

Political Engagement Through Visual Mediation: The Visuality of the Christchurch Attack and a Cross-Governmental Analysis of Performative Populist Responses

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This article investigates the role of visual communication technologies in political engagement through a case study that examines politics in the aftermath of the Christchurch mosque shooting on March 15, 2019. It explores how the live-streamed display of the attack reproduced the features of personalized framing in social media, and how such mediation has been conceived by populist politics and instrumentalized to counterbalance this peculiar act of violence. Jacinda Ardern, the prime minister of New Zealand, evoked empathy among different religious groups and solidarity with Muslim communities by supporting the #HeadscarfForHarmony campaign on social media. At the same time, Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan used the video footage of the mosque shooting for his election campaign to incite anti-Christian sentiment. This comparative analysis offers a cross-governmental perspective and questions how the political culture of populist governmentality determines the resources for citizens' participation through patterns of communication. I contend that the political culture of citizen engagement in populism is eligible to be radically changed to correspond to contemporary visual communication design technologies.

Keywords: political resources, personalized politics, visual communication technologies, visual politics, populism, political immediation

The attack on two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, on March 15, 2019, was different from other violent events because of its visual, performative qualifications and the related viral potential of the attack video. Although the Paris attacks of November 2015, the shooting at a concert in Las Vegas in 2017, and the targeting of a Pittsburgh synagogue in 2018 all involved video recordings, these recordings were created and spread online by the victims themselves (Dwoskin & Timberg, 2019) and not recorded by the perpetrators. The attack on the mosques in Christchurch by Australian shooter Brenton Tarrant caused the deaths of 51 people. These attacks were recorded and broadcasted online by the perpetrator himself. Although the footage of the attack has been condemned around the world, the video spread so quickly that Facebook had to remove approximately "1.5 million videos of the attack globally within the first 24 hours, blocking 1.2 million of these attempts automatically at the point of upload" in addition to 300,000 copies posted (Macklin, 2019, para. 20), while YouTube removed tens of thousands of identified videos and

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repackaged or recut versions of the Christchurch attack's original record (Dwoskin & Timberg, 2019). Thus, the attacker used information and communication technologies together with social media to boost the effect of his own mediatized crime, raise awareness about it, and encourage various groupings, camps, and even indifferent people to engage with White supremacist ideals through his own generated content.

This article compares the performative traits of the Christchurch attack and subsequent visual responses of populist politicians. It explores how specific elements in political communication aim to generate public engagement through employing various combinations of visual practices of communication technologies. The article investigates how the visual communication of populist politics invites citizens into political engagement for a specific construction of societal imagination derived from the terrifying event of the Christchurch attack. In doing so, this study explores the connection of mediated politics with populist popular culture through the lens of technology-enabled visual communication assets. Scholars defined the politics of Jacinda Ardern, the prime minister (PM) of New Zealand, as leftist populism (Vowles & Curtin, 2020) and the rule of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Turkey's president, as right-wing populism (Aytaç & Elçi, 2019; Selçuk, 2016; Türk, 2018). New Zealand and Turkey, two countries of populist governments of opposite political wings, were the prominent carriers of counterterrorist engagement in the aftermath of the attack. As such, the government-endorsed #HeadscarfForHarmony campaign in New Zealand invited society to wear a head covering as a gesture of solidarity with and support for grieving Muslim communities. On the other side, in Turkey, President Erdoğan attempted to generate support for his party by showing the graphic video footage of the Christchurch attack on giant screens at his rallies.

Political engagement is understood as the voluntary activities of citizens to influence government, policies, or public actions (Conway, 1999). Scholars have marked the global decline of civic and political engagement for younger generations (Bessant, Farthing, & Watts, 2017) and the loosening of group membership in parallel with the transformation of social structures that allow networking and political learning (Putnam, 2001). However, direct communication between politicians and their followers and public communication on users' policies, goals, and views have transformed political engagement. As Mazzarella (2006) asserted, the contemporary will for transparency has spread a prevalent political lack of mediation (p. 500). The current political engagement has become embedded in contemporary, hyper-mediated governmentality effectively and functionally tied up with citizens. In that sense, the existing communication technology-enabled structure of political engagement presents a two-directional flow between political authorities on one side and citizens on the other.

The way political leaders become mediatized to reach their followers, and how their followers assess their role in political engagement is necessarily part of national political culture. Indeed, the political culture of populism especially commits to a direct representation of public will. The social media culture of direct communication corresponds to this populist appeal of being directly in touch with people (Moffitt, 2018, p. 34). This unmediated apprehension and the embodied experience of politics refer to "a presencing of the political" (Mazzarella, 2019, p. 50). Populist leaders claim to *presencing* the people's will, which defines the sovereignty's immediate engagement outside the constraints of intermediary institutions, bureaucratic obstacles, and lack of resources. As such, populism seeks to directly embody rather than indirectly represent people's will (Frank, 2010; Mazzarella, 2019; Samet, 2019), that is, *presencing* the people.

Performance designates a public construction of self. The performative act is inherently attached to political power as a means of expression, representation, and public appeal. Terrorism depends on the performance drawn from everyday life's generated media practices and contents. Visuality is the primary component of ordinary users' everyday-life public performance in social media. In the hypermedia age, viewers interact with audiovisual content on social media moment-to-moment and participate in its creation by posting comments. These viewers serve not only providers but also "arbiters of content both unwittingly by means of download counts and also consciously by rating on" (van Dijck, 2009, p. 45) content because of algorithms that favor the highest engaged ones. Through his live streaming of terror, the Christchurch attacker achieved an undeserved celebrity status—one reserved for politicians, opinion leaders, and popular artists in the past. Indeed, the effectiveness of any terrorist act is tied up with its success in communication to address the masses. On the other side, counterterrorism's strategic communication also uses media technologies and adopts visual communication tactics derived from the same performative everyday-life politics. I question how visuality as an active practice intends to enact specific ways of participation for viewers. Viewers and potential supporters have become users, and, hence, they are not passively receiving content but need to be engaged through a performative public appeal.

Citizens can ideally offer insights according to the resources they have. In this context, the capabilities of visual communication practices are indispensable resources for public engagement. Resource theory (Brady, Verba, & Schlozman, 1995) predicts a greater quality of political engagement when one does not need institutionalized membership and long-term commitment for networking. Citizens can become "politically informed with a click of a mouse" with low opportunity cost, as stated in the Internet-effect hypothesis (Kroth & Neiss, 2012, p. 163). As the consequence of social fragmentation, individuation has given rise to an era of personalized politics (Bennett, 2012, p. 20). Instead of collecting and generating group loyalty to achieve political resources, citizens can easily engage with personalized politics with current communication technologies. However, as Christian Fuchs (2013) stated, the opportunities for mediated public communication are still limited due to the unequal distribution of resources. The online public sphere is assumed to provide easy access to resources accumulated through social relationships, namely "social capital" (Bourdieu, 1986). But such opportunity for accessible political engagement in social media has been disrupted by "disparities of tech-savvy abilities" (Fuchs, 2013, pp. 184–185), including know-how of visual communication tactics. Although new media allow ordinary people to achieve celebrity status (Stefanone & Lackaff, 2009), such social prestige is not guaranteed. Personal value is tied to the visibility generated by public performance.

Visual communication practices as part of political performance constitute one of the prominent resources for everyday-life public engagement. Within the global flow of information and the ubiquitous production of communication material, the use of standard technologies (Child & Tayeb, 1982) has constructed popular visual practices for participation in the public sphere. These practices include forms and contents of visual mediation and interaction generated in technology-assisted political culture. According to resource theory, understanding one's sense of external efficacy, including the power to affect politics and get responses from institutions (Torney-Purta, Henry Barber, & Richardson, 2004), changes the level of engagement in politics. Performative know-how and knowledge of visual communication assets became fundamental attributes of supporting actors. Therefore, citizens need to maintain and adopt abilities for visual communication practices as resources to get into personalized politics.

Through a cross-governmental study of populist visual mediation, I analyze the reception, reputation, and interruption of the Christchurch attack. I examine governmental populist strategies in Jacinda Ardern's online campaign and Tayyip Erdoğan's offline use of the Christchurch attack footage during a local election rally to incite political engagement. By doing so, this article examines the current mediated forms of political engagement in the context of populist leadership and populist political cultures that impact citizens' engagement, focusing on resources of visual communication abilities.

Comparison of Populist Culture via Communication Technologies

Although the Christchurch attack has not affected the citizens of New Zealand and Turkey equally, both populist leaders used media to reframe the incident. Indeed, the communication structure between politicians and citizens constitutes one of the prominent parts of political culture and, hence, offers clues to understanding the processes of social continuity and change.

Political culture generates socialization habits and networking prospects for citizens. Thus, the variations in political culture also reflect how the flexibility of social media enhances political participation and how the new, personalized frames can adapt to the political culture. The assumption predicts that resources such as political learning, citizens' own perceptions of political efficacy, socioeconomic status, and networking opportunities can become favorable or low cost when the political engagement takes place online.

Citizen mobilization is affected by new global modes of medium use. The questions are how politics benefit from new media, how new media shapes the actualization of politics, and how a specific political culture adapts to new modes of communication. A multitude of personalized, creative, expressive, individualized, and self-actualizing forms of digitally enabled participation are now included in "social" forms and modes of political engagement (Theocharis & van Deth, 2018, p. 139). Such involvement methods, namely personalized politics, do not necessarily intersect with institutional organization, forms of citizenship, or communal affinities but can reflect self-actualizing rather than dutiful political engagement (Uldam & Vestergaard, 2015, p. 8). These contemporary forms of political engagement raise new questions about patterns of political inequality because traditional resources for political engagement doubly correspond with the digital agency.

In populist politics, the mediation between leaders and their supporters becomes essential to make the direct effects of their governing politics concrete. That is because the content of populism urges for "the predilection of populist leaders for continual mobilization" (Mazzarella, 2019, p. 52). In other words, populism seeks the immediate *presencing* of popular sovereignty (Canovan, 1999). Political engagement is the populist verification of a government's legitimacy. Thus, the never-ending plebiscite features of rallies and referenda as a custom of populist politics aim essentially to dissolve the institutional frames that embody the indirect governance of people (Mazzarella, 2019, p. 52). As such, the immediate presentation of the people rather than the representation affirms legitimate grounds for populist rule. The image of political authority must performatively reflect "the collective flesh," either by the leader or by an assembly.

Populism is not exclusively a movement of right or left politics. A cross-governmental analysis of political engagement across the political spectrum in conjunction with current digital traits has not been

explored in the literature of populist politics. Left-wing populism is considered to be inclusive and anti-pluralist. Thus, left-wing movements can frame the people as a supermajority, similar to the Occupy Wall Street label of "the 99 percent" (Vowles & Curtin, 2020, p. 12). Conversely, Chantal Mouffe (2019) stressed the affirmation of the collective will for a radical democracy through a heterogeneous subject without discarding neoliberal logic. In the same fashion, PM Ardern of the social-democrat party has used her leadership to encourage a decrease in inequality by ensuring every individual's economic and social security, regardless of their background in society (Ardern, 2018). Ardern can be considered a populist not only because her discourse captures this inclusive sense of "the people" but also because her personal leadership "rests on direct, unmediated, uninstitutionalized support from large masses of mostly unorganized followers" (Weyland, 2017, p. 48).

Similarly, President Erdoğan defines himself as a defender of democracy and a representative of the "real" people. He first used the Ottoman (Yavuz, 2020) and then "the ummah" as imagery to integrate Turkey's various ethnic-but-Muslim identities into a more unifying definition of "the people." Right-wing populism is said to promote exclusive societies (Huber & Schimpf, 2017). Accordingly, his long-ruling AK Party (AKP) is known for its authoritarian approach, suppressing opposition groups and critical media while exploiting public resources to sustain a pro-AKP capacity for political engagement (Esen & Gumuscu, 2017). As such, the AKP is one of the governments mentioned for unofficially recruiting "paid citizens" as part of a "cyber troop campaign" for political engagement in social media (Bradshaw & Howard, 2017). Pro-AKP techno-culture remains within party lines and mainly works as "social lynching" or "trolling to disrupt conversations" (Fuller, Wilson, & McCrea, 2013) rather than as direct personal expressions of political issues.

Undoubtedly, the rule of the AKP in Turkey seeks both to encourage and to contain political engagement, similar to the case of a competitive or "hybrid authoritarian regime" (Richter & Hatch, 2013, p. 325). Many AKP critics were removed from their official institutional seats in the military, judiciary, and media through the legal process (Tuğal, 2015). The authoritarian management of the press under AKP rule also coincides with the "conservative top-down social engineering" (Açikel, 2012) process of a "pious young generation" (Lüküslü, 2016). Government-oriented youth organizations with massive financial and symbolic support activate civic participation through grassroots engagement to redraw the "ideal" citizenry of Muslim-Turkish nationhood (Yabancı, 2019, p. 5). Accordingly, the party draws on public resources, including communication and transportation facilities, for its own political interests and encourages pro-AKP engagement.

In another part of the world, Jacinda Ardern's center-left Labor Party won a historic second term of single-party government with nearly 50% of the total votes (Menon, 2020). Ardern has long used social media platforms to document her interaction with the public (Verma, 2020) and interact with citizens and answer their questions. Her leftist populism marks her professional-yet-personal gestures of skipping mediating institutions to reach her supporters. More importantly, Ardern is famous for documenting the mundane parts of her life as a regular person, a working mother, and a professional. Thus, "the top posts from the most engaged NZ politicians on Instagram show that relatability and behind-the-scenes moments are key on Instagram" ("Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern," 2020). The political culture generated from Ardern's left-wing populism benefits from digital mediation of communication and a personalized framing of politics.

Despite substantial differences in political culture, the diffusion of technology affected both populist governments' communication strategies and ways of engagement with followers. The post-ideological era of political cynicism has provoked a search for authenticity where supporters want to have personal relationships with politicians (Stiers et al., 2019). The online public sphere has been described as the end of the split between the public and private spheres (Papacharissi, 2008). Authenticity has become the generic rule of communicative agents, and live streaming provides complete authenticity, deprived of the editing process. Not only populists' but all politicians' personalized, conversational, and interactive behaviors correlate with social media's communication style. The ideal of e-governance (Mazzarella, 2006) consists of removing impersonal institutions and alienating bureaucratic ones and, in return, corresponding to e-citizen personalized politics.

Consequently, Ardern answering questions on FaceTime about the Covid crisis and Erdoğan's FaceTime call for help from his supporters during the 2016 coup attempt satisfy such "authenticity" requirements for political engagement with authorities and institutions. Thus, live streaming embodies the populist essential of bypassing mediating institutions to connect leadership with the assigned "popular will" in pursuit of "affect-intensive *presencing* of popular sovereignty" (Canovan, 1999; Mazzarella, 2019, p. 47). Yet, Erdoğan's social media presence on online platforms such as Twitter is restricted to formal posts and government declarations, while PM Ardern shares personal moments of her life with her followers.

This comparative case study of political communication in the aftermath of the Christchurch attack highlights specific points in the ways that populist governments adopt digital communication technologies to provoke public engagements.

Methodology

Data Collection

The data for this study were collected from a subset of news media sources, including YouTube and the social media accounts of Ardern and Erdoğan, and participant-generated social media content surrounding the online debates in the wake of the Christchurch attack using the keyword and hashtag search "Christchurch" on social media. I used a purposeful sampling strategy of these new media sources to analyze the discourse of visual communication practices of the Christchurch attack and populist public engagements to counter the attack. Using screenshotting, I manually traced and collected posts dated from March to June 2019 on publicly open accounts on the social media platforms Twitter and Instagram with their metadata until saturation was reached with sufficient data diversity. I further used the hashtag and keywords "Christchurch," "Erdoğan," "seçim (election)," "Anzak (Anzac)," and "Aya Sofya (Hagia Sophia)" for Erdoğan's rallies and #HeadscarvesForHarmony, #HeadscarfForHarmony, and #scarvesinsolidarity together with #WeAreOne and #TheyAreUs for Ardern's campaign. About 60 posts were randomly chosen to study the visual communication structure of Erdoğan's rallies and Ardern's campaign, in addition to the prior collection of 43 posts on just the Christchurch attack. From Reuters, *The Guardian*, *The Washington Post*, CNN, and *The Economist*, I collected articles showing international mass media coverage of the Christchurch attack with respect to the two governments' campaigning and meetings with civil society, news on citizen actions, and press statements through keyword search in the online world news.

Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis

The Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis method assisted in the appropriate overview of the research subject, emphasizing the "intertextuality and intermediality" (Orr, 2003) of everyday-life public communication in relation to the larger cultural practices, their expression, and their power structures. This study focused on compositional traits and techno-structural aspects of visual communication as part of political culture. Compositional features such as sender-receiver positioning, interaction design, communication style, and modalities refine "meaning resources" (Wodak & Meyer, 2015, p. 182). Thus, visual communication constitutes a discourse that "endows agents with social capital, inserts certain norms into social situations, and invites certain interpellations in social spaces; and to relate agents to both social fields and other actors" (Vuori & Saugmann Andersen, 2018, p. 11). Critical discourse analysis of visual communication essentially brings into visibility how dominant structures stabilize conventions and naturalize them until they are taken as "given" (Wodak & Meyer, 2015, p. 11). I focus on "the visibility in practice that operates through making some norms visible and others obscure" (Vuori & Saugmann Andersen, 2018, p. 10).

The specificities of medium use impact the power relations embedded in meaning. In the Heideggerian perspective, technology is not value-free because it reveals, brings forth, and makes present through regulating the course (Heidegger, 2010). In that matter, the type of technology used to produce multimedia content is intrinsic to representation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2012, p. 177) alongside the operation. Thus, techniques of visual communication constitute our everyday language for the social construction of reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1991) and the storage of social knowledge. Examining visuals of different technology of political imagery provides opportunities to reflect on the underlying type of governmentality and prospective citizen engagement. Thus, the visualities display the "right" way of political engagement for agents to constitute and conduct politics. Such dimensions and visions suggest how citizens should engage throughout the spectacles of politics presented to them as spectators.

Adoption of Digital Communication Strategies in Comparison

Participants in the online public sphere need to produce noticeable content to attract attention (Hwang & Shim, 2010). Strategic communication advocates noise generation to empower counterterrorism. Such methods eventually map perceptions and influence networks to diminish the visibility of "terrorist" acts (Weimann & Knop, 2008). Media-based counter-performance methods include online sting operations that work through "posting false representative performances to attract and ensnare offenders" (Surette, 2015, p. 203). Thus, the two distinct populist governments sought to incite political engagements to reformulate the attack to assist the societal imagination of "the people." The following section will analyze the visibility of the initial Christchurch attack's broadcast and the subsequent political responses to discover how the political culture generates different affinity-building techniques tied to visual mediation processes.

The Initial Broadcast: Christchurch Attack

The Christchurch attack was chiefly a violent massacre but also a terrifying visual performance. Using the Facebook Live application, Tarrant, the attacker, got into his car to drive to Al Noor Mosque, his first target. He also shot selfie images, replicating a most digitally contemporary social act (Burke, 2019).

As he committed the worst mass shooting in New Zealand in 30 years, the attacker spoke directly to the viewers. He entered the mosque building at 1:41 p.m. and went from room to room before returning to his car again to reach his second target, Linwood Mosque, at 1:50 p.m. (Macklin, 2019). The attack's footage can be distinguished from similar violent events in its visual capacity to frame the real through the "presentism" engendered in its first-person perspective live-stream record of the violence, where the viewer can connect with the perpetrator's intimate moments of crime.

Certainly, the Christchurch footage does not allow viewers to remain isolated from the act but instead forces them to be involved through active spectatorship or visual replication. Live streaming is tied with the idea of "presence." Both the content creator and the viewer engage in *presencing*. The fact that the video is unedited adds an "authentic" feeling. Due to the live video streaming, the attacker could not edit and shape his narrative and thus preferred not to retain editorial control. Live streaming provides moments where the nonvisible becomes visible with complete authenticity. Yet, this also necessitates the presence of the audience, the active engagement of the public with the performance. The footage was not easily available but existed for a limited time, live for the viewer. That is because the mediation of the Christchurch attack offers the voyeuristic "pleasure" of a "curtains left slightly open" moment.

Within this context, the attack's visuality replicates the mediation of personalized politics. Public circulation of one's authentic self promotes bonding with the audience and structurally constitutes affinity with the performing attacker. The attack video presents its own justification, derived from the intimacy of the criminal recording, that permits a reality show-like voyeuristic pleasure to the viewer. Authentic traits and the *presencing* feature of the broadcast demonstrate the populist embodiment of the performance.

The attack's visibility depends on the act's engagement with the viewers and thereby encompasses its own "righteous demand" and legitimacy. Such authenticity proceeds via the direct embodiment of the viewers by the attacker through a live stream. Thus, traits of visual communication practices secure the performative success of nonmediation, in other words *presencing* of the spectators. For instance, John Earnest, another White supremacist who attacked the Chabad of Poway Synagogue in California on April 27, 2019, posted an anti-Semitic note to 8chan along with a link to a Facebook page and list of songs to play during the stream, including a message that read, "a livestream will begin shortly" (Collins & Blankstein, 2019, para. 5). However, Earnest failed to live stream his attack due to his lack of technical proficiency (Macklin, 2019). Such incapacity for live streaming marks not only the attacker's failure to provide a "how-to" manual but also his inability to encourage the audience to subscribe to the in-group. Earnest's attack did not satisfy the requirement of making the audience present and did not provoke the arousal for active engagement.

Tarrant, the Christchurch attacker, contended that only concrete and immediate demonstration of his group's White supremacist interests could remedy the individual's alienation from politics, omit the pragmatic concealment of the xenophobic "right" of hatred, and skip informal corridors of power. He posted before the attack on the website 8chan: "Well lads, it's time to stop *shitposting* and time to make real effort post. I will carry out an attack against the invaders and well even live stream the attack via Facebook" (Shakir, 2019, p. 1). In that matter, the attacker borrows from the populist discourse of *presencing* the will of the (White supremacist) "people."

Ardern's Campaign

PM Ardern immediately defined the attack on Muslims during their Friday prayers as an act of terrorism. Throughout New Zealand, vigils were held, with millions showing up to honor the dead and express grief by forming a national bond with the broader Muslim community (Besley & Peters, 2020). On April 10, 2019, New Zealand's parliament voted in favor of a gun reform bill that banned military-style, semiautomatic weapons ("Christchurch shootings," 2019). PM Ardern's discourse in the after-attack was significant in stressing that the victims were part of New Zealand and not a specific group such as "immigrants" or "Muslims." Therefore, the attack was against New Zealand. "They have chosen to make New Zealand their home, and it is their home. They are us" (Reicher, Haslam, & Bavel, 2019, p. 12).

The #HeadscarfForHarmony campaign, launched on March 22, 2019, invited New Zealanders to wear a headscarf or head covering to show support for and solidarity with the grieving Muslim communities. The campaign consisted of volunteers participating in community-driven initiatives to enact an alternative, inclusive New Zealand rather than the gunman's ideal White supremacist society. In Muslim-minority countries, Muslims, particularly those with a "visible" Muslim identity, are more vulnerable to anti-Muslim hostility, intimidation, abuse, and threats of violence, both online and offline (Awan & Zempi, 2015). In her visit to Christchurch after the attack, Ardern dressed in black, wore the hijab visibly, and embraced members of the Muslim community (Reicher et al., 2019, p. 13). Her decision to wear the hijab was an act of solidarity in a climate where the veil identifies Muslim women as targets for harassment and prejudice. Her initiative aimed to convert the sign from a "target" to a symbol of togetherness (Davies, 2019). Participants shared photos of themselves wearing the scarves replicating Ardern's move on social media (Gonzales, 2019) with the hashtags #HeadscarvesForHarmony, #HeadscarfForHarmony, and #ScarvesInSolidarity, together with #WeAreOne and #TheyAreUs. Thus, the headscarf became a symbol of solidarity, as shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Example of a social media post on Twitter as part of the #HeadscarfforHarmony campaign. Retrieved April 10, 2019.

Although a politician initiated the #HeadscarfForHarmony campaign, participants were enabled through mediator-free communication and low-cost access. The campaign embodies the ubiquitous self-design practices common to social media. Visual communication of self-design corresponds with personalized politics in the sense that "by designing one's self and one's environment in a certain way, one declares one's faith in certain values, attitude, programs and ideologies" (Groys, 2011, p. 34). Many stereotypically non-Middle Eastern, White, or non-religious women wore headscarves on social media under the campaign hashtags. Significantly, these mediated photos of the campaign juxtaposed the hijab with the imagery of New Zealander women. The images of hijab-wearing New Zealanders, including a policewoman, a TV news presenter, a reporter, a businesswoman with her laptop, and PM Ardern herself, became popular on social media. Indeed, such visibility contradicts Christchurch's footage, in which the victimized Muslims were part of the score and hence were not only objectified but also banalized.

The headscarf campaign has also faced criticism because the hijab is not worn by all Muslim women, and further because it is not meant to be "a piece of clothing to be worn as a costume," with critics claiming that "there are other ways to show love" ("Headscarves Movement," 2019). Yet, the performative side of PM Ardern's mourning emphasizes the use of social media to promote personalized politics that evoke a networked, active, and personal in-group identity. In this sense, the campaign was "powerful" in attracting attention to persuade diverse people to engage and generate interactivity in the public domain.

The #HeadscarfForHarmony campaign designates a low-effort, voluntary action that generates and provides low-cost social capital and easy resource generation for political engagement. The self-disclosure of the user-participants of the campaign maintains PM Ardern's self-design, while users create intimate photos captured in their private lives, either with their families or across the mirror in their bedrooms. The posts of solidarity by women across New Zealand expressed the users'/participants' thoughts and feelings about the incident by framing texts and their hijabi selfies. Participants in this public engagement also stated the reasons why they decided to participate in the campaign. Such self-disclosure allows the subject, although not directly involved with the traumatic event, an emphatic projection of the self into an external situation (Rimé, 2009). Such affiliations entail "evocation of emotion in a socially shared language, cross-communication of emotion-eliciting occurrences and experiences of emotional reactions especially for negative events witnessing" (Rimé, 2010, p. 308). Hence, the practice of self-disclosure designates an act of social appropriation (Micallizzi, 2013) and affinity building. Although this is a simple act, digitally enabled intimacy has been built to allow sufficient resources for the networking of political engagement. The personalized politics initiated in the campaign provoked interactivity to work as a "hub" for social engagement and filled up the blank left over from censoring the Christchurch footage.

The #HeadscarfForHarmony campaign necessitated the participation of followers. Otherwise, the campaign would have been a failure to orchestrate pro-Muslim solidarity in New Zealand. Followers' engagement to refute the White supremacist discourse of the Christchurch attack captured civil society actors' efforts to address issues of public concern. Indeed, the photos posted under the #HeadscarfForHarmony campaign present an aftermath hub, although modest compared with what the Christchurch attack footage could have provoked if it had not been prevented through censorship. Hence, social media engagement worked out as a counterbalancing news disseminator.

In this case, the efficacy of citizen participation cannot be measured through the government's responsiveness but through the citizens' active role in countering this performance of terrorism. The campaign is the *presencing* of "popular will" through direct presentation and immediate citizen action. Ardern's campaign performance required direct public mobilization similar to the Christchurch attack's mediation to spread its message. The moderating role of the leader provides a hypermediated version of populist politics' public embodiment, not tied to a politician's solo performance. In that sense, Ardern countered dirty politics with the help of the people and realized the ideal of transparent governance. Here, citizens' understanding of their own efficacy to affect politics is high and reveals a substantial reserve of resources for political engagement.

Erdoğan's Election Rallies

In comparison to Ardern's inclusive discourse, Erdoğan's was exclusive. The response of Turkey's government to the White supremacist Christchurch attack on March 15 has been unique compared with that of other Muslim-majority countries. What is specific about Turkey in the Christchurch attack is that the attacker targeted the Turkish canonical, historical role within Islam. He covered his assault rifles with dates, names, keywords, and insulting, misogynistic words that refer to Turks, such as Turcofacos, Turkdevourer, 1683 (the date of the failed Ottoman siege of Vienna), and the name of the Serbian soldier who killed Ottoman Sultan Murat I. In addition, in several parts of his manifesto, the attacker stated that "until the Hagia Sophia is free of the minaret, the men of Europe are men only in name" (Koru, 2019, para. 3). Although the attacker's historical narrative of Turkey reflected a solitary action without organizational support, President Erdoğan associated the Christchurch attack with a major conspiracy of anti-Islam Christian planning ("Turkey and New Zealand," 2019). As a result, the "Australian government was at a point weighting travel advice for its citizens visiting the country" (Koru, 2019, para. 1).

The attack footage as a record designates a protagonist role for Turkey so that populist antagonistic discourse can rely on it to generate a sense of shared threat. The Christchurch video offers a documentary file of an assumed anti-Islam plot by "Western" powers to be spread in a political Islamist election rally. Consequently, although Erdoğan did not have a shared objective with the attacker, he still used the attack footage during his election campaign. The video permitted a powerful articulation of anti-Christian/anti-West discourse as a gesture of out-group formulation for AKP propaganda.

Erdoğan's anti-Christian propaganda obviously demonstrated the necessity of his party's populist embodiment of "the people," the pious Muslims. At the time of the Christchurch attack, Turkey's local elections were approaching and its economy had dipped into recession in the wake of a currency crisis. Even before the election results, Erdoğan's party, AKP, was expected to lose control of the capital Ankara (Weise, 2019). Simultaneously, Erdoğan described the Christchurch massacre as "a wider attack on Islam and Turkey" while speaking at a rally commemorating the 1915 Gallipoli campaign, when the Ottomans repelled Allied forces, including Australian and New Zealand troops known as the Anzacs (Weise, 2019). Erdoğan aimed to gather support for the AKP in the election by re-broadcasting video footage of the Christchurch attack on giant screens at his rallies (Wintour, 2019). The crowd gathered responded to the terror footage by "booming wildly" (Lowen, 2019) during the screenings.

However, Erdoğan's screening of the Christchurch attack video has not given it back its visibility in the public sphere after its removal from social media. The re-broadcasting of the visuals of the attack was aimed at motivating the engagement of the public. The critiques of his decision to display the attack's footage to crowds prevented further online attempts following Erdoğan's discourse. Although the critical comments emphasized his re-broadcast's potential to provoke hate crimes against New Zealanders and non-Muslims in Turkey and abroad, the rally re-screenings only remediated the Christchurch attacker's content. It did not reproduce the attack's form of political mediation and its performative aspect of public self-framing. Thus, neither Erdoğan nor the supporters exhibited personalized politics through "individualized, promotional and surveillance practices" (Uldam & Vestergaard, 2015, p. 16). The rally screenings of the video precisely lacked an interactive feature for the audience watching in the physical public scene. In that sense, visual exploitation of the Christchurch attack does not engage with the actual video's interactive potential, which invites the audience's active participation in the performance.

In the first place, the election rally exhibition is a re-broadcast, not a presentation that directly embodies the audience for building intimacy. In re-broadcasting at a rally, the divide between the public and private spheres remains intact during the performance. At the Chabad of Poway Synagogue, the Christchurch replicant attacker's failing live stream interrupted active participation and in-group inclusion through an inefficient use of social media. Similarly, Erdoğan's subsequent re-broadcast obstructed any immediate identification with the performing leader of populist politics. However, Christchurch's original live stream used the mechanism of transparency to claim authenticity while it sought the direct personal engagement of the viewers in the performance scene.

For sure, the political culture is pivotal to understanding the modes of political engagement for its supporters. The representative political culture embodies a type of political engagement that maintains a split between the public and the private. Following the particularity of the Christchurch attack's mediation, the public dissemination of Erdoğan's discourse required active political engagement to set the agenda on an anti-Muslim conspiracy plot. Indeed, Erdoğan had the resource capacity to reach many people simultaneously during a short time period, as he did in the case of the coup attempt in 2016. But his rallies and counterattack did not show expertise in the hyper-mediation of populist leadership. The display of the Christchurch attack was held just for election rallies. Thus, the re-broadcast lacked the directness and immediate visuality of the attack. Therefore, structurally, it did not activate individualization of the spectators and resource generation for digital politics. Thus, the mediation gesture of re-broadcasting the attack redirects supporters to formal means of political engagement, here, the elections.

Disadvantages with respect to resources, particularly money for basic needs and formal civic skills related to the voting procedure, have been known to be remedied by intermediary organizations of the AKP for its supporters in Turkey. In the context of Christchurch, the AKP electorate did not have access to sufficient resources for online engagement in personalized politics. For instance, social media presumably increases tech-savvy youths' participation in politics. The decrease in young supporters' shares in the AKP's electorate profile and the hierarchical structure of pro-AKP organizations do not generate habits for the individualized and direct traits of personalized politics. Moreover, pressure on civil society organizations and the advantages of a pro-government stance only serve to spread government ideas to society by reflecting government interests (Doyle, 2018, p. 457) rather than individualized engagement in policy discussions and

decisions. Thus, it does not primarily nurture the personalization of politics. As such, the resources for political learning and the networked social capital that AKP supporters enjoy essentially derive from indirect capacities stored in these partisan civil society organizations.

Because political learning of resource generation occurs as part of political culture, the communication precepts of a long-running regime or governmental authority construct how political engagement proceeds. Erdoğan's re-broadcast in the rally reconstituted the leader as the only performer of the people's will. His imagery of populist leadership does not merge with the moderator role for public *presencing*.

Presencing of Popular Will

The counterterrorism politics of these two distinct populist governments embody their own conceptualizations of *presencing* "the people." Their governmental visual discourses follow the logic of direct mediation, either through rallies or through participatory digital action. Thus, the political engagement that they demand presupposes the immediate *presencing* of the popular will.

Yet, the left-wing populism of PM Ardern facilitated an easy and low-tech, yet direct, means of embodying supporters through regular, everyday, user-generated content of self-exhibition and voyeurism. Ardern had already been authentic in her own personal participation in political engagement. Meanwhile, Erdoğan's display of the video showing the massacre, which was banned content, satisfied the voyeuristic demand indirectly. People only become active through Erdoğan's embodying leadership, which authorized them to face obscene politics of an assumed anti-Islam Christian plan. Thus, there was no interactivity enabled for the supporters. The leader just guaranteed the authenticity of the populist embodiment. Hence, the visual discourse tended to encompass the political engagement of rallies afterward through the institutional means of elections.

Populist politics are eligible to compete with the immediate effects of visual terrorism because of their wishful omission of indirect mediation with supporters. Compared with the Christchurch attack's live stream, Ardern's campaign necessitated an equivalent endorsement of the viewers' participant roles. The contrast between Ardern's and Erdoğan's reactions to the massacre in their performances derives from the political engagement they claimed to embody in the name of the "regular citizens." Erdoğan's right-wing populist visual discourse conflated the authentic identification of the leader with political engagement. Thus, the affinity building of right-wing populism concentrates on the leader. "The people" are not personalized; pro-AKP political engagement redraws representative party policies. Yet Ardern's participatory action to counter the attack consisted of a heterogeneous claim for the people, facilitated by her left-wing populist leadership. In that case, affinity building demanded personalized politics of the members of the public. As such, the visibility of her campaign defined Ardern as the moderator, not the embodiment, of political engagement.

Reexamining these two instances of counter-visibility meant to challenge the attack's image, the offline exhibition of the Christchurch video in Erdoğan's rallies did not promise interactivity to form a hub for sociality while Ardern's #HeadscarfForHarmony campaign promoted immediate, direct participation. As such, #HeadscarfForHarmony reproduced a social media culture of user content promotion and intimacy

generation. Thereby, the political culture redirected netizens' socialization habits. Erdoğan's solo performance owns a commandment of transparency to assumingly reveal the "dirty politics" of "Western" powers. The Christchurch re-broadcast had been played in rallies in the name of the public's right to know the "secret" anti-Islam Christian plan. Yet, in practice, Erdoğan's show reinstated a bureaucratic ethos and politicians' strength to endorse politics. Here, his political communication demands reception rather than the interaction of the spectators. Compared with the live stream of the attacker's acts in Christchurch, Erdoğan's re-broadcast of the attack's video provides a static visuality that demonstrates deep political obscenity, with delayed access to the viewers and without permission to circulate. In that sense, Erdoğan confirms "the higher rationalities of the state imagery positioned distantly to citizens" (Hansen, 2001, p. 130). The Christchurch attack's screening in AKP rallies did not permit the political mediation that Tarrant's initial broadcast relied on to realize the *presencing* of its "regular (white supremacist) citizens" will.

Conclusion

The Christchurch attacker certainly exercised digital expertise, along with resources of visual communication abilities specific to the online public sphere. The attack had the potential for viral online and offline spread but was successfully kept in isolation. The right- and left-wing mediation of populism in the case of Erdoğan versus Ardern's leadership has developed different popular culture habits for resource generation. Their distinct structural designs of populist communication styles reveal what is expected from governmental responsiveness and what is understood as citizen's political efficacy in a particular political culture.

A terrorist act that heavily corresponds to social media culture, such as the Christchurch attack, necessitates a comparative approach to encountering the contemporary dissemination logic of news and setting the agenda for alternative societal imagery in response. Hence, the construction of augmented spheres of direct expression and interaction can eventually be unavoidable in the long run to challenge existing institutions. In that sense, new communication trends such as visual technologies gradually change political culture and subsequent citizens' political engagement habits. That is because a local incident can go viral and become of global concern to incite political engagement.

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