The Socio-Theoretical Relevance of Erich Fromm's Psychoanalytic Conception of Narcissism

Towards a Frommian Critical Social Theory of Narcissism

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Abstract: This article methodologically explores Erich Fromm's theory of narcissism in socio-theoretical terms while referring to his theory of alienation. It thereby portrays the foundations of an analytical method of far-right politics in the context of capitalism and demonstrates that malignant narcissism touches off fascism without regard to authoritarianism. Essentially, the Freudian psychoanalytic concept of narcissism lies in Fromm's social theory. However, it is possible to discern the theoretical essence of his social theory characteristically in his conception of alienation. By focusing on this theoretical concern, I argue that in Fromm's social theory the concept of narcissism works on a socio-pathological level, particularly in the way in which it synchronises with alienation, a social phenomenon that fulfils its important functions in conjunction with the marketing orientation under the conditions of a market society, and therefore that the concept plays an overriding role in his theory of alienation. I conclude that the relevance of a Frommian critical social theory of narcissism for our society is best showcased by the concept of postfascism.

Keywords: alienation, capitalism, fascism, having mode, marketing orientation, narcissism

This article excavates Erich Fromm's psychoanalytic conception of narcissism within the framework of his social theory of alienation, thereby revealing the socio-theoretical relevance of the former theory and preparing for theoretical analyses of far-right politics in the social context of capitalism.¹ Surprisingly, there is little scholarship on Fromm's theory of alienation, a Marxist philosophical concept, that refers largely to his theory of narcissism, a Freudian psychoanalytic concept – only a few works are discernible (Deguchi 2019; Sakurai 2018a; 2018b; 2020). In addition, the latter theme is scarcely addressed by psychoanalysts and psychologists in general (Bacciagaluppi and Biancoli 1993: 447; Sakurai 2018a: 149).² Perhaps this situation is due to the fact that Fromm's psychoanalysis itself has not been examined at all in the mainstream of psychoanalysis and any related disciplines (Bacciagaluppi and Biancoli 1993; cf. Greenberg and Mitchell 1983; Roazen 2001). From this perspective, Fromm's issue of narcissism is still underrated despite the fact that social theory has started drawing attention to it – as mentioned in note 2 – and precisely for this reason, themes of his conception of alienation have not been highlighted in terms of narcissism.

Apart from the fact of his being a neo-Freudian psychoanalyst, Fromm is considered a social theorist, particularly in the sense of his contributions to Critical Theory (Braune 2014; Braune and Durkin 2020; Deguchi 2015; Durkin 2014; Sakurai 2018a, 2020). This scholarly facet is a sure sign that his work serves to incorporate Sigmund Freud into Karl Marx, thereby seeking to diagnose and cure societal diseases by means of his distinctive sociological psychoanalysis that enables society to reflect self-critically on itself.³ On this basis, Fromm attempts to propose appropriate remedies for contemporary narcissistic society internalising a specific way of being that stems from the pathological phenomenon of alienation, a society in which people devote themselves to consuming while 'sell[ing] themselves at the highest possible price' (Sakurai 2020: 182; cf. Fromm 1964; 1971 [1947]).

What inferences does Fromm's social theory suggest by highlighting narcissism? It unveils the mechanisms of narcissism under social conditions of market capitalism that acts as a negative factor in the social framework of democracy due to the fact that narcissism is essentially intertwined with alienation (Sakurai 2018b; 2020). This philosophical concept signifies a socio-pathological

phenomenon wherein human beings are transformed into an object of socio-economic systems, and the latter is thereby transformed into a subject which is called 'capital' (Fromm 2013 [1961]; cf. Marx 2013 [1844]). This essential transformation breeds alienation. As Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer put it, '[t]echnical rationality today is the rationality of domination', and '[i]t is the compulsive character of a society alienated from itself' (2002: 95). Through alienation, then, human beings come to feel unbearable psychological pain due to their extremely passive position while stimulated by the market mechanism to foster a malignant form of narcissism (Sakurai 2018b; 2020). As such, it is worthwhile to demonstrate the theoretical link between alienation and narcissism in the framework of Fromm's social theory. Through this demonstration, I will, in Frommian terms, set about analysing political formulations involving the category of fascism, a pathological politics that the social functions of narcissism provoke under market capitalism.

This article can be of relevance for Critical Theory and the study of narcissism in politics in the sense that: first, it showcases the socio-theoretical relevance of narcissism in Marxist terms and in Frommian diagnostic and prescriptive terms; and second, it offers a socio-theoretical framework of narcissism that contributes to illuminating current political phenomena embroiled in populist politics in terms of fascism.

I will first argue that in Fromm's social theory the concept of narcissism works on a socio-pathological level in the way in which it synchronises with alienation, that it to say narcissism invigorates the functions of alienation (Fromm 1971 [1947]; 1980b [1979]; cf. Sakurai 2018b; 2020). I will then construe the latter pathology as a social phenomenon that, under the conditions of a market society, fulfils important functions in conjunction with the 'marketing orientation', the 'ability to play the expected role' through which one sells oneself at the highest possible price (Fromm 1971 [1947]: 82). I will deduce that the notion of narcissism plays a predominant role in Fromm's theory of alienation. I will finally conclude that a Frommian critical social theory of narcissism is quite relevant, especially under social conditions of postfascism, a twenty-first century political movement that obliterates democracy 'from within' through taking over some of the key elements of fascism (Traverso 2019: 5).

How Does This Research Relate to the Concept of Fascism?⁴

Perhaps I should start by clarifying briefly what the concept of ‘fascism’ denotes in this research and the link between the concept and the research. The term ‘fascism’ has its origins in the Italian ‘fascio’, meaning a ‘bundle of rods’, which represents strong group solidarity (Whittam 1995: 6; cf. Sakurai 2018b: 145). This shows precisely that fascism first thrived in the context of Italian politics (Bach 2006; Finchelstein 2017; Griffin 2012; Passmore 2014 [2002]; Whittam 1995). In the sense that it emerged in 1919 (Finchelstein 2017; Griffin 2012; Passmore 2014 [2002]; Whittam 1995), it differs from political phenomena that have long existed, such as traditional autocracy, despotism, dictatorship and tyranny, each conceptual implication of which overlaps with that of fascism. Briefly speaking, the term ‘fascism’ refers to a ‘generalized historical type of authoritarian political regime’ (Bach 2006: 192).

The eminent theorist of fascism Roger Griffin further defines fascism as a ‘revolutionary form of ultra-nationalism that attempts to realize the myth of the regenerated nation’ (2012: 1). On the basis of this essential definition, he elaborates on the nature of fascism:

It is a myth which applied in practice creates a totalitarian movement or regime engaged in combating cultural, ethnic and even biological (‘dys-genic’) decadence and engineering a new sort of ‘man’ in an alternative socio-political and cultural modernity to liberal capitalism. (2012: 1)

In Griffin’s view, fascism is an alternative to ‘liberal capitalism’ and is predicated on a nationalist ideology that is deployed for a political crusade against liberalism. In other words, it is a revolutionary movement that is based on the social structures of capitalism from which liberalism is removed and that seeks an alternative modernity.

In the context of Fromm research, fascism looks slightly different. It means a one-dimensional political form taking on authoritarian character features that emerges from socio-psychological conditions under which the masses with a strong sense of fear and isolation, whose *raison d’être* relies on the power and influence of a charismatic leader, are all organised into a nationwide mobilisation (Fromm 1941; cf. Braune 2020; McLaughlin 1996; Sakurai

2020). In addition, in Fromm's terms fascism is interpreted as a form of authoritarianism, that is as a pathological orientation and way of ruling that are built on 'somasochism', therefore as a pathological symbiosis whereby sadistic and masochistic desires instigate a violent form of politics (Fromm 1941: Chs. 5 and 6).⁵ On this view, it is argued that although Fromm had based the causes of fascism heavily on the authoritarian personality in his seminal work *Escape from Freedom*, he incorporated into his own theory of fascism some other character orientations such as narcissism and necrophilia through associating fascist politics with chauvinism and ethnonationalism in his later contributions (Fromm 1964; 1973; 2011 [1976]). This means that in his later years Fromm came to focus more on fascist momentum under the capitalist economy that is founded on the narcissistic and necrophilous orientations (1964; 2011 [1976]).

Fromm's conception of fascism is characterised by a socio-psychological, theoretical framework that goes into detail about socio-economic structures by use of Freudian psychoanalysis. However, it also focuses on the modern concept of capitalism as does Griffin's, that is to say they both find the capitalist economy a basis for fascist politics.⁶ Nevertheless, I discern contemporary theoretical relevance, especially for advanced countries, more distinctly in Fromm's conception of fascism. Fromm's standpoint, 'a pathological orientation and way of ruling that are built on "somasochism"', seems much more pertinent to politics today than Griffin's, 'revolutionary form of ultra-nationalism that attempts to realize the myth of the regenerated nation'. Indeed, it does not appear that each of the existing political forms that can be considered in line with the concept of fascism today takes a revolutionary form for the purpose of founding a nation that seeks to realise 'socio-political and cultural modernity', resting on a specific nationalist ideology. It does rather seem that they are all unconsciously in somasochistic, symbiotic relations simply for the purpose of gratifying *narcissistic desires* (Kellner 2018; Sakurai 2020; cf. Traverso 2019). The latter is indeed a precise account of how politics in the genealogy of fascism flourishes in the current political climate in Frommian psychoanalytic socio-theoretical terms.

Enzo Traverso, a notable theorist of fascism, amplifies its concept most appropriately in the current far-right political landscape.⁷

He applies the word ‘postfascism’, which is separate from fascism in general, and tackles far-right issues with a focus on *involuntary* and *postideological* effects while keeping a firm grip on the notion as we shall see later in the section titled ‘Theoretical Potential of Fromm’s Social Theory of Narcissism in an Analysis of Far-Right Politics’ (Traverso 2019: 3–39; cf. Sakurai 2020; 2021). It seems that Traverso’s conception of postfascism aligns well with Fromm’s conception of fascism in the context of research on recent far-right political movements as they both stress unconscious, postideological and non-violent facets of fascism from a Marxist angle.⁸

In short, Fromm’s theoretical model of narcissism sheds considerable light on fascist structures and even those of politics today. As we will see later, however, it is argued that Fromm did not manage to associate narcissism with fascism adequately, or rather, this may simply insinuate that the linkage between those has not been readily acknowledged sufficiently in Fromm research. On the basis of this theoretical concern, I will attempt to link narcissism to fascist politics in Frommian socio-theoretical terms *through not involving the concept of authoritarianism*, and to reveal the applicability of Fromm’s theory of narcissism in the context of postfascism, meaning twenty-first century fascism, thereby formulating a Frommian critical social theory of narcissism and confirming its relevance for today.

Fromm’s Theory of Narcissism: A Cross- and Interdisciplinary Concept

The issue of Fromm’s theory of narcissism is not addressed sufficiently even in the context of Fromm research. Moreover, it has been almost completely disregarded by the mainstream of psychoanalysis, as mentioned above. The possible primary reason for this disregard is due to the ‘cross-disciplinary, multi-layered structure of the theory’, an interdisciplinary structure pertaining to both psychoanalytic and socio-theoretical frameworks that confuses contemporary scholars who specialise in a discipline (Sakurai 2020: 180). In addition, it is due to the fact that Fromm’s psychoanalytic theory particularly emphasises a ‘negative impact of the marketplace mentality’ on human psychology (Lesser 2002; cf. Sakurai 2018a: 149).⁹

Despite this, there exist Fromm scholars, including psychoanalysts, who have highly evaluated Fromm's conception of narcissism (Bacciagaluppi 1993; 2012; Bacciagaluppi and Biancoli 1993; Cheliotis 2012; Deguchi 2019; Funk 1993; 1994; 2000; Kellner 2018; Sakurai 2018a; 2018b; 2020). In particular, Marco Bacciagaluppi (1993) stresses its relevance at three levels: theoretical, socio-pathological and clinical. In Fromm's social theory, narcissism indeed assumes the role of a 'character structure' on a socio-pathological level (Bacciagaluppi 1993: 93; cf. Sakurai 2018a; 2018b; 2020). On this basis, Fromm links narcissism to market society with regard to their respective social functions. However, this linkage has given rise to the perplexities of his theory of narcissism and psychoanalytic theory, which have resulted in those theories being disdained by contemporary researchers in many disciplinary fields as well as by psychoanalysts in general, as noted above. In other words, the scheme of his psychoanalytic theory, as well as that of his theory of narcissism, has been considered outside the scope of their disciplines due to its extensive interdisciplinarity confusing them.

Narcissism as Selfishness: A Psychoanalytic Concept

Fromm's conception of narcissism originates in Freud's. Freud's following definition of it may be most relevant to Fromm: '[n]arcissism . . . would not be a perversion, but the libidinal complement to the egoism of the instinct of self-preservation, a measure of which may justifiably be attributed to every living creature' (Freud 2001 [1914]: 73–74). Perhaps, this had affected Fromm significantly, and he thereby started thinking of narcissism in line with egoism, particularly with 'selfishness' (Fromm 1962 [1956]); cf. Cheliotis 2012; Sakurai 2018a; 2018b; 2020). As we shall see below, however, Fromm resulted in taking a view completely opposite to Freud's: whilst self-love is a key element of love, narcissism rather has detrimental features to it (1956 [1955]; 1962 [1956]; 1971 [1947]; cf. Deguchi 2019).

Fromm considers narcissism as 'selfishness', a withdrawal of one's love from others whereby one turns it towards oneself (1962 [1956]: 60–61; cf. Sakurai 2018a: 49–50). In other words, it is, in his view, one's desire that makes one unable to love others as well as oneself, and is separate from 'self-love' (Fromm 1941: 116; 1956 [1955]: 36; 1962 [1956]: 60–61; 1971 [1947]: 131). This is

characteristically described by Fromm's words: 'While on the surface it seems that [narcissistic] persons are very much in love with themselves, they actually are not fond of themselves, and their narcissism – like selfishness – is an overcompensation for the basic lack of self-love' (1941: 116). With regard to the reason for this essential lack, Fromm gives a detailed account of it as follows.

Narcissism can then be described as a state of experience in which only the person himself, his body, his needs, his feelings, his thoughts, his property, everything and everybody pertaining to him are experienced as fully real, while everybody and everything that does not form part of the person or is not an object of his needs is not interesting, is not fully real, is perceived only by intellectual recognition, while affectively without weight and color. (1973: 201)

From this perspective, Fromm infers that, '*[s]elfishness and self-love, far from being identical, are actually opposites*' (1962 [1956]: 60), on which basis, in his theoretical scheme, narcissism is seen essentially as negative in a humanist sense.

Benign and Malignant Narcissism: A Pathological Concept

In addition to a psychoanalytic interpretation, Fromm takes a pathological view on narcissism in the forms of benign and malignant narcissism in dialectical terms (1964: Ch. 4). This kind of dialectical mechanism is best illustrated by the fact that a disease, whether physical or psychological, often undergoes the changeable course of good and bad conditions in turn. In pathological terms, Fromm defines the benign form as 'self-checking' and the malignant form as 'not self-limiting' (1964: 77). As he puts it, '[i]n the benign form the object of narcissism is the result of a person's effort', while '[i]n the case of malignant narcissism, [it] is not anything the person does or produces, but something he *has* . . . ' and 'thus, is not self-limiting, and in consequence . . . crudely solipsistic as well as xenophobic' (1964: 77).¹⁰ It is anticipated that the very malignant type will bring on far-right politics embracing ethnonationalism and xenophobia.

Social Narcissism: A Sociological Concept

Furthermore, Fromm divides narcissism into two kinds in terms of 'biological and sociological functions' as he calls them: individual

and social narcissism – he often replaces the latter with ‘group narcissism’ (1964: 72–73, 78; cf. Sakurai 2018a: 166). In his theory, this difference is understood quantitatively, that is to say the former narcissism is *analogous* to the latter one (Fromm 1964: 78; cf. Sakurai 2018a: 51–54). In other words, these are quantitatively separate from each other in the perspectives of individual and social psychology (cf. Funk 1990). This is a crucial feature in Fromm’s psychoanalytic theory as the quantitative difference attaching to both psychology and social psychology enables Fromm to discern diseases not only on an individual level but also on a social level. This explains why Fromm devoted himself to the narcissistic orientation specifically in terms of social narcissism. In fact, he is considered not simply a psychoanalyst but rather a ‘sociological psychoanalyst’ (Grey 1992; cf. Sakurai 2018a: 158), as he himself shows in his 1932 pioneering essay ‘The Method and Function of an Analytic Social Psychology’, which incorporated provocatively Freud’s psychoanalysis into Marx’s historical materialism from a sociological angle. (Fromm 1970 [1932]).

Group Narcissism: The Pathological Development of Politics

The concept of ‘group narcissism’ is underpinned by Fromm’s socio-psychological method founded on psychoanalysis (Fromm 1964; 1973; 1980b [1979]). It is believed that it is associated in some way with aggression and thus construed in a pathological dimension. As Fromm puts it, that ‘is one of the most important sources of human aggression, and yet this, like all other forms of defensive aggression, is a reaction to an attack on vital interests’ (1973: 205). In fact, Fromm argues that malignant/extreme narcissism contributes to wanton destruction, referencing Adolf Hitler and Heinrich Himmler (1973: Chs. 12 and 13).¹¹

Essentially, group narcissism works in three ways: in the ‘narcissistic cathexis’,¹² in the dialectical, developmental process of benign and malignant narcissism and in malignant group satisfaction (Fromm 1964: 78–79; cf. Sakurai 2018a: 51–52). The first way signifies the mechanism of how a group is provided by its members with energies of either benign or malignant narcissism by which the group can operate, for example, with the reaction of rage. The second way is expounded by Fromm’s account that group narcissism becomes ‘compatible with social co-operation’ if its needs are

oriented to productive activity in benign terms, while ‘narcissistic passion’ is induced if those are absorbed into a group’s ‘splendour’, ‘its past achievement’ and the ‘physique of its members’ in malignant terms (1964: 73–78). The third way demonstrates why extreme forms of narcissism such as political fanaticism, chauvinism and ethnonationalism are always supported to a large extent by malignant narcissistic satisfaction, which is due to the fact that it is the sole contentment of group members.

The above mechanisms of group narcissism are backed up by those of individual narcissism on the grounds that the former narcissism operates by offering individual narcissistic energy to a group. However, what should be most focused on with respect to the issue of group narcissism is rather its pathological functions, for narcissism at the social level often becomes malignant in Fromm’s theoretical framework – this is another reason why the above second and third ways are quite relevant to the group type of narcissism in a socio-pathological sense. In particular, he stresses the four characteristics of group narcissism in a pathological dimension: the ‘lack of objectivity and rational judgement’, the necessity of ‘narcissistic satisfaction’, the ‘reaction of rage’ and narcissistic ‘symbiosis and identification’ (1964: 85–87; cf. Sakurai 2018a: 52–53; 2018b: 152). In these ways, narcissism becomes *pathologically* associated with politics, as suggested below. This is primarily due to the fact that, as Fromm puts it, ‘[in]asmuch as the group as a whole requires group narcissism for its survival, it will further narcissistic attitudes and confer upon them the qualification of being particularly virtuous’ (1964: 80). To put it simply, a group type of narcissism is forced to become more and more narcissistic because it needs the cathexis of individual narcissism to be alive. In Fromm’s theory, the mechanism of group narcissism runs almost exclusively by means of malignant group satisfaction since under social conditions of market capitalism, in which people require excessively high narcissistic satisfaction, the dialectic of benign and malignant narcissism is most often affected primarily by pathological political movements such as ethnonationalism and chauvinism.¹³ In the traditional understanding of Fromm’s theoretical scheme, it can be argued that when here lies an authoritarian socio-character structure, the movements result in instigating a fascist type of politics. Regardless of this, capitalist market society hinges upon the mechanisms of

narcissism, a character structure of its society, and thus the people's *raison d'être* is herein displayed solely by their own narcissistic orientation which drives the functioning of the market economy.

As mentioned earlier, it is possible to discern the development of fascist politics in the theoretical system of Fromm's theory of narcissism. A political formulation in terms of narcissism is most reasonably delineated by Fromm's words that, '[g]roup narcissism is a phenomenon of the greatest political significance', and that '... if he [a narcissist] can identify with his nation, or can transfer his personal narcissism to the nation, then he is everything', thereby becoming omnipotent through finding himself 'the member of the most wonderful group on earth' – these views are indeed embraced by his political theory of narcissism (1980b [1979]: 51–52; cf. Sakurai 2018a: Ch. 4, Sect. 4.1.2; Thompson 2020: 39). According to Fromm, a malignant type of group narcissism is essentially in danger of provoking political behaviour attaching to 'fanaticism' and 'destructiveness' on the grounds that it is characterised by lack of self-control implicating that of objectivity and rational judgement and by a sense of total power whereby one feels like everything – in fact, Fromm regards an uncontrolled state of mind and sadistic omnipotence as main factors in those two pathologies (1964: 83; cf. 1973: 300–301). It follows that malignant narcissism transfers its own need to 'nation', 'race', 'religion' and so forth, thereby begetting political fanaticism (Fromm 1964: 73). Fromm argues:

If . . . [a] narcissistically inflated group does not have available a minority which is sufficiently helpless to lend itself as an object for narcissistic satisfaction, the group's narcissism will easily lead to the wish for military conquests; this was the path of pan-Germanism and pan-Slavism before 1914. In both cases the respective nations were endowed with the role of being the 'chosen nation', superior to all others, and hence justified in attacking those who did not accept their superiority. . . . their fanaticism was certainly one factor which contributed to the outbreak of the war. Beyond this, however, one must not forget that once a war has started, the various governments try to arouse national narcissism as a necessary psychological condition for the successful waging of the war. (1964: 86)

Although in this context Fromm refrains from the use of the *term* 'fascism', a combination of narcissistic, necrophilous and sado-masochistic character structures does clearly show itself to be the

socio-psychological base of fascism in Fromm's theoretical system: the 'syndrome of decay' (1964: 108–114).¹⁴ In other words, Fromm considers narcissism as a certain factor in spawning fascist politics despite the fact that it does not specifically characterise fascism in terms of his characterological theory. In fact, it is argued that in his later years he came to believe that the source of fascist types of politics is not exactly equal to authoritarianism resting on sadomasochism (e.g. Fromm 1964; 1973). Add to this that a factor in fascist formulations is indeed explicable by means of Western Marxism, particularly by the concept of 'dialectic of enlightenment', which sees a fascist development in line with a contradiction in economic rationality (Adorno and Horkheimer 2002). Furthermore, it should be pointed out that there have existed sufficient socio-pathological milieux in which people have nurtured the desire to depend exclusively upon authoritative belongings such as nation, race and religion in the context of mass society even in the postwar period. It goes without saying that these conditions entail narcissism. These issues are of particular importance in the sense that contemporary market-oriented society is structured by a narcissistic orientation, as can be seen in Fromm's social theory (Fromm 1980 [1979]: 53–54). Narcissism does indeed control everything wherever people's life rests on the 'separateness and antagonism of individuals toward each other' and the 'worship of industrial production', for these are the essential conditions fomenting narcissism (Fromm 1980 [1979]: 53–54). In the context of contemporary mass society, group narcissism flourishes, as

[a] highly narcissistic group is eager to have a leader with whom it can identify itself. The leader is then admired by the group which projects its narcissism onto him. In the very act of submission to the powerful leader, which is in depth an act of symbiosis and identification, the narcissism of the individual is transferred onto the leader. The greater the leader, the greater the follower. Personalities who as individuals are particularly narcissistic are the most qualified to fulfil this function. The narcissism of the leader who is convinced of his greatness, and who has no doubts, is precisely what attracts the narcissism of those who submit to him. The half-insane leader is often the most successful one until his lack of objective judgement, his rage reactions in consequence of any set-back, his need to keep up the image of omnipotence may provoke him to make mistakes which lead to his destruction. But there are always gifted half-psychotics at hand to satisfy the demands of a narcissistic mass. (Fromm 1964: 87)

Similarly, in contemporary mass society that alienation underlies and that isolates people from each other, narcissism is deployed for the formulation of pathological politics, from which a fascist politics can be expected to emerge (Sakurai 2018a: 53–56; 2018b: 152–153). This shows precisely why fascism does thrive even without any authoritarian character structure in Frommian terms.

To be sure, it is worth referencing authoritarianism in the context of US Trumpism to portray it as a kind of fascism (e.g. Boggs 2018; Connolly 2017; Giroux 2018; Stanley 2018). However, it indeed appears irrelevant to expect the authoritarian orientation to be a *decisive* factor in the emergence of fascism in the contemporary political landscape. On this view, it may prove to be relevant to point out that Fromm focuses more on narcissism in the development of fascist politics, as can be seen in his later works, especially in *The Heart of Man* (1964). It seems that in politics nowadays narcissism does rather most often play a primary role in political formulations involving the category of fascism. In my view, the overarching point regarding our politics is deciphered by how authoritarian *needs* flourish in relation to political conditions built on narcissism, and therefore not by whether a social character consists of an authoritarian orientation – for this reason, any issues of Fromm's social and political theories, needless to say, must rather be tackled through observing actual political dynamics meticulously when one seeks to see these in terms of the contemporary relevance of the theories. Hence, the character structure of narcissism is of enormous relevance to social and political theory, especially to the theory of fascism.

Fromm's Conception of Alienation

The concept of narcissism, which takes on these multiple disciplinary facets, such as those of psychoanalysis, sociology and politics, becomes entangled in the theoretical functions of the concept of alienation, a philosophical concept that has its derivation primarily in Marx's contributions (Sayers 2011; Schacht 1994). In what follows, I will first of all go into detail about the concept and Fromm's conception of it briefly and then depict how Fromm's theory of narcissism operates in the philosophical context of alienation.

The Philosophical Sense of Alienation

Fromm absorbs the concept of alienation and its theoretical relevance almost exclusively from Marx (Fromm 1980a [1962]: Ch. 6; 2013 [1961]; Marx 2013 [1844]; cf. Lio 1989; Sakurai 2018b; 2020). In Marx's sense, alienation signifies a socio-pathological phenomenon wherein human beings come into existence as an object of capital in the system of capitalism.¹⁵ In this social condition, humans feel unbearable psychological pain in the sense that they are forced to live on an excessively passive level, which means that they become 'labor-power' which simply generates 'surplus value' (Marx 2013 [1844]; 1992 [1867]). Marx says:

alienated labor turns the *species-life* of man, and also nature as his mental species-property, into an *alien* being and into a *means* for his *individual existence*. It alienates from man his own body, external nature, his mental life and his *human* life . . . A direct consequence of the alienation of man from the product of his labor, from his life activity and from his species life is that *man is alienated* from other *men*. When man confronts himself he also confronts other *men*. What is true of man's relationship to his work, to the product of his work and to himself, is also true of his relationship to other men, to their labor and to the objects of their labor. In general, the statement that man is alienated from his species life means that each man is alienated from others, and that each of the others is likewise alienated from human life. (2013 [1844]: 88)

The Marketing Orientation and the Having Mode

Fromm (1971 [1947]) fleshes out Marx's theory of alienation through referring to his own concept of 'marketing orientation'. In his view, the orientation is a character structure that has emerged in modern time as a 'modern product' fulfilling the 'economic function of the market' (1971 [1947]: 67, 81). This indicates that the market mechanism based on capitalism has transformed the character structure according to the way that human beings have adapted dynamically to the mechanism. The pivotal theoretical implication of the marketing orientation, as Fromm says, is '*I am as you desire me*' (1971 [1947]: 73). As he puts it, 'what matters is . . . his [a marketing-oriented person's] success in the process of selling them [commodities]' (1971 [1947]: 72) and 'the experience of oneself as a commodity and of one's value as exchange value' (1971 [1947]: 68). This means precisely that one sells oneself as labour power,

that is as wage labour. To put it simply, human beings have been reduced to a socio-economic function of capital that entangles the whole of human life. As such, the marketing orientation has become contemporary people's character structure.

In addition, the marketing orientation bears profoundly on Fromm's other unique concept of 'having mode' (Fromm 2011 [1976]). This is indeed the counterpart concept of 'being mode',¹⁶ and it is believed that these concepts owe their inspiration to Marx and Meister Eckhart (Fromm 2005 [1997]: Pt. III; 2011 [1976]: Chs. 3, 7; cf. Sakurai 2018a: 168). The having mode, says Fromm, characterises industrial society that he calls 'acquisitive society' (2011 [1976]: 57).¹⁷ As Fromm phrases it, '[t]he nature of the having mode of existence follows from the nature of private property' (2011 [1976]: 63), and at the same time, 'to consume is one form of having, and perhaps the most important one for today's affluent industrial societies' (2011 [1976]: 23). In other words, the having mode captures the essence of the contemporary way of life, in which the vast majority of people aim to consume as a matter of first priority, thereby indulging their own narcissistic desires through consumption.¹⁸ From this perspective, contemporary people under these social conditions crave to sell themselves for the purpose of *not simply surviving but rather consuming*; it appears that the latter is more worthily deserved by them in contemporary life. This is why the problematic social condition of alienation never changes, as it is built on the capitalist market mechanism that leads people to devote themselves to consumption, and contemporary capitalism thereby works. Also, it is, on this basis, why Fromm requires them to transform the having mode into the being mode, a mode wherein 'one is joyous, employs one's faculties productively, [and] is *oned* to the world' (2011 [1976]: 16). From these points of view, contemporary people satisfy their own individual needs with the having mode while satisfying society's needs with the marketing orientation by responding to what both the needs are driven to do. They thereby contribute to bolstering a socio-character structure inducing alienation that requires them to undertake a passive role in the system of market-based capitalism. In Fromm's terms, alienation is supported, and its social condition is regenerated, by both society and the individual, while those both slake their respective desires in the way that the latter

adapts to the former and internalises its needs regardless of social classes. In this respect, it is admitted that individuals are self-destructive due to their extreme passive position under alienation, as can be seen even in Fromm's theoretical framework. As such, Fromm updated Marx's view on alienation, thereby seeking to demonstrate that 'the clerk, the salesman, the executive, are even more alienated today than the skilled manual worker', and that 'as far as consumption is concerned, there is no difference between manual workers and the members of the bureaucracy' (2013 [1961]: 47–48).

How Does Fromm's Conception of Narcissism Function in the Philosophical Framework of Alienation?

How do we expect narcissism to emerge under social conditions of alienation from the perspective of Fromm's conception of alienation? What I can make clear through this exploration is simply the essential, functional link between alienation and narcissism in a social dimension with the assistance of Fromm's social theory. As we saw earlier, narcissism, in his social theory, serves as a character structure of society and the character structure of market capitalist society. This indicates that Fromm's conception of narcissism characterises mass society throughout the twentieth century and even in the twenty-first century, and that its socio-economic character structure is based on market capitalism causing alienation. In addition, Fromm's social theory of narcissism implies that in conjunction with the social functions of alienation, contemporary society evolves the 'dialectic of narcissism', a developmental path of social narcissism (Sakurai 2018a: Ch. 6, Sect. 6.3.2.5; 2018b: 150).

The dialectic of narcissism, in Frommian terms, signifies that while human life in the system of market capitalism hinges heavily on the narcissistic desires of human beings, they are required to overcome their own narcissism. From a Frommian perspective, however, it seems possible to discern this dialectic at least in three respects: first, in the dichotomy between the necessity of narcissistic desires and that of overcoming those; second, in the dichotomy between consumption and alienation; and third, in the dichotomy

between democratic and fascist paths in terms of self-love and narcissism. On the above second issue, the dichotomy is construed as dialectical on the grounds that the more human beings come to depend on consumption, the more firmly alienation, the very condition by which they are troubled, can be buttressed, since the latter social function nowadays rests largely on the former one and emanates from the idea of capital that underpins the market economy under capitalism. Indeed, people are almost completely unaware of this dialectical process.

A narcissistic socio-character structure encourages people to develop narcissistic needs under the socio-economic conditions of alienation because consumption indulging their narcissism is herein their sole contentment. For this reason, both narcissism and alienation, in Fromm's social theory, are profoundly associated with each other, or rather, they reinforce one another. From an ideological perspective, these two societal factors therefore bolster the status quo of contemporary society while reinforcing each other. On this basis, social narcissism undergoes a dialectical path.

The Economic Functions of Narcissism

As Fromm argues, what one owns, namely 'property', typifies people's basic desire in the capitalist system, which fact braces and regenerates the condition of alienation (2011 [1976]: 63). Due to this social condition, narcissism functions quite negatively in the sense that the people stimulate narcissistic needs under prevailing social conditions of consumerism, precisely as they cultivate and foster a sense of satisfaction, called the having mode, that requires one to be narcissistic by adapting dynamically to a society that makes itself work in the market mechanism.¹⁹ In this society, people satisfy their own needs called 'narcissism' by fulfilling a societal role with the aid of a marketing orientation, and both the individual's and society's needs are thereby gratified.²⁰ For these reasons, for Fromm narcissism is an obstacle to a humanistic society that seeks to augment democracy. It is, he believes, a character structure that operates the 'separateness and antagonism of individuals toward each other' and the 'worship of industrial production', both of which rather work quite adversely for democratic politics (1980 [1979]: 53–54). The people are thus required to curb and then overcome narcissism in Fromm's view.

The Political Functions of Narcissism

If the mechanism of these economic functions of narcissism prospers further, as can be seen in Fromm's theory of narcissism, then politics will be affected by it unfavourably in terms of Frommian democracy.²¹ In this case, politics undergoes a pathological developmental process on the basis of the functioning of malignant narcissism. In this context, people naturally require politics to reduce economic, asymmetrical balance of power existing between the upper and middle classes and the working class under market capitalism, which forces individuals to satisfy their own lives solely through consumption. They, ironically, become herein more and more driven by the desire to consume while forced by the market economy to embrace this mechanism, because it is the only way wherein they can satiate their desires under the social conditions of market-based capitalism. For this reason, people who cannot be satisfied are bound to require a political change. In a market society, people are theoretically free, but practically not free, to be independent, for they essentially cannot live without dependence on socio-economic systems.²² This psychological condition of society is metaphorically elucidated by Fromm. He argues:

Primary bonds once severed cannot be mended; once paradise is lost, man cannot return to it. There is only one possible, productive solution for the relationship of individualised man with the world: his active solidarity with all men and his spontaneous activity, love and work, which unite him again with the world, not by primary ties but as a free and independent individual. However, if the economic, social and political conditions on which the whole process of human individuation depends, [*sic*] do not offer a basis for the realisation of individuality in the sense just mentioned, while at the same time people have lost those ties which gave them security, this lag makes freedom an unbearable burden. It then becomes identical with doubt, with a kind of life which lacks meaning and direction. Powerful tendencies arise to escape from this kind of freedom into submission or some kind of relationship to man and the world which promises relief from uncertainty, even if it deprives the individual of his freedom. (1941: 36–37)

The overarching point is that in Fromm's socio-theoretical scheme the social conditions of alienation, which leans on the market capitalist mechanism, trigger a malignant type of group narcissism and prompt society to fall into a negative spiral of the recreation of this

cycle that results in the functioning of politics opposite to Frommian humanism.²³ In a political formulation, this group type of malignant narcissism comes into being as pathological political movements such as racist chauvinism and extreme fanaticism through 'social transference';²⁴ this mechanism is indeed explained precisely by Fromm's social theory of narcissism (Fromm 1964; cf. Sakurai 2018a; 2018b; 2020). However, the linkage between narcissism and fascism has not yet been readily acknowledged in the theoretical scheme. This bespeaks the necessity of a systematic account of the connection between those two theoretical components involving the essence of Fromm's theory of narcissism so that it can be an asset to the theory of fascism.

Theoretical Potential of Fromm's Social Theory of Narcissism in an Analysis of Far-Right Politics

Fromm's theory of narcissism has great potential to unravel some concrete political phenomena: ethnonationalism, chauvinism, populism and postfascism.²⁵ I will offer some suggestions for an analysis of those political ideas while drawing attention to the theoretical implications of his conception of narcissism in terms of liberal democracy.

Ethnonationalism

Ethnonationalism emanates from a political way of thinking with particular emphasis on homogeneity. Kinship in the sense of ethnicity is therefore most stressed in the foundations of a nation-state in the theoretical system of this concept. Given this fact, ethnonationalism is naturally expected to thrive in the right-wing political context. Theoretically, this type of nationalism flourishes everywhere politics is structured on the basis of the nation that shares the same language, culture and history because it is important that all ethnic groups in a nation should claim themselves to be that – thus everywhere over the world.²⁶

According to Fromm's theory of narcissism, 'national narcissism', which serves to cause a battle between countries as seen characteristically in the two world wars, can become associated specifically with ethnonationalism (Fromm 1964: 85).²⁷ In particular,

in the social framework of liberal democratic states, ethnonationalist politics concerns not solely how narcissism works together with alienation, but rather how it fulfils malignant functions in conjunction with nationalism – it is argued that ethnonationalism is a malignant type of nationalism *per se* in a Frommian sense. The scheme of Fromm's theory of narcissism has potential to unravel some of the contemporary phenomena involving ethnic nationalism from a pathological perspective. Additionally, it links narcissism to the causes of fascism precisely from this point of view.

Chauvinism

Chauvinism, derived from the French soldier Nicolas Chauvin, always betokens extreme forms of patriotism and political movements that can sometimes become entangled in ethnocentrism, nationalism and nativism – in this respect, it also concerns ethnonationalism. Fanaticism, extreme beliefs or behaviour involving politics or religion with enthusiasm, particularly characterises some of the salient implications of chauvinism. Chauvinist movements emerge where politics takes on patriotic features generally in the context of military mobilisation.²⁸

In the current political landscape, Fromm's theory of narcissism has the potential to cast light on chauvinist political movements enmeshed in populist phenomena such as the National Rally and AfD (*Alternative für Deutschland*). To be sure, it is conceded that the concept of populism, an 'authoritarian form of democracy' that emerges as a 'counteroffensive reaction of populations who are virtually unrepresented', theoretically best functions in present social contexts in relation to those political movements (Finchelstein 2017; Müller 2016).²⁹ This is because it captures the essence of the current political climate of which anti-pluralist, political ingredients have burst out, especially in advanced countries. Unlike the concept of populism, Fromm's conception of narcissism does reveal socio-psychological, pathological factors in the formulation of patriotic politics even in the context of chauvinism.

Populism

Surprisingly, Fromm never brings the concept of populism to any of his issues (Sakurai 2020: 188). The reason for this, I believe, is due to the socio-historical conditions in which he found himself

operating. The Nazi movement was indeed burgeoning where he lived when he was putting his energies into research on the authoritarian personality in the early and mid-1930s, from which perspective it is natural that he should rather focus exclusively on the concept of fascism as an extension of his analysis of authoritarianism. Although this does not signify that Fromm was unaware of or oblivious to populist phenomena, it might seem that his political theory as well as his theory of narcissism is not really suitable for analyses of populism. This is chiefly due to his focus on socio-psychological factors that draws particular attention to the socio-characteristic features of politics such as fascism, rather than to the pluralist features of politics involving quantitative political elements that populism showcases, for example, a difference in political support between majority and minority. However, Fromm's theory of narcissism goes into detail even about populism mainly in pathological terms by focusing on socio-psychological features and displays its own *raison d'être* precisely in the sense that narcissism nowadays plays a far-reaching role regardless of place, specifically in contemporary market society (Kellner 2018; Sakurai 2020).

Postfascism

It is believed that the word 'postfascism' was introduced after World War II.³⁰ Traverso (2019) recently put flesh on the bones of the concept of the word in more genealogical terms. The essence of the concept is offered by his account that 'postfascism belongs to a particular regime of historicity – the beginning of the twenty-first century – which explains its erratic, unstable, and often contradictory ideological context, in which antinomic political philosophies mix together' (2019: 7). To summarise, postfascism is a political movement that extinguishes democracy 'from within' in impolitical and postideological ways through taking over the essence of fascism (Traverso 2019: 5). In other words, it is characterised by the pathological desire to destroy the cardinal processes of democratic deliberation through transforming the theoretical elements of traditional fascism in a way that preserves 'a plebiscitary model of democracy' (Traverso 2019: 28).

Problems with postfascist politics, the corollary of liberal democracy, can be illuminated by Fromm's social theory with a focus on the narcissistic character structures of society, a cross- and

interdisciplinary theory that, focusing on socio-psychological determinants, untangles the essence of far-right political movements as an extension of a fascist type of political formulation. It is indeed possible to discern Frommian works that tackle current far-right issues by bringing intense focus on socio-psychological aspects involving the genealogy of fascism (Kellner 2017; 2018; Peters 2020; Sakurai 2018b; 2020; 2021). In Fromm's theoretical framework, democracy and fascism are construed provocatively in dialectical terms (Fromm 1941; 2011 [1976]; cf. Sakurai 2018a; 2018b; 2020). Arguably, postfascist types of politics are scrutinised in exactly the context of liberal democracies by Fromm's social theory, especially by his theory of narcissism.

Conclusion: Towards a Frommian Critical Social Theory of Narcissism

As we have seen, it is possible to discern the theoretical link between Fromm's theory of narcissism and the conceptual significance of alienation as well as his theory of the latter philosophical concept in the framework of his social theory. Arguably, the relevance of the former theory is best summarised by his theory of alienation. On the other hand, however, Fromm's important socio-theoretical undertaking, an amalgamation of his conception of narcissism into his theory of fascism, is still underappreciated. Significantly, this cross-disciplinary standpoint elucidates fascism without involving the authoritarian character structure in the mechanism wherein narcissism operates in the formulation of fascist politics. However, this will be achieved adequately by refining Fromm's theory of narcissism in the context of the theory of fascism.

Apart from these, Fromm's contributions imply that the core of his intellectual backbone is precisely Marx and Freud. Fromm's oeuvre works by compensating for the two theories' defects from each perspective and aims to establish the 'new society' that fosters one's individuality properly on the basis of 'productive activity' (Fromm 2011 [1976]: Chs. 1–3, 5).³¹ This is indeed primarily why Fromm is a social theorist whose *raison d'être* rests on sociological psychoanalysis, rather than a social psychologist meaning an empirical scientist or a simple psychoanalyst.

I conclude that in Fromm's social theory the concept of narcissism runs on a socio-pathological level in the way in which it synchronises with alienation, a social phenomenon that fulfils its important functions in conjunction with the marketing orientation under the conditions of a market society, and therefore that the concept plays an overriding role in his theory of alienation. Despite the discernible potential of his social and political theory of narcissism, however, Fromm remained in the dark about some vital issues of fascism in relation to narcissism. Perhaps these socio-theoretical themes will be tackled most adequately in terms of postfascism through seeking the relevance of a Frommian critical social theory of narcissism for our society.

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Notes

1. This methodological article builds on a conference paper entitled 'The Socio-Psychological Base of Contemporary Fascism in the World of Liberal Democracy' (2018), published in *Fromm Forum* 22, and focuses on the socio-theoretical implications of Fromm's conception of narcissism within the scheme of his theory of alienation – another article that methodologically relies on the paper has already addressed some of the socio-theoretical issues of Fromm's conceptions of narcissism and alienation to some extent in terms of authoritarianism and applied those

- to an analysis of ‘postfascism’ (Sakurai 2020). The article thereby aims to portray the methodological foundations of a Frommian critical social theory of narcissism *without referencing authoritarianism* and confirm its relevance for analyses of current far-right politics, especially for the theory of fascism.
2. Despite this poor disciplinary condition, works on the topic have gradually appeared, most notably in the field of social theory (Cheliotis 2012; Deguchi 2019; Durkin 2014; Kellner 2018; Sakurai 2018a; 2020; Thorpe 2016).
 3. It is worth noting that Critical Theorists, among them Herbert Marcuse, also apply similar methods (see, e.g. Kellner 1984).
 4. I have discussed some of the key issues of traditional fascism along with populism (Sakurai 2020).
 5. Alzo David-West (2013, 2014), while referencing Fromm, analyses left-wing authoritarianism in line with fascism. His work seems relevant even in understanding left-wing populism as seen in advanced countries, such as Corbynism and Mélenchonism. In Frommian terms, for example, Sakurai (2021) reveals the analytical relevance of the authoritarian left through scrutinising German right-wing authoritarianism. Fromm, in his later works (1973, 1984), has indeed left some fruitful ideas about the nature of left-wing authoritarianism.
 6. Generally, capitalism is considered as a basis for fascism, particularly in the Western Marxist tradition (e.g. Adorno and Horkheimer 2002; Fromm 1964; 2011 [1976]; Marcuse 2002 [1964]; Traverso 2019; cf. Griffin 2004; Passmore 2014 [2002]; Renton 1999).
 7. I discuss some of the key issues of Traverso’s conception of postfascism (Sakurai 2020; 2021).
 8. On this, see research on some of the current far-right topics that is conducted by means of the application of this method (Sakurai 2020; 2021).
 9. The marketplace mentality is one’s specific socio-economic mindset that leads one to compete to buy and sell goods and services. Fromm’s marketing orientation is associated with this in economic terms involving instrumental rationality, but differs from it in theoretical terms internalising Marxist and Freudian theoretical frameworks.
 10. Fromm refers, for example, to Hitler as an exemplar of malignant (extreme) narcissists (1964: Ch. 4; 1973: 406–407).
 11. Fromm offers some examples of malignant narcissism and aggression, among them Joseph Stalin, in addition to Hitler and Himmler (1973: Ch. 11).
 12. Fromm uses this term to elucidate a psychoanalytic function that drives psychological energies (Fromm 1964: Ch. 4).
 13. This is exemplified by the rise of right-wing, nationalist movements that came to pervade the recent political climate in advanced countries, such as US Trumpism and the French National Rally (e.g. Boggs 2018; Connolly 2017; Giroux 2018; Kellner 2017; 2018; Stanley 2018; Traverso 2019).
 14. Both ‘necrophilia’ and ‘somasochism’ perform the functions of their own respective character structures in Fromm’s theoretical framework (e.g. Fromm 1941; 1964; 1973). Fromm defines the former as the ‘love of the dead’, which is composed of ‘sexual necrophilia’, a ‘man’s desire to have sexual intercourse’, and of ‘nonsexual necrophilia’, the ‘desire to handle, to be near to, and to gaze at corpses, and particularly the desire to disremember them’ (1973: 325). It is regarded as one’s orientation that feels the ‘passionate attraction to all that is dead, decayed, putrid, sickly’ (1973: 332). The necrophilous orientation craves to destroy everything by force and is therefore a major component of destructiveness. Fromm depicts somasochism as a kind of pathological symbiosis between a sadist and a masochist, on which basis they seek to indulge their respective sadistic and masochistic desires, thereby generating authoritarianism – in this respect, both

- sides are considered authoritarian (1941: Chs. 5 and 6). Significantly, Fromm has associated these character features with narcissism, which also functions as a character structure in his theory of fascism, thereby finding Hitler an ideal fascist figure who embodies a combination of those three orientations (1964; 1973).
15. Marx puts forward four kinds of alienation: alienation from the object of labour, that from the activity of labour, that from one's human activity and that of man from man (2013 [1844]: 81–160; cf. Dworkin 2015: Ch. 2).
 16. As Fromm puts it, the 'being mode' is 'the mode of existence in which one neither *has* anything nor *craves* to *have something*, but is joyous, employs one's faculties productively, is *oned to the world*' (2011 [1976]: 16).
 17. The term 'acquisitive society' was coined by Richard Henry Tawney (Tawney 2004 [1920]). This was later fleshed out by Crawford Brough Macpherson in his discussion on possessive individualism (Macpherson 2011 [1962]).
 18. With regard to recent consumer conditions, see, e.g. Bauman 2007 and Giddens 1991.
 19. The 'economic functions of narcissism', on an individual level, overlap to a certain extent with those of the 'individual narcissism of consumerism' as Charles Thorpe calls it (2020: 176).
 20. With regard to the so-called needs of a narcissistic, consumerist society that are ironically self-defeating, it is worth referencing Marcuse's true and false needs: the former needs mean those which 'have an unqualified claim for satisfaction . . . nourishment, clothing and lodging at the attainable level of culture', that is what he calls 'vital needs'; and the latter needs mean those which stem from the expectations of gratification via products, that is 'those which are superimposed upon the individual by particular social interests in his repression' (Marcuse 2002 [1964]: 7–8).
 21. The 'political functions of narcissism' pertain to those of the 'group narcissism of nationalism' as Thorpe calls it (2020: 176). However, the former differs from the latter in the sense that it internalises and emerges from the economic functions of narcissism.
 22. Fromm's idiosyncratic conception of freedom, which is famously proposed as positive and negative freedom in *Escape from Freedom* (1941), is quite useful in understanding this issue in terms of independence and dependence. The negative form of freedom, in his sense, fulfils a primary function in contemporary consumerist society wherein people have relinquished their sense of autonomy and agency. On this basis, Fromm endorses and advocates the positive form of freedom which makes human beings autonomous from systems.
 23. On Fromm's conception of humanism, see, e.g. Durkin 2014; Wilde 2004.
 24. In Fromm's theory, 'social transference' is one's act of identifying oneself with authority or its symbols such as a nation and a political leader on a social level, and is needed to generate a group type of narcissism (Fromm 1980b [1979]: 41, 51–52).
 25. Even some issues of feminist nationalism may be tackled in terms of Fromm's social theory of narcissism. It appears that they are profoundly associated with the essence of far-right political movements that the theory sheds considerable light on, especially under market capitalism – on the concept of feminist nationalism, see, e.g. Herr 2009 and West 1997.
 26. On this, it seems there exists a tremendous amount of research (e.g. Connor 1994; Conversi 2002; Rosman and Rubel 2006).
 27. 'National narcissism' in Fromm's sense is also construed in pathological terms (Fromm 1964: Ch. 4).
 28. Gijsberts et al. 2017, for example, assist in understanding the emergence of those movements.

29. The concept of populism is variable in definition. However, these two theorists seem to have recently been most referred to in the context of research on the theme.
30. Or, more rigorously, the term has come to be applied since the 1990s. It has been referenced by a large number of scholars in the humanities and social sciences, most notably by R. Griffin (1996, 2012), and conceptualised, for example, by the Romanian philosopher Gáspár Miklós Tamás (2000, 2001).
31. 'Productive activity' is about one's ability to connect oneself to the world with the use of 'productive love and thinking' (Fromm, 1971 [1947]; 2011 [1976]).

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