Dynamics of "Conservative" and "Progressive" Narratives in the Era of Digital Transformation in Political Communications

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the distinct characteristics and roles of "conservative" and "progressive" narratives as part of an ambivalent process of diachronically organizing symbolic collective representations and exploring their influence on the political positioning of national communities. The digitalization of political communications has increased the variability of "temporal representations." New approaches are thus needed to frame the conflict between tradition and innovation within the political and cultural dynamics of contemporary actors. Political elites across national communities are influenced by their various perceptions of the pace of political change and their expectations of the "present" and "future." They employ different criteria for what constitutes a "recurrence" or "continuity." It is therefore increasingly important to understand the relationship between "temporal regimes" in political memory and the processes of traditionalization within the binary coding of political communications as "conservative" or "progressive." Temporal regimes in political communications are shaped by a trend toward homogenizing a community's temporal representations, which fosters more stable conditions for integrating perceptions of the past, present, and future. Traditionalization is critical in institutionalizing and maintaining models of political solidarity. It serves as an essential cultural resource for the temporal structuring of the political sphere and countering political inversion and arbitrariness by political actors. The crisis in the temporal regime of the "modern era," as articulated by contemporary globalist elites, has significantly heightened the risks of political asynchronicity within the national

memory of modern communities. Political elites and other actors are increasingly losing the ability to effectively control tradition-making, often replacing it with radical conservative traditionalization or progressivism. Drawing on the theoretical and practical insights of modern cultural sociology and political anthropology, the authors propose new theoretical approaches to understanding the role of temporal dimensions in the reproduction of political order within the context of neoliberal digitalization strategies.

Introduction

Studies are increasingly focusing on the ambivalent opposition between "traditional" and "innovative" elements in the political positioning of modern national communities that has caused by rising conflict-driven differentiation within and polarization of national and international political spaces. These changes are reflected in the dynamics of contemporary political communications. In our view, these phenomena are not solely the result of authoritarian consolidation or the disruptive activities of "invisible elites," as suggested by many political scientists (e.g., Bexell et al., 2022; Dellmuth & Tallberg, 2023); they are also linked to a structural crisis in the "temporal order" of collective representations. Elite articulations and promotion of "traditional-values" narratives has intensified with the growing variability in perceptions of the past, the sense of "unpredictability of the present," and the "uncertainty of the future." Traditionalization is more frequently deployed by elites to stabilize political order and mobilize political actors in response to the growing risks of political decision-making.

The proliferation of "distinctions" in radical digital mobility fractures and disrupts the concept of continuity with the past. The "past" loses its retrospective sequence and certainty, distorting communicative understanding and social continuity. Instead of engaging in a constructive "dialogue with the past," which would symbolically extend that past into the present and future, political actors now increasingly engage in a "digital arrest and capture" of the past, with "nostalgia for the past," and the generational continuity previously central to human communities being lost as a result (Hoskins, 2017).

Positivist sociological literature on the political and cultural dynamics of elites often overlooks how social memory ensures continuity and disruption in the evolution

of political actors. Instead, social memory is reduced to memory politics, typically understood as historical politics. Pragmatism and the "epidemic of progressivism" in the radical liberalization of global political communications have come to represent the "highest rationality," leading to an imbalance of preservation strategies and innovation that has given rise to the spread of "retrotopias," a vision of the present through the lens of a "lost" or "abandoned" restructured past that fails to establish a connection between the present and a constructive future (Bauman, 2017).

The multiplicity of temporal representations highlights the need for models to synchronize or differentiate between the past, present, and future. New approaches to framing the political and cultural dynamics of elites are necessitated by the temporal dynamics of modern political communications, which increase the variability of "temporal flows" (the "heterogeneity" of social time) associated with the activities of numerous political actors. Political elites across national communities are guided by different criteria of continuity shaped by their perceptions of the pace of political change and their expectations of the "present" and "future." Such processes stimulate the theoretical modeling of stable "time regimes"—temporal structures within national and civilizational communities associated with the homogenization and integration of perceptions of the past, present, and future.

The intensification of proxy wars and the propaganda potential of digital communications make it difficult for political elites and expert communities to predict which actions will achieve a sustainable political order and an effective position in the international arena. This compels political actors to articulate ambivalent discourses in the public sphere. These actors must balance "political-cultural constants" (political traditions and customs) with "innovations" and appeal to conservative or progressive values in legitimizing political decisions and mobilizing citizen engagement. The hybridization of national political cultures and the ambivalence of political-positioning discourses is intensified by the digital revolution. Thus, existing theoretical models of the functioning and recreation of political traditions should be adjusted, particularly in relation to the growing political differentiation of the ideologies of "conservatism" and "progressivism" and the conflict-driven dynamics of collective perceptions of the past, present, and future.

These processes underscore the importance of studying how political actors position themselves within the temporal structuring of national memory, which, in turn, shapes the narrative design of these ideological discourses. Political struggle is always intertwined with concepts of societal evolution and narratives of the past, present, and future. In this theoretical context, examining political actors' specific discursive forms and their symbolic and self-presentation "within time," as well as the impact of temporal structures on practices of political domination, is a promising avenue of inquiry. Time is understood here as a specific political-cultural "dimension of meaning," a means of symbolically framing the events of political communication, where temporal symbolic structures serve as an "archiving" of the multiplicity of such events over time.

We argue that limiting the search for connections between the traditional and innovative activities of political actors to the process of traditionalization will merely

reproduce the past in the present or associate innovation exclusively with the future. A more nuanced analysis of this communicative dynamic should be understood within the semantics of an ambivalent process that seeks to ensure a temporal regime of political continuity in the binary coding of political communications as conservative/progressive. In the process of structuring and aligning elite and citizen expectations of the "future," "present," and "past" within the conservative/progressive semantic framework, specific temporal narratives emerge to organize political communications.

When there are no available cognitive schemes for the stable compatibility of temporal expectations, conflicts between elites and within civil communities intensify. It is during such periods that reflecting on political traditions and civilizational identity becomes particularly relevant, or discourses of revolutionary change arise. Temporal narratives, which represent "time regimes" and the "politics of time," organize variable group expectations through the synchronization of the perceptions of political events considered significant by the collective. Given evolving and specific temporal regimes and the legitimation of political memory, analyzing the political and cultural specificity of competing temporal narratives and counter-narratives of conservatism/progressivism within national memory offers a theoretical foundation to forecast the full evolutionary potential of actors in a given political community.

In our view, studying the theoretical and methodological issues related to the influence of temporal structures on traditional and progressive narratives in modern political communications is essential for understanding the specific processes that ensure "symbolic constancy" in the political evolution of modern communities. This article addresses the following fundamental research questions: What are the theoretical and methodological foundations relied on in contemporary studies of traditionalization and social dynamics of conservative/progressive narratives in the political positioning of modern communities, and what theoretical problems and ways of overcoming these have been identified? What is the role of temporal regimes of national memory in shaping the political positioning of actors in conservative and progressive narratives? How does the digitalization of political communication impact the temporal orderliness and the political positioning of actors in political communications?

The Dynamics of Traditional and Innovative Elements in Contemporary Political Communications

Studies on actors' political positioning often highlight the theoretical and methodological challenges of studying the role of political traditions and the practices which political elites use for their maintenance. Contemporary scholars view political traditionalization as a significant phenomenon tied to the process by which actors socially construct a society's political identity through projections of the past. Virtually every study of the sociocultural dynamics of political actors notes that the positioning of elites impacts the effectiveness of the communicative structures that shape their self-identification and national identity policies through the cultivation of political traditions. It is also clear that the process of cultivating traditions in modern communications is not merely a matter of preserving "remnants" of past social realities—it also serves as a reservoir of meanings derived from the past and the present.

In public rhetoric and sociological literature, social traditions—especially political ones—are often described as relatively stable, deeply rooted patterns guiding everyday life and as ontological values and customs passed on over time. These traditions reflect a commitment (whether positive or negative) to the "political past," including "past" institutions of power and ideological stereotypes (Gofman, 2015). Political traditions emerge as idealized and ideologized models of political order, which elites reference when formulating, adopting, and implementing policy decisions (Sudakov, 2004). The key "operators" of political traditions, alongside other "non-political" entities, are the political elites, as well as individual and group actors who consistently engage not only in preparing or discussing decisions but also in making them (Kaspe, 2022). While this conceptualization of political tradition is academically significant, it requires further clarification and theoretical-methodological refinement.

A more appropriate interpretation of the "traditional" in modern communication is as a reworking, reshaping, or repurposing of cultural forms from the past within and beyond institutional settings. Emerging traditions thus always constitute a variable share of the dynamic and the conservative (Buccitelli, 2018). The conceptual framework proposed by Hobsbawm provides a more grounded approach to understanding the process of traditionalization in contemporary society. His definition of contemporary traditions is generally acceptable if we moderate postmodernist interpretations of his concept of the "invented tradition" (Hobsbawm, 2012). According to Hobsbawm's ideas, tradition can be defined as a set of practices governed, directly or indirectly, by formal and informal rules of a ritualistic and symbolic nature, aimed at instilling specific values and behavioral norms through repetition and by establishing continuity with a real or invented past.

These theoretical and practical challenges in the reproduction of contemporary traditions encourage a critical description and comparative analysis of the functions of political traditions as discursive structures of a community's historical memory and an exploration of how diverse political ideas and knowledge of the past are transformed into stable political traditions. It is also necessary to identify the political and cultural factors that lead to their erosion and replacement by qualitatively different "guiding patterns." Furthermore, when discussing collectively significant representations of "past" events and practices in political memory, we are dealing not with the events themselves but with expectations that impose or remove constraints on political action in the present and future. The labeling of a tradition as "real" always involves expectations of the "present" and "future." Thus, the dynamics of the semantic structures of political memory are decisive in the emergence and description of political traditions.

Despite active public and academic debate about the significance of the correlation between traditional/innovative (conservative/progressive) elements in the political positioning of elites, these sociopolitical semantics are often reduced to specific dimensions (value-normative, socio-psychological, historical) and involve sharp ideological confrontations. The substitution of the ambivalent dynamics of traditional/innovative categories with the concepts of traditionalism and its opposites leads to homonymy (tradition–inertia, tradition–nostalgia, etc.) and the delocalization

and de-temporalization of traditions, detaching them from fixed spatial and temporal frameworks (Gofman, 2015, pp. 46–54). Radical attacks on the traditions and history of one's country and the replacement of deeply rooted cultural symbols with exaggerated forms of political correctness are, according to some studies, indicative of a "cultural disorder"—oikophobia, that is contempt or hatred of one's own sociocultural forms, and a civilizational crisis (Beckeld, 2022). Other unresolved questions include how and in what way "narratives of the traditional" and their symbolic representations are part of the process of political self-identification among modern elites and communities—and what determines their constructive "innovative" or destructive symbolic potential.

Many of those studying the role of traditions in politics have highlighted these theoretical and methodological challenges. However, we believe that a comprehensive study of the processual aspects of the social construction of traditions justifies viewing traditionalization as integral to the dynamics of a community's political memory. Traditionalization cultivates and prolongs patterns of constancy and stability over time. It is essential for the institutionalization and maintenance of political solidarity and serves as a significant cultural resource for the temporal structuring of the political sphere.

In other words, a stable political identity is always rooted in the temporal structure of memory, which is represented in narratives of continuity and permanence. The "temporal order" of political communications is linked to how participants in the political process position themselves in and perceive time (past, present, future), which predetermines the discursive and institutional dynamics of communities and their specific practices of solidarity. Examining the temporal regimes of the traditionalization process makes it possible to comparatively analyze the potential for ordering among political actors based on the dominant views of the significance of certain events from the past, present, and anticipated future.

Theoretical and Methodological Foundations for Studying the Temporal Structures of the Traditionalization Process

In this article, a complementary approach is proposed that combines cultural-sociological and political-anthropological models of temporal dynamics in sociocultural phenomena. This approach can function as a priority methodological strategy for examining the politico-cultural specificity of time-ordering practices in the political positioning of elites within the context of digitized political communications. It allows contemporary political culture to be interpreted as a historical form of political memory and the politics of memory, along with its digital transformations, as a form of symbolic politics[1]. Prominent scholars of collective representations, such as

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[1] In this article, the focus is on the temporal dynamics of symbolic structures in political memory, particularly their role in the political positioning of elites and maintaining order in political communications. We offer a more detailed interpretation of the cultural-sociological epistemology for studying the sociocultural dynamics of political memory, including its symbolic spatial-temporal boundaries, codes, and legitimization profiles, as well as the role of discursive structures in the processes of political identification and generational continuity of contemporary elites, in their previous works (Zavershinskiy & Koryushkin, 2022; Zavershinskiy et al., 2022).

Aleida Assmann and Jan Assmann, emphasize the strategic importance of studying processes that cultivate the "spirit of community," which is crucial for developing a sense of solidarity in sociopolitical communications. They argue that the spirit of community is subject to erosion and distortion as mass digital communications blur the boundaries of rationality and social empathy. This is particularly evident in the rise of neoliberal and radically conservative political ideologies that often portray individuals as potential villains and aggressors (Assmann & Assmann, 2024).

In our view, the analytical framework for understanding the politico-cultural dynamics of elites is extended by incorporating temporal dimensions into the study of political actors' communicative dynamics. Particularly relevant to analyzing elite political activity are the perspectives of researchers who emphasize the importance of theoretical modeling of social communication processes—depending on whether temporal or spatial factors predominantly influence the connections within political reality. Concepts like "past," "present," and "future" are intrinsic to communication, leading those who explore the inherent significance of culture and symbolic patterns to focus on time; those who emphasize material and organizational aspects of power tend to focus on space (Filippov, 2008, p. 109). Attention to these temporal options is essential for refining answers to key questions such as how and by whom political time is set and within which temporal horizons actors "initiate actions, make proposals, or self-present, thereby compelling others to respond" (Luhmann, 2007, p. 332). Lakoff (2009) highlights the dynamic and often conflicting "bi-conceptualism" of conservative and progressive ideologies in real-world politics from the perspective of contemporary cognitive science. The author identifies the roots of this bi-conceptualism in the brain's narrative structures and in the anthropological practices of metaphorizing family communications (Lakoff, 2009, pp. 69–74).

This and similar epistemological strategies emphasize that the symbolic structures of political memory—represented in temporal narratives—are relatively independent, given their significant autonomy from social reality. The narrative core of collective representations is heterogeneous, differentiated by the polarization of binary distinctions that frame a given narrative. Temporal political narratives emerge from resolving the dichotomy inherent in the binary coding of power communications between conservative and progressive oppositions (Luhmann, 2001, pp. 24–44). They thereby introduce order to the interpretation of the temporal design of nationally significant events in collective memory.

Binary coding provides a symbolic classification of the world, structuring the temporal and spatial design of politically significant events (Alexander, 2006). Smith (2005) develops the theory of binary semantics in the civil sphere (pp. 14–24). By extension, the discursive core of the contemporary temporal regime of political communications is heterogeneous and differentiated by the polarization of conservative and progressive binaries, which shape traditional and innovative narratives. The contradictory representations of the conservative–progressive dynamic in academic and everyday political discourse reveal an ideological confrontation in conservative discourse; this advocates for the articulation of "the knowledge of tradition" to ensure social harmony and generational continuity based on "the constancy of moral truths"

and faith in a transcendental, "just" order rooted in "living diversity" (Kirk, 2001, 2023). In everyday life, such an order is defended within the discourse of "popular conservatism" using populist connotations that rely on the collective and ostensibly "natural" sense of unity, "constancy," and "rational progress." The liberal discourse is presented as in direct opposition to the conservative narrative and is focused on combating the emerging "progressophobia," which originates within intellectual elites and transforms faith in the Enlightenment into a "quasi-religion" (Pinker, 2018, p. 218).

The semantic vacuum created by this dichotomy is filled by epistemological skepticism regarding the justification and truth of the concepts of liberalism and conservatism. This skepticism is context-dependent: conservatism is associated with a desire to preserve what individuals value, while progressivism is concerned with resisting limitations on the freedom to act in pursuit of vital life goals (Roeber, 2024). It is thus crucial to distinguish between progress as a universal principle for modern society and "progressivism," which often manifests in a disdain for one's own culture and a tendency to blame it for all societal ills (Bulut, 2024; Krause, 2023).

These narratives can be further classified according to the intensity of polarization within their binaries (share of dynamic to conservative elements) and by genres—from those with a weak potential for everyday temporalization of expectations to those with greater potential, such as the tragic/romantic or even apocalyptic genres, which are among the most impactful narrative forms. Mass collective representations at the everyday level may operate in a presentist mode, interpreting the past and future through the cognitive lens of the local present. Nevertheless, the elite may be driven by nostalgic expectations of the past or by revolutionary or radically conservative visions of the future, often foreshadowing apocalyptic societal transformations.

These various interdisciplinary methodological strategies share a common ontology: interpreting the communicative dynamics of social memory as a meaning-generating process represented in symbolic performative structures. The self-identification of political actors within a society is always, whether directly or indirectly, linked to the symbolic legitimation of their significance within the collective representations of its evolution over time, as the "synthesis of time and identity" is always mediated by memory (Assmann, 2010, p. 109).

At the same time, this variability, along with the empirical strategies used in narrative analysis, requires more comprehensive analytical models. Crucially, the specific process of traditionalization within the symbolic frameworks of political memory also depends on the temporal dynamics of the figurations of mnemonic actors in political memory. In this context, Olick's theoretical insights are particularly important, as they help refine strategies to represent the symbolic structures of political narratives and their specificity within a given society. According to Olick (2016), describing the shifts in legitimation profiles within contemporary social memory requires analyzing the conflictual dynamics of the symbolic contours of national memory; these symbolic contours include such competing symbolic components as images of the past, political characteristics of elites, typologies of heroism, notions of duty, guilt, and responsibility, as well as prioritized strategies and practices for combating "enemies" that determine the emergence and evolution of legitimation profiles (Olick, 2016, pp. 36–76). This

methodological framework makes possible a discussion of the temporal specificity of time images, the synchronization or asynchronization of heroic and sacrificial hierarchies, shifts in strategies for cultivating traditions and innovations, and changes in strategies for humanizing or dehumanizing enemies.

The comparative analysis of the temporalization of legitimation profiles in political memory becomes particularly significant in studying the politico-cultural dynamics of national identity narratives. By articulating the specific combination of conservative and progressive legitimation profiles, researchers can clarify the process of temporalizing communities and identify how to code the political practices of actors based on the conservative/progressive binary. When examining the process of traditionalization and its narratives, the dynamics of temporal regimes within political memory that define and redefine the symbolic figures within legitimation profiles must be considered. The specificity of overcoming the conservative/progressive binary (and the resulting narratives of continuity) depends on which temporal references (present, past, or future) dominate. Modeling the temporal regimes of society is promising for a comprehensive study of the role and significance of temporal dimensions in the dynamics of binary coding in political positioning.

Temporal Regimes as Methods of Ordering Political Communications

The concept of "memory regimes" is increasingly being used to explore the relationship between collective perceptions of time and identity in the formation of sociocultural communities. Despite the focus on the historical and temporal specificity of memory regimes in political studies, this concept is more often used for comparative functional analysis of memory politics and commemoration practices. In such analyses, historicity tends to be viewed as a byproduct of how elites socially construct public space and state identity. When the value-normative parameters of memory regimes and their narrative structures are examined, the temporal dimension is often reduced to the dichotomous value orientations of autocratic and democratic actors and the institutionalization of memory politics (Malinova, 2020, p. 21).

Researchers focusing on the "sociology of memory space" may reference the works of Assmann but often overlook the heuristic potential of the concept of memory regimes. Their aim when introducing the concept of the "temporal regime of culture" to study the sociocultural dynamics of social memory was to identify the "temporal organization and orientation" of society—the specific cognitive schemes of collective interactions and identification practices (Assmann, 2017a). Assmann identifies the uniqueness of social memory in the modern era through its symbolic representations of the "past" and "future" and in the "referential frameworks of modernity." They characterize the modern era as a "time of rupture," a "fictitious new beginning," "creative destruction," the "emergence of the concept of 'the historical,'" and "acceleration." In Assmann's view, these features define how actors' expectations and activities can vary semantically. In the contemporary era, which some researchers refer to as "postmodern," what makes societies "modern" is that they exist in a highly conflictual regime of "dynamic stabilization." This regime requires growth, acceleration, and

innovation to maintain its structure and institutional status (Torres & Rosa, 2021, p. 520). Many researchers link this intensification of the "traditional/innovative" conflict to the inevitable "traumatic demands" of these dynamics. These are demands for emotional, institutional, and "symbolic compensation" through new interpretations of past events. The new interpretations change the role structure and system of continuity and obligations among participants in the political process to accord with this new vision (Alexander, 2012).

Assmann's proposed strategy for studying temporal regimes in modernity can be refined through existing models of the temporalization of modern collective memory. A successful example, in our view, is the study of how collective memory influences the positioning of political elites in the international arena (Bachleitner, 2021). According to Bachleitner, to exist and achieve sociopolitical stability, a society must be capable of prolonging itself over time and of acquiring performative public memory and state identity. This identity should elevate the expectations of political actors beyond the available political realities and past interpretations of political reality. Bachleitner does not use the concept of a temporal regime, but their concepts of temporal security, which is based on the theory of ontological security in communities, and temporal regimes emphasize the connection between collective memory ("being-in-time") and identification processes based on constructing national narratives about the interrelation of the past, present, and future. The political-cultural triggers of this process, accompanied by public reflection and intense debates on ontological security, include the interpretation of traumatic events—real or imagined—and the spread of anxiety and public shame.

When answering the question "who and how initiates time," of particular interest is the researcher's identification of the processual phases of establishing a stable identity; this process influences political elites and legitimates their policies domestically and internationally. As per Bachleitner's approach, the actions of political actors occur along the "axis" of temporalization of ideas about critical political events of the past, essential for the emergence of a particular nation within the context of the dynamics of perceptions of the past and future from the present. Perceptions of "temporal security" as an effective ideal dimension of the specificity of political positioning in national communities arise in the process of constructing political strategy, public identity, state policy, and national values. According to Bachleitner (2021), this analytical model of temporalization of collective memory, through which this memory acquires political-cultural specificity through perceptions of "temporal security" and "temporal continuity," allows the combination of socio-psychological and sociological understandings of collective memory's influence on national identity and state actions in the international arena.

Based on the model's basic premises, and softening its socio-psychological contexts related to the model of cultural trauma, the process of establishing a temporal regime in a given society can be interpreted as follows. The process is initiated when elites develop an anti-crisis political strategy that leads to the reconstruction of public policy and widely shared perceptions of the country's politico-cultural identity. This then stimulates the construction of a state identity and social consensus on national values.

The temporal regime of modern societies thus arises or changes during the process of strategic political positioning by elites with respect to other political communities. The "symbolic constants" of the country's public identity are established as prerequisites for the domestic contours of the temporal regime. This fosters confidence in the consistency of political decisions and the longevity of state institutions.

The process concludes with the articulation and sacralization of national values, resulting in a public political axiology—ideologically and morally justified narratives about the "correctness" and "justice" of the political course pursued by elites. Ensuring sustainable continuity in elite activities cannot be reduced to their ability to cultivate and protect the traditions of the past. The emergence of political traditions and their effectiveness depends heavily on the phase of the temporal regime in which society "exists," the specificity of the political strategies prioritized by elites, the characteristics and practices by which public and state identity are constructed, and the state of collective expectations and the interpretative abilities of discursive institutions to constructively rethink past experiences.

An analytical model of temporal regimes and their sociological operationalization developed to study how modern digital technologies influence political communication cannot exclude the highly relevant interdisciplinary approach of Coeckelbergh. In *Digital Technologies, Temporality, and the Politics of Co-Existence* (Coeckelbergh, 2022), the author introduces concepts of the anthropochrone and technoperformances of time, along with related post-anthropochronic and hyper-anthropochrone representations of time and transhumanistic post-anthropochronic technologies. These concepts are employed to analyze the processes of evolution, synchronization, and desynchronization of heterogeneous narratives of time in various sociopolitical spaces shaped by qualitative changes in information storage and dissemination technologies, particularly those influenced by artificial intelligence (Coeckelbergh, 2022). Torres's (2021) monograph, *Temporal Regimes: Materiality, Politics, Technology*, is a recent comprehensive attempt to summarize the various approaches to theoretical modeling temporal regimes. In our view, this work is valuable both for its attempts to systematize approaches to the typology of the sociopolitical specifics of temporal regimes and its potential to operationalize sociological studies on the dynamics of temporal regimes. The core premise of Torres's conceptual ideas is that time—the understanding of the experience of change—and the formation of a temporal regime are connected by repeatability and stability in the production of ideas about time. Temporal regimes are the result of a sociocultural configuration that arises in a society, based on which the thematization of ideas about time occurs. A temporal regime arises from tendencies toward homogenization and creates stable conditions for the sustained combination of ideas about the interconnection of the past, present, and future. In this way, the temporal regime establishes the conditions for the dominance of ideas about the direction of change—linearity or cyclicality, presentism or futurism, acceleration or deceleration. A temporal regime creates certain life habits or structures to achieve a specific result.

Describing the specificity of existing temporal regimes requires a comprehensive analysis of temporal ideas based on parameters such as repeatability, articulability, and governmentality (Torres, 2022, pp. 1–38). "Repeatability" refers to the recurrence

of temporal perspectives and how the past shapes the present and is "held" in it; "articulability" refers to the existence of clear ideas about the patterns of temporal dynamics and the direction of temporal flows; and "governmentality" refers to a set of performative norms that govern or "program" collective actions to change the social order. In our view, such derivatives make it possible to identify the fundamental processes in the dynamics of temporal regimes and provide a foundation for comparative studies of time regimes across national communities. It is evident that leaving aside critical reflection on their specifics the basic tenets of these concepts are complementary to the politico-cultural dimensions of the traditionalization process in national communities noted above. Temporal regimes can contribute to the creation of communities or, conversely, hinder this by coordinating events in individual and collective life. Political time is a complex interplay of synchronies and temporal heterogeneity, which can coexist within a single temporal regime, influencing the level of conflict and the specificity of traditionalization. Thus, the distinctions between "conservative" and "progressive" do not merely manifest in ideological value orientations or in the rejection or acceptance of "innovation" and "tradition." Rather, they manifest in the understanding of the processes as acceleration and repetition, as well as the particularities of articulating and administering their symbolic representations. Thus, progress in modern communications does not negate tradition; instead, they serve as potential resources for future use. Meanwhile, conservative narratives do not reject progress but emphasize the search for normative and institutional constants amid ongoing change. Modern temporal regimes take on especially conflictual dynamics in the context of the digitization of social memory, which introduces specific methods of marking space and temporal vision for organizing political activities.

The Political and Cultural Dynamics of Modern Temporal Regimes and the Crisis of Traditions in the Digital Age

The scholarly literature on the influence of political-cultural practices in the digital era is diverse. Many researchers emphasize that with the breakdown of grand political narratives driven by the digitization of a "culture of differences," there is an increase in the autonomy and differentiation of symbolic coding within distinct communicative environments. This shift leads to a decline in the influence of previously dominant "symbolically generalized media" (Luhmann, 2006, pp. 46–48). Such processes disrupt the interconnectedness of communication systems and contribute to the erosion of temporal structures in political memory.

In contemporary interdisciplinary research, particularly in digital memory studies over the past decade, scholars have extensively analyzed the impact of digitization on social communications, the formation of "transnational memory," the specifics of network interactions, the functioning of mass media on digital platforms, and the digitization of commemorative institutions (Bond et al., 2017; Garde-Hansen, 2011; Helgesson & Svenungsson, 2018). Despite the wide range of themes, research on the political-cultural dimensions of political memory in the digital age remains ambivalent regarding the impact of digitization on the

political positioning of actors. The assessments range from positive appraisals and skepticism to apocalyptic predictions regarding the influence of digital technologies on elite dynamics. Overall, the digital revolution contributes to the formation of new elite segments and a digital culture—a specific ideological, value-normative, and worldview structure—and the development of a "digital political reality" (Schradie, 2019). This reality is expressed in global projects for developing metaverses that create extra-state and extra-legal ontological digital formats of socio-technological activity in which interactions are coded by corporate requirements and technical standards (Fukuyama, 2018).

There is also optimism regarding the expansion of public spaces and increased participation in the political process through online interactions and electronic governance. Researchers argue that electronic governance is a positive example of rejecting traditional political intermediaries and shifting elite attention toward improving specific everyday practices of political communication (West, 2005). This "disintermediation," or removal of intermediaries, reduces the costs of content production through web technologies, and their horizontal nature allows citizens to create content that reaches a wide audience. The main goal of this transformation in models of communication is the spread of content, messages, opinions, emotions, and ideas that do not originate from intermediary elites. Researchers suggest that digital public spaces are thus more pluralistic and better equipped to provide content for public discussion (Robles-Morales & Córdoba-Hernández, 2019, p. 141).

However, a critical analysis of the political-cultural consequences of the Internet's supposed promotion of democracy and public dialogue remains dominant. Rather than fostering inclusivity, the Internet is more often associated with "fragmentation and polarization," a decline in the symbolic effectiveness of commitments to social equality and justice, a lack of shared meaning, and numerous "information bubbles." In "communicative capitalism," there is a merging of surveillance capital and the surveillance state. Big Data represents the power of "Big Brother" and "big capitalist business" (Fuchs, 2019, p. 58). "Surveillance capitalism" fosters networks that generate a hierarchical distribution of opportunities. In communication processes, those who most successfully monetize their hierarchical position within this space benefit the most (Dean, 2019, p. 178). "Communicative capitalism," accelerated by digitization, undermines the concepts of democracy and political solidarity while promoting discourses of victimization.

The semantic structures of political memory emerging under the influence of digitization are often more performative than the actors, institutions, and organizations that created and hoped to control them. For example, conservative narratives intended to bring temporal order may instead trigger revolutionary processes. However, ostensibly progressive, democratic, and neoliberal political counter-narratives can lead to total symbolic decoding and delegitimization of the political order. Culturally and anthropologically oriented authors attribute such processes to the affirmation of a modernist Occidental identity ("occidentalism") based on a temporal regime of continuous change in which individuals invest in new identifications understood

through the lens of individualistic self-development. The inability to achieve such self-development leads to an identification crisis, stimulating a return to conservative forms of traditionalism and the intellectual cynicism of postmodernism, culminating in clinical affective narcissism (Friedman, 2019).

Many researchers characterize the temporal regime of late modernity in terms of the temporal inversions of the past, present, and future in collective representations. Assmann (2017b) notes that in the digital age and amid the intensive development of hypervisualization techniques, new images of the past are constantly emerging. This trend is highly ambivalent; it is unclear whether this will stimulate and intensify collective hostility and nationalist narcissism or make the process of rethinking the national past more inclusive (Assmann, 2017b). The ambivalence stems from the fact that digital communication technologies, which are associated with the ideology of "continuous progress," generate ever-new forms of communication control, leading to a decline in sociopolitical imagination and effectively canceling the "future."

Instead of forecasting the future, people receive "consumer gadgets" and audiovisual "memory exoskeletons." This ideology of progress masks the absence of a positive future perspective and helps reactivate radical conservative discourses. The culture of the past is embedded in the sociocultural "post-future," emphasizing the crucial aspect of forming a culture of the past, while the (re) affirmation of a positive present seems increasingly utopian. There is a growing inability and consumerist unwillingness to actively participate in connecting the "past" with the idea of the future. This factor distinguishes the current memory regime from that of the 19th and especially the 20th centuries when positive utopias of the future emerged. People experience pressure both from the loss of the future and "through numerous intimate and affective interpretations of the past, the loss of our past." Instead of processing the past, it is being "plundered," producing easily disappearing "ghosts of the past" (Pogačar, 2017).

Neoliberal deconstructions of temporal regimes and their digital audio-visualizations of the horizons of political memory lead to a reconsideration of modern temporal structures, clashing the "legacy of the Enlightenment with neoliberal modernity." Their diverse understandings of the past result in contemporary elites losing the meaningful framework for making political decisions as the stability of present perceptions erodes, diminishing their capacity to adapt to political realities. This gives rise to the dictatorship of "short-term memory" and a kind of political "infantilism," manifesting in a retreat from positive and negative expectations. The processes transpiring in the political memory of modern society under the influence of digital communications significantly increase the risks of political elites making irresponsible decisions. As a result, the political elite and other political actors will lose the ability to effectively control the process of positive traditionalization, replacing it with far-right conservative narratives or radical progressivism. One can only hope that the traumatic experience of emerging from the current temporal crisis and transitioning to more balanced temporal regimes of political positioning will be guided by positive-utopian expectations rather than apocalyptic projections.

Conclusion

The relationship between traditional and innovative elements in the activities of contemporary political elites should not be simplistically reduced to merely reproducing an archaic past while radically positioning toward an innovative future. Modern political communications amplify the variability of "temporal flows"—the "heterogeneity" of social time—that are tied to the activities of numerous political actors. This amplified variability demands new approaches to addressing the conflict between tradition and innovation in the political-cultural dynamics of today's elites. Political elites across nations have various criteria for continuity that are shaped by their perceptions of political change and their expectations of the present and the future.

We argue that in modern communications, political tradition and traditionalization should be understood as the result of processing temporal political-cultural forms of the past, projected onto the present and the future. This happens in the political memory of society at the institutional and everyday levels, making the concept of a "temporal regime of political memory" especially significant. Such a regime emerges from trends toward homogenization, creating stable conditions for integrating perceptions of the past, present, and future. This temporal regime underpins the dominance of views on the direction of change, including the reproduction of political traditions. Political time is a complex blend of synchrony and temporal heterogeneity. These coexist within a single regime and determine the prevailing level of conflict and the specifics of "repetition" (traditionalization), retaining past experiences in the present and extending them into the future.

A comprehensive analysis of this communicative dynamic between tradition and innovation is crucial. This analysis reveals the complex and ambivalent process of establishing a temporal regime of political continuity through the binary dynamics of conservative versus progressive forces in political communication. The alignment within this conservative/progressive framework of elite and public expectations about the past, present, and future generates distinct narratives that structure and guide political discourses.

Modern traditionalization is key in the community dynamics of political memory, cultivating and extending patterns of repetition, permanence, and stability over time. It is central to institutionalizing and maintaining political solidarity, serving as a crucial cultural resource for the temporal structuring of the political sphere and resisting political inversion and arbitrariness in the activities of today's diverse elites. The ability to overcome the conservative/progressive binary and the resulting narratives of repetition hinges on which temporal references dominate: the present, past, or future. Examining the specifics of temporal regimes in the traditionalization process enables a comparative analysis of how political actors "order" themselves based on their perceptions of significant past, present, and future events.

Driven by neoliberal "heirs of modernity," the digital revolution intensifies the hybridization of national political cultures and fuels the ambivalence in political positioning and national traditions. The authors side with those who argue that modern digital communications in the West are trapped in a "post-future" crisis

(postmodernism, meta-modernism, transhumanism, etc.), with the attempt to "reaffirm" a positive present seen as a retrotopia and a civilizational crisis, manifesting in the rise of oikophobia. This fragmented understanding of the past causes global elites to lose their framework for decisive political action; as the stability of present realities fades, their ability to adapt is crippled. The result is a dictatorship of "short-term memory," the death of positive utopias, and a kind of "political infantilism," with elites retreating from future expectations—both positive and negative. As the crisis of modernity's temporal regime shaped by neoliberal elites takes hold, it heightens the risk of political asynchrony and gives rise to either radical conservatism or unchecked progressivism.

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