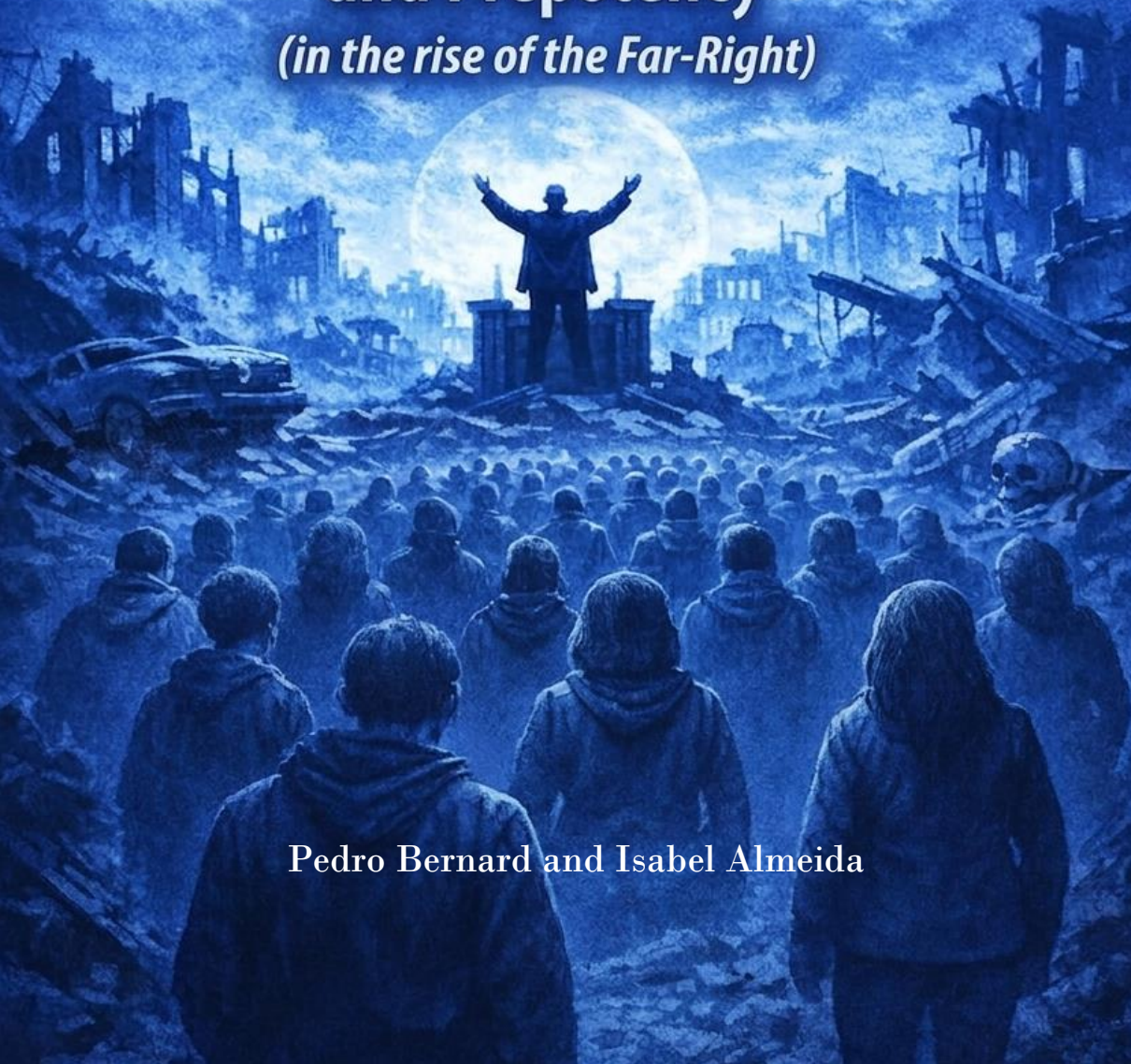


BAP

The Banalization of Arrogance and Prepotency

(in the rise of the Far-Right)



Pedro Bernard and Isabel Almeida

BAP:

The Banalization of Arrogance and Prepotency (on the rise of the Far Right)

Dedicated to the enormous: Américo (APB) the "Maestro"

© 2026 [Pedro Bernard]

All rights reserved.

This work is protected by copyright. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed or used, in whole or in part, by any means or process, without the prior written permission of the author.

Unauthorized commercial use, reproduction or adaptation of this work, is a violation of copyright law.

Available: referendumm.org

Illustration cover, Source: Generated by AI (Copilot) on 02/27/2026 (cover for Book: BAP - The Banalization of Arrogance and Prepotency)

Summary of Chapter 1: Introduction: The BAP – The new face of power in the XXI Century

The present, written by two hands, similar to a piano composition by four hands, proposes to investigate the phenomenon of the Banalization of Arrogance and Prepotency (BAP) in the contemporary era. The growing normalization of these behaviors, both in public and private spheres, creating a climate of Banalization and impunity, raises concerns about the social fabric, democratic coexistence and the health of institutions. This work aims to analyze, in a critical and reasoned way, the roots, manifestations and consequences of this trend, as well as to suggest possible ways to overcome it.

Summary of Chapter 2: Recurrence of BAP

The Banalization of Arrogance and Prepotency (BAP) describes the normalization of attitudes of superiority and contempt for the other, which cease to be reprehensible exceptions to become a recurrent political strategy in contexts of crisis. Inspired by Hannah Arendt's "banality of evil", BAP reveals how the absence of critical thinking allows arrogance to be transformed into a culture of power. From Nazism to contemporary populisms, a cyclical pattern of normalization, institutionalization, and authoritarian crystallization can be observed.

Summary of Chapter 3: BAP as a Policy Instrument

The BAP asserts itself as a strategic tool for mobilization, exploiting ideological dichotomies, naturalized hierarchies and the figure of the "strong leader" to transform arrogance into a sign of competence and authority. In contexts of identity crisis and institutional distrust, arrogance is aestheticized as authenticity, courage and decision-making effectiveness. The result is the erosion of democratic dialogue and the normalization of arrogance as a legitimate style of government.

Summary of Chapter 4: Propaganda at the Service of BAP

Digital propaganda transforms BAP into a systematic strategy, using social networks, micro-segmentation and fake news to normalize arrogance, abuses and illegalities as signs of strength and authenticity. Algorithms create emotional bubbles that reinforce fear, resentment, and tribal identity, replacing rational debate with affective loyalty to the leader, the chapter shows how repetition and misinformation erode factual truth and delegitimize institutions. The result is democratic erosion, where the ballot box ceases to be a space for deliberation and becomes a ritual of identity consecration.

Summary of Chapter 5: BAP Raises Votes

The BAP works as a calculated electoral strategy, transforming arrogance into an image of efficiency, strength and rupture with the "old politics". In contexts of social frustration and institutional discredit. The electorate's adherence is based on symbolic identification, resentment and tribal loyalty, where moral vices are accepted as political virtues. Thus, the Banalization of arrogance becomes an instrument of mobilization and loyalty, normalizing the erosion of democratic debate.

Summary of Chapter 6: The Identity Figure

The chapter analyzes how democracy, by personalizing political representation, can become vulnerable to the narcissistic-populist leader, who transforms a mandate into a symbolic coronation. Exploiting institutional and emotional weaknesses, the "elective king" converts vote into consecration and representation into embodiment of the popular will. Projective identification and tribal loyalty metamorphose the critical citizen into a devout one, trivializing arrogance as a legitimate leadership style. Thus, democracy runs the risk of emptying itself from within, when the leader's body overlaps with the institutions that should limit him.

Summary of Chapter 7: Lies Sustain Evil

The chapter argues that lies are at the root of political evil: it dehumanizes the "other", manufactures fear and legitimizes projects of domination that would be indefensible in the light of truth. Historical and contemporary examples show how false narratives create parallel realities that normalize violence, war, and exclusion. The consequences go beyond the immediate event, crystallizing into collective traumas and national myths that perpetuate conflicts. Resistance involves the defense of factual truth, historical memory and empathy as ethical foundations of democratic life.

Summary of Chapter 8: Gaza product of the BAP-Right

Gaza is the historical and political result of the institutionalization of a logic of force, blockade and dehumanization, especially consolidated by sectors of the Israeli far right. Having transformed occupation, settlements and siege into structural policies of terror, blocking diplomatic solutions and fueling successive cycles of violence, within a conflict shaped by historical traumas — Nakba and Holocaust — politically instrumentalized. The chapter concludes that without mutual recognition of suffering, an end to structural domination, and a break with the logic of absolute force, destruction and trauma will tend to perpetuate themselves for generations.

Summary of Chapter 9: Impunity

It analyzes impunity as a structural element of the contemporary global order, as a result of the BAP wave, where force prevails over law and international institutions reveal fragility in the face of the great powers. On the political and geopolitical level, responsibility is diluted in vetoes, strategic alliances and double standards, creating enclaves of power immune to the law. On the ecological level, the same logic is manifested in the unregulated extraction of resources and in the Banalization of climate breakdown, where immediate profit supplants collective survival.

Summary of Chapter 10: Capitulation of the Institutions

The chapter argues that institutions created after 1945 to limit the power of states — such as the United Nations and the International Criminal Court — have become structurally dependent on the powers they are supposed to oversee, being paralyzed by vetoes, pressures and geopolitical calculations. Legality remains on paper but without enforceability, allowing for selective impunity and erosion of global moral authority. Humanitarian agencies and legal mechanisms give in to political and financial threats, while strategic silence replaces accountability. The result is a dangerous precedent: international law exists, but it does not govern when confronted with power.

Summary of Chapter 11: Democracy easy prey

The chapter argues that democracy contains a structural vulnerability: by making room for freedom, pluralism and electoral competition, it also allows the rise of leaders who exploit collective fears, frustrations and resentments. The narcissistic populist turns the election into a "symbolic coronation", presenting himself as the only legitimate interpreter of the popular will. It simplifies reality into binary narratives ("people vs. elites"), attacks institutions of control, and personalizes power. Democratic representation gives way to the worship of the leader, while criticism is treated as treason. Thus, democracy maintains institutional forms, but loses democratic spirit. The greatest danger is not external invasion, but internal self-destruction legitimized by the popular vote itself.

Summary of Chapter 12: Democratic Transition

The chapter argues that democratic transition is a permanent, non-linear process, marked by the continuous tension between authoritarian impulses and institutional culture. The course will depend on the battle for factual truth, the resistance of institutions, the political use of technology and the management of economic inequalities. Democracy can mature, stagnate in cycles or degrade into personalism legitimized by the vote. Basically, the transition reflects which archetype prevails in the collective psyche. The future is not an end point, but a new unstable level until the next big crisis.

Prologue:

The synthesis of the arguments presented throughout the thesis book reinforces the need for a deep reflection on the paths that led to the Banalization of arrogance and prepotency. It defends the urgency of rethinking individual and collective practices, as well as the importance of building a culture of respect, humility and social responsibility. The closes with a critical reflection on the role of each individual and each institution in transforming this panorama, and on the implications for the environment, the future of the planet and the possible paths for a political transition in a context of democratic fragility.

BAP, as a structural phenomenon, is not inevitable. It results from political, cultural, and technological choices that can be contested and transformed. Resistance involves the defense of factual truth, the strengthening of institutions, civic education and the reconstruction of community ties capable of counteracting the logic of polarization and performative arrogance.

The future will depend on the collective ability to recognize the risks of trivializing arrogance and to promote a democratic culture that values dialogue, empathy and responsibility. The democratic transition, far from being a fixed destination, is an ongoing process that requires vigilance, participation, and ethical commitment. Overcoming the BAP-Banalization of Arrogance and Prepotency is not only a political challenge, but a civilizational imperative.

Glossary of Terms for a BAP Analysis

1. Arrogance

- **Technical Definition:** An attitude or behavior that manifests an unwarranted overestimation of one's abilities, knowledge, or importance, often accompanied by a disregard or lack of consideration for the opinions, feelings, and skills of others. It is distinguished from mere trust by the absence of real foundation and by the component of disdain.
 - **Contextualization:** In moral philosophy, arrogance (or *hubris*, in the Greek tradition) is seen as a vice that corrupts judgment, leading the individual to transgress limits by believing himself above common norms. In social psychology, it can be analyzed as a compensation mechanism for deep insecurities or as a factor that deteriorates cooperation and collective learning.
-

2. Prepotency

- **Technical Definition:** Abusive, authoritarian and imposing exercise of power or authority. While arrogance is an attitude, Prepotency is a *practice* that effectively subjugates the other, using a position of strength (real or perceived) to annul dissent and impose will, often with whim and arbitrariness.
 - **Contextualization:** Key concept in political theory and sociology of power. It increases proportionally with the number of votes collected. It reflects a distortion in the command-obedience relationship, where legitimized authority is transformed into despotic power. It can be studied in the dynamics of toxic leadership, in abusive institutional relations and in authoritarian regimes, where the norm is imposition without dialogical mediation.
-

3. Narcissism (Narcissistic Personality Trait)

- **Technical Definition:** Persistent pattern of grandiosity (in fantasy or behavior), excessive need for admiration, and marked lack of empathy, as described in diagnostic manuals such as the DSM-5. It is characterized by an inflated self, fragile and dependent on external validation, with difficulty in recognizing the interiority of others.
 - **Contextualization:** In addition to clinical psychology, the concept was vital to **Critical Social Theory** (e.g., Christopher Lasch, in *The Culture of Narcissism*). "Cultural narcissism" is analyzed as a social phenomenon where the cult of self, image and personal success undermine community ties and civic engagement. In political analysis, the term is used to describe leaders whose conduct is guided by the need for attention, praise, and reinforcement of a grandiose image.
-

4. Ego-Centrism

- **Technical Definition:** Cognitive and affective difficulty in differentiating one's own perspective from the perspective of others. It is an inability to "decenter" the point of view, taking one's own experience as absolute and universal. It is not necessarily pathological like narcissism, but a limitation in the capacity for empathic and relational understanding.
 - **Contextualization:** Central construct in developmental psychology (Jean Piaget), referring to a normal phase in childhood. In adults, its persistence is seen as a failure in psychosocial maturity. In moral philosophy, it is related to the challenge of overcoming one's "own point of view" to achieve an impartial ethical judgment (a perspective addressed by philosophers such as Thomas Nagel).
-

5. Theory of the Banalization of Evil

- **Technical Definition:** Philosophical-political thesis developed by **Hannah Arendt**, based on her coverage of the trial of Adolf Eichmann in Jerusalem. Arendt argued that Eichmann was not a sadistic or ideologically fanatical monster, but a mediocre bureaucrat, concerned with efficiency, career, and obedience to orders. The "evil" he perpetrated was "banal"—the result not of malignant depth, but of an *inability to think* critically, the renunciation of autonomous moral judgment, and uncritical immersion in dehumanizing administrative systems.
 - **Contextualization:** A fundamental concept to understand the mechanisms of totalitarianism, social conformity and administrative violence in the twentieth century. It applies to the analysis of how atrocious acts can be committed by "normal" individuals inserted in structures that normalize illegality and suspend personal responsibility, replacing it with functional duty.
-

6. Dichotomy

- **Technical Definition:** The division or classification of a concept, a set, or a phenomenon into two mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive parts (i.e., which cover all possibilities between them). It is a form of binary thinking that opposes poles (e.g., good/evil, nature/culture, subject/object).
-

7. Left-Right Political Dichotomy

- **Technical Definition:** One-dimensional political spectrum that originates from the physical arrangement of the parties in the French National Assembly after the Revolution (1789). In a **heuristic and simplified way**, it is usually associated:
 - **Left:** Emphasis on **equality** (social, economic), distributive justice, reformism or social transformation, active role of
-

the state in economic regulation and social protection, and more progressive view on customs.

- **Right:** Emphasis on **freedom** (individual, economic), order, tradition, merit, limited role of the state and primacy of the market, and more conservative view on customs.
-

- **Contextualization:** Originating in the French Revolution, following social discontent, Louis XVI allowed, in 1789, the National Constituent Assembly, in an attempt to represent all social classes, placing on the left of the "hemicycle" those who opposed his legislative veto and on the right those who supported the continuation of monarchical power and the King's veto, that is, on the left, those who wanted change, and on the right, the defenders of the old order and tradition, responsible for the transition from the vertical to the horizontal system, once (during the Middle Ages, in monarchical regimes) where the King at the top of the vertical axis and the other classes in descending order, instead of the modern horizontal system that breaks with a discriminatory hierarchy, polarizing ideas on the same level of action and thus contributing to the democratization of the political-party system. It remains a **persistent heuristic model** in political and media discourse, useful for mapping general positions.

8. Epigenetic Theory

- **Technical Definition:** An interdisciplinary field of biology that studies inherited changes in gene expression (activation or silencing of genes) that **do not** involve changes in the underlying DNA sequence (i.e., are not mutations). The term literally means "above genetics." These changes are mediated by biochemical mechanisms, such as **DNA methylation** and **histone modification**, which act as "switches" regulating access to the genetic code.
 - **Contextualization:**
-

1. **Scientific Revolution:** Epigenetics represents a paradigm shift by overcoming rigid genetic determinism. It demonstrates that the genome is dynamic and responds to environmental, experiential, and behavioral signals (diet, stress, toxins, parental care, trauma).
 2. **Bridging Nature and Nurture:** Provides a plausible biological mechanism for how social and environmental factors ("nurture") can become biologically embodied, influencing health and behavior throughout an individual's life and potentially subsequent generations (transgenerational heredity).
-

Abbreviations/Acronyms:

- **BAP: Banalization of Arrogance and Prepotency**
 - **NEP: Narcissistic Egocentrists Populist**
 - **PNL: Populist Nationalist Leader**
 - Generics:
 - **NGO: Non-Governmental Organization**
 - **ICC: International Criminal Court**
 - **ICJ: International Court of Justice**
 - **UN: United Nations**
 - **UNRWA: United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East**
 - **ICE: Immigration and Customs Enforcement**
 - **PCBS: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics**
-

Suggestion for Use in Reading the Book:

This glossary serves as a conceptual anchor. It is recommended, in the body of the work, to explore the **intersections** between these terms. For example: how a **narcissistic and arrogant political discourse** can lead to **institutional prepotency**; how the **Banalization of evil** can be facilitated by rigid **dichotomous thinking** ("us vs. them"); or how the **left-right dichotomy** can be instrumentalized in an **ego-centered** way, by actors who seek only image and power, trivializing the public debate. The analysis gains depth by showing how these concepts do not operate in isolation, but in networks of meaning that explain complex social phenomena.

1. Introduction: The Banalization of Arrogance

— The New Face of Power in the 21st Century

A Phenomenon Associated with the Extreme Right in Times of Democratic Crisis

After a quarter of a century, from the century. We are witnessing a disturbing transformation in the grammar of global political power. What was once condemned as a moral vice – flagrant arrogance, ostentatious prepotency, excessive narcissism – has metamorphosed into an effective political strategy, into a saleable personal brand, into a sign of strength for electoral bases eager for rupture. This process of **trivializing arrogance** does not merely represent the rise of politicians with difficult personalities, but the normalization of a *modus operandi* that systematically erodes institutions, public discourse, and the very ethical foundations of democratic life.

The phenomenon found its paradigmatic expression in the figure of **Donald Trump**, whose campaign and subsequent presidency in the United States (2017-2021), and 2025 converted disregard for the truth, personal attack as standard rhetoric, and the cult of the grandiose image of opinion articles into tools of government. Trump has not only exhibited traits of arrogance and prepotency; he instrumentalized them, demonstrating that the disdain for conventions, the insult to adversaries and institutions, and the repeated affirmation of his own greatness ("I alone can fix it") could resonate deeply in an electorate cynical with the traditional elites and thirsty for identity recognition, verifying and confirming that with the addition of votes for the 2nd term he also raised the level of arrogance, and even more proportionally that of Prepotency, unprecedented.

This formula did not remain isolated. It spread like a pattern, finding resonance and imitation in leaders around the globe, who adapted the same repertoire to their national contexts. **Benjamin "Bibi" Netanyahu** in Israel has for decades dominated the political scene with a combative, personalistic style that often puts his political survival above institutional cohesion, using divisive rhetoric and delegitimizing critics — including the justice system itself. **Vladimir Putin**, in Russia,

has for more than two decades personified arrogance as a geopolitical project: an iron self-confidence that translates into audacious military interventions, ruthless suppression of internal opposition, and a cult of personality that portrays the leader as the indispensable guardian of national greatness.

In Europe, figures such as **Marine Le Pen** in France and **Viktor Orbán** in Hungary represent institutionalized variants of this tendency. Orbán, in particular, has built an "illiberal democracy" where concentrated power is justified by a discourse of threatened sovereignty, allowing him to treat adversaries as enemies of the nation and subordinate counterpowers to his project.

In Portugal, André Ventura, a typical narcissist, creates an egocentric Party in his image, tactician in the application of the classic BAP, through the xenophobic and racist narrative towards ethnic minorities, pointing them out as scapegoats, reverting them in number of votes, that is, for each immigrant who enters, he proportionally multiplies his number of votes.

The following is a list of European far-right leaders or political figures who, because **of their leadership styles, rhetoric, and public behavior**, are often described by political scientists and media outlets as exhibiting **narcissistic, authoritarian, or populist traits**.

Leader/ Country | Party | ; Characteristics of the "Egocentric" Style and Examples

Viktor Orbán; Hungary; Fidesz ; **Cult of personality** (his image dominates the public space), **narrative of Hungary's "sole savior"**, **systematic attacks on independent institutions** (press, judiciary) to centralize power.

Marine Le Pen; France; Rassemblement National; **Attempt to "normalize"** the party with a focus on its leadership, **rhetoric of victimization and siege** ("against the Paris/Brussels elites"), **personalization of campaigns**.

Giorgia Meloni; Italy; Brothers of Italy (Fratelli d'Italia); **Aggressive and identity communication** focused on her persona ("I'm a woman, I'm a mother, I'm a Christian, I'm Italian"), **a narrative of cultural resistance** with her as the main spokesperson.