conscious movement,” one does not have the luxury today.<sup>6</sup> The new reactionaries hang their hats on “themes with somewhat forgotten flavors: order, authority, the restoration of values, the ‘real people’ ...even the cult of roots and constituted identities.”<sup>7</sup>

This new conservatism then is heavily tinged by identity politics and conflict (a notable departure from Gaullism’s focus on consensus and unity), though not exclusively. Its hatred of the “egalitarian left” forms the basis for its opposition to social phenomena like the legacy of May 1968, mass culture, human rights, anti-racism, and Islam, but also in large part to redistributive economic policies.<sup>8</sup> It’s thus fair to say that French conservatism has radicalized in the social realm but has yet to make a clean break with economic neoliberalism. There is always a spectrum of opinion, but large parts of French conservatism, from far-right political parties like *Rassemblement National* to center-right ones like *Les Républicains* to intellectuals in the *nouveaux réactionnaires*, still embrace neoliberal economics despite their opposition to the cultural liberalism that is sometimes associated with neoliberalism.

### Populism and People Power

In 1956, Edward Shils suggested that populism can emerge “wherever there is an ideology of popular resentment against the order imposed on society by a long-established, differentiated ruling class, which is believed to have a monopoly of power, property, breeding and culture.”<sup>9</sup> Shils has a minimalistic definition of populism, viewing it as any project in which “emanation from the people confers validity on a policy and on the values underlying it.”<sup>10</sup> Shils’ minimalism leaves the door open for populism of the left and the right and is thus more of a logic, or a framework, than an ideology.

However, Shils asserts that populism naturally flirts with anti-liberalism. The reason is simple – liberal institutions are somewhat autonomous, meaning they are not shaped by the popular will but by some other force like the law, norms, or precedent. Thus, because Shils’ populism is “impatient of institutional procedures which impede the direct expression of the popular will,” it is also illiberal-adjacent as liberal institutions (at least theoretically) are exactly the kind that circumnavigate the direct, majoritarian, will of the people.<sup>11</sup> This does not mean that populism is always illiberal, it just means that populism and illiberalism are not odd bedfellows.

Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser have a similarly minimalist definition of populism, which agrees with Shils’ emphasis on popular will but is more explicit in suggesting that populism must be anti-elitist. For them, populism is “a thin-centred ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, ‘the pure people’ and ‘the corrupt elite,’ and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people.”<sup>12</sup> By thin-centered ideology, they mean that populism has limited substance, but is *attached* to other ‘thick’ ideologies like conservatism or socialism.

Mudde and Kaltwasser’s conceptualization is also more morally contingent than Shils’. As they put it, “populism is in essence a form of moral politics, as the distinction between ‘the elite’ and ‘the people’ is first and foremost moral (i.e. pure vs. corrupt), not situational (e.g. position of power), socio-cultural (e.g. ethnicity, religion), or socio-economic (e.g. class).”<sup>13</sup> In other words, populism is fundamentally a form of identity politics, not material politics. Like Shils, they note populism’s antipathy to liberalism, which they attribute to the “internal contradiction of liberal democracy,”

namely “the tension between the democratic promise of majority rule and the reality of constitutional protection of minority rights.”<sup>14</sup> Populists come down firmly on the side of majority rule.

Rogers Brubaker adds some complexity, suggesting that populism is a vertically *and* horizontally antagonistic phenomenon. Agreeing with Shils, Mudde & Kaltwasser, and others, Brubaker suggests that populists who speak in the name of “the people” characterize the public in vertical opposition to those on top, the “economic, political, and cultural elites.”<sup>15</sup> However, in his typology the people are also in opposition to those below, the “parasites or spongers...addicts or deviants.”<sup>16</sup> In the horizontal dimension, “the people” are understood as a “bounded collectivity,” characterized by the contrast “between *inside* and *outside*.”<sup>17</sup>

For Brubaker, an important and dangerous element of populism is the focus on demonizing those who are both on the bottom *and* the outside. It’s important to note that in Brubaker’s formulation populism is not an ideology or a framework but a “repertoire,” characterized by a “limited though historically evolving set of relatively standardized elements that are well known to, and available to be drawn on by, political actors,” which simultaneously leaves room “for improvisation and elaboration.”<sup>18</sup> This “repertoire” includes tools such as re-politicization (taking back control over domains that have been de-democratized), majoritarianism, anti-institutionalism, protection (from perceived outside threats), and “rawness,” i.e. an oration style that uses “raw and crude...over refined and cultivated” language.<sup>19</sup>

### Illiberalism’s Features and Origins

The literature on illiberalism is also illuminating when studying Zemmour, though much more fluid. Defining illiberalism can be difficult because it is a negative concept i.e., its definition relies on defining its antithesis, liberalism (which itself can be defined economically, politically, culturally, etc.). It is also difficult to define because it tends to be used pejoratively by political actors while being used in an explanatory manner by academics.<sup>20</sup> Even so, Marlene Laruelle provides a roadmap for defining the illiberal “family,” characterized by five features: its relative recency, its capacity to be articulated intellectually, culturally, or politically, its denunciation of “minoritarian technocratic liberalism,” its ability to pull from classical conservatism and far-right politics, and its effort to “restore national sovereignty.”<sup>21</sup>

Other scholars conceptualize illiberalism slightly differently. Erik Swyngedouw suggests that illiberalism is the fulfillment by other means of neoliberalism’s promise, that is the promise “that free markets, individualisation, deliverance from community obligations and attachment to the private sphere” can deliver enjoyment.<sup>22</sup> In his words, illiberalism is “a symptom of the deadlock produced by the contradictions and antagonisms that constitute present-day instituted post-democracy in its articulation of... neoliberalisation.”<sup>23</sup> Leaning heavily on psychoanalysis, Swyngedouw asserts that neoliberalism promised the masses “enjoyment,” defined psychoanalytically as “a special kind of agony...that makes us feel more alive, more fully present, more in tune with what makes life worth living, and dying for, than anything else, [in] excess beyond the given, measurable, rational, and useful,” but has failed to deliver.<sup>24</sup> For him, illiberalism has grown out of the desire to blame someone, or something (the Other) for this failure. The “autocratic lure” of illiberalism then is “nothing else than a symptom of the repetitive failure to enjoy, caused by an Other who is imagined to stand in the way of ultimate, yet impossible, enjoyment.”<sup>25</sup>

In his telling, this is why countries like Poland and Hungary, which underwent harsh neoliberalization in the 1990s, were some of the first to embrace illiberalism.<sup>26</sup> This is not incompatible with Laruelle’s criteria. After all, what is “restoring national sovereignty” and denouncing “minoritarian technocrats” if not an attempt to wrestle back power from the Other that

has stolen the promise of one's enjoyment? Of course, those in Eastern Europe are materially better off as a result of neoliberalization, but they are not fulfilled. Hyperindividualization and consumerism were once alluring objects, but they ultimately failed to deliver that which "makes life worth living," that is *enjoyment*. It is also compatible with populism, as elites, immigrants, and deviants can easily stand in as the Other.

## Evading Classification: Eric Zemmour's Many Faces

With the concepts out of the way, the task now is to classify Zemmour. Can one confidently say Zemmour is a conservative, a populist, an illiberal? Or perhaps all or none of these? When making this assessment it's important to synthesize two domains: the rhetorical domain and the policy domain. Doing so illuminates not only Zemmour's vision, but his plan to (or not to) implement it.

### Out with the Other! Zemmour's Populist, Illiberal Rhetoric

Zemmour's inflammatory rhetoric is not a secret to anyone that follows French politics. The titles of his books, like *The First Sex* (about the "feminization" of society), *French Melancholy*, and *French Suicide* give one a hint about the kind of rhetoric he espouses. Zemmour has said, and written, many things that have caused an uproar in France, too many to cover exhaustively. Instead of recounting them, I will focus on key moments and speeches from the campaign, not only because they are the most recent but also because they were made while Zemmour was pursuing actual political power.

The place to start is with Zemmour's campaign announcement, a 10-minute YouTube video that lays out his reasons for running and his vision for the country. Zemmour begins by addressing a public that walks "down the streets in [their] towns," but "don't recognize them."<sup>27</sup>

At one point, Zemmour provides an exhaustive list of French historical figures and achievements that is worth quoting in its entirety:

You remember the country found in films and books. The country of Joan of Arc and Louis XIV. The country of Bonaparte and General de Gaulle. The country of knights and ladies. The country of Victor Hugo and Chateaubriand. The country of Pascal and Descartes. The country of the fables of La Fontaine, the characters of Molière, and the verses of Racine. The country of Notre Dame de Paris and of village church towers. The country of Gavroche and Cosette. The country of barricades and Versailles. The country of Pasteur and Lavoisier. The country of Voltaire and Rousseau, of Clemenceau and the soldiers of '14, of de Gaulle and Jean Moulin. The country of Gabin and Delon; of Brigitte Bardot and Belmondo and Johnny and d'Aznavour and Brassens and Barbara; the films of Sautet and Verneuil.

What one notices in the quote above is its paradoxical diversity and homogeneity. On the one hand, these cultural figures span centuries and vastly diverse political contexts. But a second glance reveals the ways in which this list is homogeneous. By and large, every figure Zemmour lists is either white, Christian, or both i.e., "traditionally French." All of this is a way for Zemmour to conclude that "France is no longer France, and everyone sees it."<sup>28</sup> He also tells his audience who exactly is to blame for their loss, it's those who "despise" the public: "the powerful, the elites, the conformists, the journalists, the politicians, the professors, the sociologists, the union bosses, the religious authorities."<sup>29</sup> Zemmour proclaims that "for decades, our elected officials of the right and the left have led us down this dire path of decline and decadence...They have hidden from you the reality of our replacement."<sup>30</sup> It's for this reason that Zemmour claims "we must re-industrialize France...we must equalize the balance of trade...we must reduce our growing debt, bring back to France our companies

that left, give jobs to our unemployed... we must take back our sovereignty, abandoned to European technocrats and judges, who rob the French people of the ability to control their destiny in the name of a fantasy – a Europe that will never be a nation”<sup>31</sup>

The second speech to focus on occurred at Zemmour’s first rally, in Villepinte outside of Paris. This speech touches on many of the same themes as the YouTube announcement. That is, his “favorite themes” like “immigration, identity, gender, authority, rejection of political correctness.”<sup>32</sup> Once again, it was a speech mostly preoccupied with cultural, identitarian themes, as evidenced by quotes like “from the next start of the school year, we will make school the instrument of French-style assimilation and we will banish from our children’s classes the pedagogism, Islamo-leftism, and LGBT ideology!”<sup>33</sup> In this speech, Zemmour managed to get even more explicit claiming he was “against globalism, against living together, against mass immigration, gender theory, and Islamo-leftism,” adding that these ideologies have “one goal, one mission and one ideal: to deconstruct our people.”<sup>34</sup>

What conclusions can one draw from this? For one, it is intensely populist. If we follow Mudde and Kaltwasser, it’s clear that Zemmour is constructing two antagonistic camps, “the pure people” and the “corrupt elite.” He says as much in his campaign announcement video, explicitly using the word elite, but also coded words like “the powerful,” and the “journalists, the politicians, the professors.” However, Zemmour does not exemplify what Mudde and Kaltwasser call *moral politics*, which is “not situational (e.g. position of power), socio-cultural (e.g. ethnicity, religion), or socio-economic (e.g. class).” While it’s true that Zemmour avoids bifurcating the people and the elite along class lines, he is explicitly and implicitly doing so along “socio-cultural” lines.

His insistence on lionizing the white, primarily male, French while demonizing “Islamoc-leftism,” LGBTQ groups, and “gender theory” is testament to that. Thus, leaning on Brubaker is helpful here. What Zemmour is doing, as can be seen in the blockquote above, is creating a *bounded collectivity* for the French, made up of white, straight, “traditional” members of the French nation and juxtaposing it horizontally with an invasive *outsider* (Islamoc-leftists, etc.) dead-set on “deconstructing” the *bounded collectivity*. In doing so, he can also construct an enemy in the vertical dimension, the elites who are “more concerned with minorities, gender equality or the promotion of a multicultural society than attached to the well-being of their ‘people.’”<sup>35</sup>

Zemmour’s rhetoric is clearly populist, but to a lesser extent it mingles with conservatism and illiberalism as well. As noted in the sections above, the new wave of French conservatism is highly focused on identity politics, a trait mirrored in Zemmour’s rhetoric and strategy. But the *nouveaux réactionnaires’* inability to shed conservative, neoliberal, economics also emerges in Zemmour’s rhetoric and practice. While “reindustrializing France” and reclaiming power from the European Union is unlikely to get the neoliberal stamp of approval, other elements of Zemmour’s program might. Reducing government debt, which is code for austerity, has long been “intrinsically intertwined” with the “hegemony of neoliberalism.”<sup>36</sup>

Similarly, Zemmour’s pledges to “bring back to France our companies that left” and “give jobs to our unemployed” can easily manifest themselves in lowering corporate tax rates and reducing worker power to make labor markets more flexible, and unemployment benefits less generous. Furthermore, the basis of Zemmour’s social policies, as evidenced by his quote on “French-style assimilation” is universal republicanism, a notion which “paradoxically, [is] rooted in the mainstream of politics,” not just mainstream conservatism.<sup>37</sup> For Zemmour, the reason minority groups are a threat is because they place a greater emphasis on their minority identity than on being properly “French.” This notion is not novel but is deeply ingrained in French conservatism.

Whether or not these were part of the Zemmour policy program is discussed below. However, a quick note on Zemmour’s rhetoric vis-à-vis illiberalism is necessary. In the broadest terms, it’s clear that Zemmour opposes social and cultural liberalism, but is much murkier in his relationship to economic

liberalism. Nonetheless, if we use Laruelle's five-point typology, Zemmour's rhetoric checks all five boxes. The Zemmour phenomenon is relatively recent, has been articulated culturally (through his books, articles, and TV appearances) and politically (through his candidacy), has raged against "technocratic liberalism" via its critiques of the EU, has pulled from classical conservatism as discussed above, and has a sovereigntist tinge that speaks for itself. All these features mean that Zemmour speaks the language of illiberalism just as much as the language of populism and conservatism. But actions speak louder than words, and the section below investigates his proposed action agenda.

### **Xenophobic Neoliberalism: The Zemmour Policy Program**

Zemmour's policy proposals are mostly in line with what one would expect given his rhetoric. On immigration, Zemmour pairs the xenophobic rhetoric quoted above with radical policy proposals. His campaign platform included pledges to end the right to family reunification, to tighten the definition of "asylum" in order to reduce access, to select foreign students based on "merit," to impose a mandatory deposit of 10,000 euros for obtaining a visa, and to create a border guard force with military status and privileges.<sup>38</sup> Make no mistake, this would essentially eliminate immigration to France. However, if Zemmour's rhetoric and policy align on immigration, they diverge on the economy. As noted above, Zemmour's language around the economy is populist in nature but is broad enough to leave the door open for traditional, conservative policy, which is exactly what it does. Despite his pledges to re-industrialize, Zemmour's campaign platform is full of conservative, technocratic, neoliberal economic proposals. They include reducing government regulation, rewarding employees who increase company profits with tax-free bonuses, enshrining tax-free overtime, providing a tax exemption for employers that hire apprentices, abolishing the audiovisual fee, and returning France to the "virtue principle" of "work more to earn more."<sup>39</sup>

What this means in practice is that while Zemmour might normally rail against elites of all shades, corporate elites get an exemption. Under Zemmour's plans, elite business interests would be rewarded, not punished, with tax cuts, exemptions, and de-regulation. Zemmour is not shy about his economic worldview either and pejoratively calls his fellow far-rightist Marine Le Pen a "leftist" because she wants to cut the Value Added Tax (VAT) on gasoline and lower the retirement age to 60. Zemmour claims that Le Pen "multiplies the gifts without funding."<sup>40</sup> In the U.S. context, Ryan Cooper has noted that this "how are you going to pay for that?" discourse is "designed to shut down policy pushes upfront, minimizing any interference with the free market."<sup>41</sup> The same is true in the case of Zemmour.

How then are we to reconcile Zemmour's populism/illiberalism regarding immigration and minority rights with his conservative economic approach? Noemi Lendvai-Bainton and Dorota Szelewa's concept of "authoritarian neoliberalism" is close, but ultimately unfulfilling. In their view, authoritarian neoliberalism integrates neoliberalism and welfare-statism through exclusionary social protection that actively discriminates against some (immigrants and minorities), while rewarding others. Exclusionary social protection is achieved through cutting social spending in most sectors while increasing it dramatically for specific, targeted groups. Social spending is thus a form of identity politics in which "insecurities are actively rolled out for the 'other'...and only selectively mitigated for some."<sup>42</sup>

In their case study of Hungary and Poland, the nuclear family is the beneficiary of this xenophobic, exclusionary social protection. However, there is nothing to parallel the family in Zemmour's vision. He wants to keep all the exclusion, without doling out any of the protection. In Zemmour's economy, there would be no immigrants, but the slack would be made up by increasing the working hours of poor, French citizens. Thus, neoliberalism is accelerated within France's borders while illiberal

immigration policies police its boundaries. This xenophobic neoliberalism is the foundation of Zemmour's views on immigration and the economy.

## Conclusion: Eric Zemmour, Masked Conservative

What is one to make of all this? When charting the intersection of theory and practice, one can only say that Zemmour is in some ways all these things, a conservative, a populist, and an illiberal, and in being thus, perhaps none of them solely. What connects these three concepts? In large part, their connections rest on the back of post-material politics, as conservatism, populism, and illiberalism all focus on identity politics to one degree or another. This connection alone makes them attractive collaborators. There are other factors as well. The radicalization of French conservatism and the collapse of the French center-right means that Zemmour is welcomed as a conservative, and his combination of identity politics and neoliberal economics fits the bill, as does his commitment to universalism and opposition to multiculturalism. His conservative position makes sense when one considers the fact that he spent 35 years in conservative journalism and is the product of mainstream outlets like *Le Quotidien de Paris*, *Le Figaro*, RTL and state channel France 2.<sup>43</sup> But he articulates this position in a populist fashion, demonizing elites, immigrants, members of the LGBT community, and women.

If we follow Mudde and Kaltwasser's conceptualization of populism as a *thin-ideology*, then it becomes clear that for Zemmour conservatism is merely the *thick-ideology* that undergirds his populist rhetoric. Similarly, if we follow Brubaker's conceptualization of populism as "repertoire," then it becomes clear that Zemmour's populist rhetoric is simply the stylistic expression of a deeply conservative politics. None of this means that Zemmour is not a populist, it merely means that his populism does not stand alone. Similarly with illiberalism. Laruelle's typology itself accounts for the fact that illiberalism is deeply tied up with conservatism, but Zemmour is the physical manifestation of this trajectory. His rhetoric about, and policy proposals for, immigration, Islam, LGBT, and women can in no way be mistaken as liberal. He fundamentally views some groups as unequal participants in the public square. However, in the economic sphere, his illiberalism melts away and is replaced with a run-of-the-mill neoliberal program. If we take Swyngedouw's lead on illiberalism, this occurrence makes sense, as illiberalism and neoliberalism are deeply intertwined phenomena, grown out of the same desires and wants.

All-in-all, Eric Zemmour has many faces and wears many masks, but at base he is a conservative, albeit of a *nouveaux réactionnaires* variety, who is willing to invoke populist rhetoric when it serves his ends, and who is willing to flirt with illiberalism in the social sphere so long as it doesn't disrupt the operation of the neoliberal capitalist economy in France.

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- <sup>1</sup> See for instance: Politico Research, “Politico Poll of Polls - French Polls, Trends and Election News for France,” POLITICO (POLITICO, February 21, 2022), <https://www.politico.eu/europe-poll-of-polls/france/>.
- <sup>2</sup> “Who Is Eric Zemmour, France's Wannabe Donald Trump?,” *The Economist* (The Economist Newspaper, November 19, 2021), <https://www.economist.com/the-economist-explains/2021/11/12/who-is-eric-zemmour-frances-wannabe-donald-trump>.
- <sup>3</sup> David V. Allen, “Modern Conservatism: The Problem of Definition,” *The Review of Politics* 43, no. 4 (1981): pp. 582-603, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0034670500051111>, 601.
- <sup>4</sup> Russell Kirk, *The Politics of Prudence* (Wilmington, DE: Intercollegiate Studies Institute, 1993), 7-21.
- <sup>5</sup> Bruno Amable and Stefano Palombarini, *The Last Neoliberal: Macron and the Origins of France's Political Crisis* (London, UK: Verso, 2021), 31-36.
- <sup>6</sup> Daniel Lindenberg, “Le Rappel à l’Ordre - La République Des Idées,” *La République des Idées*, October 22, 2002, <http://www.repid.com/Le-Rappel-a-l-ordre.html>.
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>9</sup> Edward Shils, *Torment of Secrecy: The Background and Consequences of American Security Policy* (Chicago , IL: Ivan R Dee, Inc, 1996), 100-101.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid., 101
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid., 102
- <sup>12</sup> Cas Mudde et al., “Populism and (Liberal) Democracy: a Framework for Analysis,” in *Populism in Europe and the Americas: Threat or Corrective for Democracy?* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 1-26, 8.
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid., 8
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid., 17
- <sup>15</sup> Rogers Brubaker, “Why Populism?,” *Theory and Society* 46, no. 5 (2017): pp. 357-385, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11186-017-9301-7> , 363.
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid., 363
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid., 363
- <sup>18</sup> Ibid., 361
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid., 364-368
- <sup>20</sup> Marlene Laruelle, “Illiberalism: A Conceptual Introduction,” *illiberalism.org* (Illiberalism Studies Program, March 1, 2022), <https://www.illiberalism.org/illiberalism-conceptual-introduction/>.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid., 14
- <sup>22</sup> Erik Swyngedouw, “Illiberalism and the Democratic Paradox: The Infernal Dialectic of Neoliberal Emancipation,” *European Journal of Social Theory* 25, no. 1 (2021): pp. 53-74, <https://doi.org/10.1177/13684310211027079>, 4.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid., 5.
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid., 3
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid., 16
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid., 7
- <sup>27</sup> Éric Zemmour. “I am a candidate for the presidential election.” YouTube Video, November 19, 2021. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k8IGBDK1BH8>
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>29</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>30</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>31</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>32</sup> Gilles Ivaldi, “Éric Zemmour : Un 'Backlash Culturel' à La Française ?,” HAL (CEVIPOF ; Sciences-Po Paris, February 3, 2022), <https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-03553884/>, 1.
- <sup>33</sup> Ibid., 5
- <sup>34</sup> Ibid., 6
- <sup>35</sup> Ibid., 4
- <sup>36</sup> Simon Springer et al., “Neoliberalism as Austerity: The Theory, Practice, and Purpose of Fiscal Restraint since the 1970s,” in *Handbook of Neoliberalism* (London, UK: Routledge, 2016), pp. 361-370.
- <sup>37</sup> Philippe Marlière, “Éric Zemmour Is No Fascist – He’s the Creature of the French Establishment,” *openDemocracy*, December 9, 2021, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/can-europe-make-it/eric->

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[zemmour-is-no-fascist-hes-the-creature-of-the-french-establishment/](https://www.ericzemmour.fr/immigration).

<sup>38</sup> Éric Zemmour, "Immigration: Éric Zemmour's Program," Le programme d'Éric Zemmour, accessed May 13, 2022, <https://programme.ericzemmour.fr/immigration>.

<sup>39</sup> Éric Zemmour, "Taxes: Éric Zemmour's Program," Le programme d'Éric Zemmour, accessed May 13, 2022, <https://programme.ericzemmour.fr/impots>.

<sup>40</sup> Barthélémy Philippe, "Eric Zemmour Et Marine Le Pen... Leurs Différences Flagrantes Sur L'économie," Capital.fr, November 16, 2021, <https://www.capital.fr/economie-politique/eric-zemmour-et-marine-le-pen-leurs-flagrantes-differences-sur-leconomie-1420130>.

<sup>41</sup> Ryan Cooper, *How Are You Going to Pay for That?: Smart Answers to the Dumbest Question in Politics* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 2021).

<sup>42</sup> Noemi Lendvai-Bainton and Dorota Szelewa, "Governing New Authoritarianism: Populism, Nationalism and Radical Welfare Reforms in Hungary and Poland," *Social Policy & Administration* 55, no. 4 (February 2020): pp. 559-572, <https://doi.org/10.1111/spol.12642>, 566.

<sup>43</sup> Marlière. "Éric Zemmour Is No Fascist," openDemocracy.