I want to look at the relationship between media coverage, anger and populist politics by focusing on the case of Donald Trump. The reason I'm focusing on Donald Trump is because I've been working on questions around emotions, media and politics for a very long time. People started asking me a few years back to say things about Donald Trump and that is why I started to think about him. It's not because I think that Donald Trump is necessarily the only populist or the most important populist, but all the same I'm going to suggest today that there are some distinctive features of the discourse of emotion or the emotional politics of Donald Trump which tie into broader patterns of thinking about the role of emotion in populism.

I want to begin by briefly situating this in the context of the role of emotion in political life, which is my larger project. Then I want to focus specifically on the role of anger in political life and what I see as the distinctive nature of mediated anger or anger circulating through mediated discourses. This then allows me to further develop ideas around the emotional politics of Donald Trump as representing a distinct formation, although it's one that's related to strategies of other populist politicians.

Specifically, I want to develop the idea that Donald Trump embodies what I call an angry populism. I want to look at how that might represent a shift in what historian William Reddy has talked about as the “emotional regime.” I want to examine this particularly with reference to one example that I've looked at, which is the coverage of Donald Trump's inauguration as compared to Barack Obama's first inauguration.

I will first briefly discuss the context of my larger project of exploring the role of emotion in mediated politics. That's the focus of my book, *Emotions, Media and Politics*, and other publications. In my book and in other publications that I have worked on over the past decade or so, I have developed the argument that it's important and timely to understand how emotion can be both a constructive and a destructive force in political life more broadly. Also, more importantly, that it's an inescapable one. And we've already heard discussion of emotion in many of the presentations at this conference so far. For example, Ruth Wodak made the point that the appeals to fear, to hope and to shame are essential to forms of populist discourse. One of the arguments that I've made, and other scholars like Sarah Ahmed have made, is that we need to make a distinction between the range of different emotions that are articulated by groups and individuals and that circulate in the public sphere, as well as the resulting responses that they elicit.

In other words, I see emotion as both a force and a resource for political life, for better and for worse. There's always been a key structural tension in the history of political thought and particularly liberal democratic thought between, on the one hand, the need to involve citizens as
rational and constructive participants in the political process and then, on the other hand, the need to control what is widely seen as irrational passions and the anger of "the common people."

One of the arguments I've made in my work is that fear of emotion in public life is often actually a fear of anger because angry people are by default understood as potentially aggressive and therefore potentially dangerous. At the same time, sociologists, social movement scholars, psychologists, and political scientists are in broad agreement that political participation is in fact motivated by emotional engagement.

As Drew Westen has argued, looking at neuropsychology, we have to look at the political brain as an emotional brain. Likewise, social movement scholars have ascertained that people participate in politics because they care or they feel passionately about an issue. Conversely we can also say that the choice of inaction --of not taking part-- also comes about as a result of affective responses.

In this sense, political participation appears to be driven in large part by impulses that run counter to the ideal of liberal democracy, the notion that citizens should be dispassionate, disembodied, unemotional and rational. Instead of being driven purely by rationality, the consensus seems to be that rationality is important to political decision making, but equally, that citizens who participate appear to be fueled by passion and by emotions that range from love to hatred and anger.

My book also has chapters that look at other emotions. But I think that anger is a particularly interesting political emotion and I'm going to briefly talk about why I think it's so important to look at anger. I should note that when I talk about anger in this way I don't mean to say that we can necessarily isolate it from other emotions--either as they circulate in our individual bodies or as they circulate in public discourse. There is a range of emotions in play and in a way it's an artificial distinction to look at just one in isolation.

Nonetheless, that's exactly what I'm going to do for the purposes of my talk. If we look at anger specifically, it tends to be recognized in social theory as a reaction to injustice and inherently relational. For example, Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* defined anger as “an impulse, accompanied by pain, to a conspicuous revenge for a conspicuous light directed without justification towards what concerns oneself or towards what concerns one's friends.”

It's long been recognized that although anger is in the first instance an individual emotion, it comes to matter politically when it's articulated by collectives towards a shared objective of addressing an injustice. So it's potentially a collective and therefore political emotion. But at the same time political thinking continues to be fueled by the idea that anger is normatively unjustifiable. So Martha Nussbaum, the famous philosopher of emotion, wrote a book in 2016 called *Anger and Forgiveness*, in which she argued that basically anger is a really bad thing. She
suggested that “anger is not only not necessary for the pursuit of justice, but also a large impediment to the generosity and empathy that help to construct a future of justice.” In trying to engage with Nussbaum's argument as part of writing about mediated anger more broadly, I have suggested that anger, as it circulates through the media (this you can also say about other emotions that circulate in the media), is a distinctive emotion from the kind of anger that circulates in individual bodies and makes people, for example, aggressive and resentful towards others, which is a kind of anger that Nussbaum talks about.

I carried out a study a few years ago about anger in routine coverage of protest and developed a typology of mediated anger. I argued, in an article in the *International Journal of Communication*, that mediated anger is distinctive because it’s performative, it's discursively constructed through the speech of actors and it’s usually collective and political. I should say that in developing this argument and other arguments, I've been heavily influenced by the work of sociologists of emotion who view emotion as partly socially constructed and distinctive from affects that circulate in individual bodies.

By describing mediated anger in this way, I mean that mediated anger is performative because it's based on the performance of anger in the public sphere. If you think about people being angry in the media, whether it's Donald Trump or protesters against him, this kind of performance is often strategic but it's inherently ideological as well. It's discursively constructed insofar as it's crafted through narratives and interpretations and it shapes the conditions of possibility for shared action because it facilitates the sharing of particular legitimate ways of talking about our feelings in public.

Finally, this performance is collective and potentially political because it's based on the articulation of shared grievances usually towards particular political ends. In other words, when we talk about mediated emotions we talk about something that is potentially political, performative and constructive, so it's different from emotions that we feel in our own bodies. With that in mind, I now want to take a look at the distinctive anger of Donald Trump as a marker of an emerging form of angry populism which represents a shift in what we might call the emotional regime.

When I talk about the notion of an emotional regime I'm drawing from the work of the historian of emotion William Reddy. He talks about an emotional regime as a “set of normative emotions, and the official rituals, practices and emotives (emotion words) that express and inculcate them are the necessary underpinning of any stable political regime.”

I argue that we see journalism as a central venue for enacting and sustaining the emotional regime. I further develop the case that the emotional regime that we're seeing in the contemporary era in the context of looking at Donald Trump is one of angry populism. Angry populism, as it's embodied by Trump, is based on a rhetoric which seeks broad appeal through
the deliberate and strategic expression of anger. When it's adopted as an interpreted framework in media coverage it suggests that the anger of Trump, but also the anger of his supporters and his opponents, is both salient and relevant to political life.

This is something that fits into the context of the significant electoral and political advances of populist politicians that we've already talked about for the last few days. If we look at right wing populisms in particular, observers have pointed out that they operate through emotional appeals often associated with anti-immigration and xenophobia, widely seen as appealing to groups that feel angry and disenchanted with conventional politics.

I'm going to show you this because it's my favorite image ever. I should tell you all that I have a Putin calendar for 2019, which I opened in 2018 because I couldn't wait. Vladimir Putin, as many of you know, poses every year for the Vladimir Putin calendar, which presents him more as a superhero, sex symbol or movie star than as a conventional politician. He goes fishing without his shirt on, he hugs puppies, he does amazing workouts in the gym and he also thoughtfully sniffs what I think is a flower but what might just be a twig. The reason why I wanted to mention Putin here was mainly to show off that picture, but also to say that he is someone who has garnered significant public support in Russia by constantly reinforcing distinctions between the Russian people and pretty much everyone else.

I don't want to rehearse in detail definitions of populism, but I want to talk about these definitions in the context of emotion in particular. We've discussed how populism tends to be premised on the mobilization of the people around an opposition of shared enemies. It depends on the cultivation of exclusionary solidarities that target resentment toward the most vulnerable members of society, including immigrants and ethnic and sexual minorities.

The appeal of Trump and other right-wing populists tends to be organized around a particular negative affective constellation. That represents a coalescence of longer standing practices and trends and shares many features with other forms of contemporary populism. Trump's appeal also appears to be distinctive -- and distinctively angry -- premised on the discursive construction of shared grievances.

This is something that observers have pointed out in analyzing the rise of Trump. Trump’s electoral victory has been widely connected to broader patterns of economic anger. For instance, the prominent economist Ann Pettifor is one of many observers to link the election result to the economic consequences of globalization. Political scientists Fred Inglehart and Pippa Norris talked about it in terms of a cultural backlash that was a reaction by once predominant sectors of the population to progressive value change.

These observations tend to share, however varied their explanations are of the rise of Trump, the idea that Trump's rise can be explained in part by a kind of reactionary anger against
disenchanted electorates. As others have observed this could also be linked to a broader age of anger, to use the phrase coined by Pankaj Mishra. Anger as a political and constructed emotion appears to be a resource for populist politics in general and for Trump in particular.

This could be seen to suggest a shift in the prevailing emotional regime. There is some evidence to suggest that the recent past has seen an emphasis on emotional regimes primarily associated with hope. This is something that was very much a theme in Barack Obama's presidency, as exemplified in the iconic “Hope” poster. Prior to him Bill Clinton billed himself as “the man from Hope.” This was in part because he was actually from Hope - Hope, Arkansas. I remember his presidential campaign film where he talked about how this was a wonderful small town where nobody locked their doors at night and everyone went to the parade on Main Street. So he used this hometown of Hope as way of embodying a particular political emotional regime.

In my own longstanding research looking at the use of emotions in award-winning journalistic storytelling, what's very clear is that negative emotions tend to predominate in journalism. But actually, the most frequent positive emotion is that of hope. Hope, often against very dire predictions, is what tends to predominate in public discourse. By contrast, Trump's injunction to Make America Great Again, a slogan that does embody hope for the future and the possibility of change, has consistently been accompanied by angry rants about the present resonating with disaffected voters.

I would suggest that there is a shift to an emotional regime that tends to focus on anger. Before doing that I want to give a little caveat on the emotional politics of Donald Trump. I don't want to make the argument that this is the only form of unconventional emotional expression associated with Trump. Trump is in fact widely characterized with reference to his poor management of emotion and he is frequently compared to a toddler. So the word tantrum comes up very frequently in media coverage of Donald Trump.

In fact, Trump's outbursts and gaffes have been really too numerous to count. He has shown what sociologists of emotion would characterize as blatant disregard for emotion rules that might have terminated any other candidate at any other time. There is this kind of performance of outrageousness, which does seem to resonate with voters. Trump sailed onwards constantly emoting in these socially inappropriate ways, as in this very high profile incident where he made fun of the disabled reporter Serge Kowalski.

This kind of behavior would have terminated any other candidate at any other time. Here I'm thinking of one person in particular -- the sad case of Howard Dean. How many people remember Howard Dean? Dean was a primary candidate for the Democratic Party in the 2004 presidential election. He finished in third place in the Iowa Caucus and he gave a speech to his supporters after. At the end of his speech he did this little weird high-pitched red-faced scream. It was this one momentary lapse on his part, which ended his candidacy because observers noted
that it made him look very unpresidential, precisely because it demonstrated a lack of control of his emotions.

All I'm saying is that Trump would have totally gotten away with doing that. Of course, Trump's blustering performance cannot simply be understood at constructed through the discourses of mainstream media, but rather as emerging within a hybrid media system. Trump, like other populist politicians, has been highly successful at mobilizing support through Twitter.

His tweets have, in turn, attracted extensive media coverage and allowed him also to bypass a lot of the kind of scrutiny that tends to accompany coverage in the mainstream media. Obviously the increasing prominence of social media shapes not just the content of mainstream media but also some extent their emotional style. According to a number of observers, the affordances of Twitter facilitate a discursive climate, which is more extreme, more divisive and more polarized. Trump appears to be a beneficiary of the shift by crafting these very highly emotionally charged messages on Twitter in a way that then spills over into mainstream media.

Anger is the one emotion which has been used most frequently to describe both the rhetoric of Donald Trump and his appeal to disenchanted citizens, whether through his incessant Tweeting or through his behavior on the campaign trail or in the White House.

One of the things that I've looked at in my research is how often different emotion words are being used in media coverage of Trump, and I have found that anger is far more common than others like irrationality, unpredictability, unpredictable and so on. But anger is not the only prominent way of talking about Donald Trump. According to a Gallup poll that was carried out in November 2017, the word incompetent was in fact the most common descriptor, with four percent of respondents answering with it. Other words included strong, idiot, egotistical, ignorant, great, racist, asshole and narcissistic.

The philosopher Aaron James, who holds a PhD from Harvard and is a professor at the University of California at Irvine, is a leading light in the burgeoning field of “Asshole Studies,” because there is, indeed, such a thing. Aaron James recently released a new book which suggests that Trump can, in fact, best be explained on the basis of the framework of Asshole Studies. In the blurb for this book, he stated the importance of Asshole Studies for making sense of Trump. I want to read that blurb to you and see whether you find it convincing.

“That Donald Trump is an asshole is a fact widely agreed upon, even by his supporters who actually like that about him. But his startling political rise makes a question of just what sort of asshole he is and how his asshole-dom may help to explain his success one of not just a philosophical interest but of almost existential urgency.”
Dr. James makes this compelling case here for studying Trump through the lens of Asshole Studies, but I have nonetheless stuck to my guns and have kept with looking at expressions of anger in media coverage. This is an example that I use in my book also in a brief piece in *Media, Culture and Society*. I studied the shifting emotional regimes by looking at expressions of anger in post-election and inauguration coverage of Obama's first election and inauguration in 2009, comparing that to Trump's election and inauguration in 2017.

In taking this approach, I'm following the lead of journalism historians who have looked at changes in the coverage of recurring events over time. This includes Michael Schudson’s work on the President's State of the Union Address, and Bonnie Brennen’s work on coverage of Thanksgiving.

The purpose of my analysis, however, is not to offer a detailed historical explanation of emotional regimes, but rather to provide a snapshot of a particular critical moment of change represented by the election of Trump. This kind of analysis can point us toward shifts in the relative prominence of particular emotions in discourse and highlight what this tells us about horizons for public debate and for political change.

The inauguration is an interesting event to study because it frames the presidency by providing an interpretive context for understanding key debates about the president, and therefore provides a sense of the emotional regime that he or she embodies. If we look at the longer period between the election and the inauguration, that period is quite critical in both establishing and contesting the reputation, vision and public image of a new president. At the same time, inaugurations seek to cement a dominant narrative around the president. Scholars and historians who have studied inaugurations suggest that they could be seen as rituals that build consensus around the spectacle of affirming the new president and the shared values represented by them. They often represent these moments when the nation has been constructed as coming together and divisions set aside.

This makes the study of anger all the more interesting in the context of inauguration coverage, because if anger is viewed as an uncontrollable, dangerous negative emotion, it's anathema to the ideological consensus of the inauguration ritual where we might expect it to be largely suppressed or invisible.

We expect it to be a time when everyone comes together, waves a flag and everyone is happy about the new president. I studied the occurrence of the phrases “anger” and “angry” in the period between Trump's election in November 2016 and the day following the inauguration in January 2017, contrasting it with the same period following Obama's first election.

There were many more stories that mentioned anger in the context of Trump than for Obama. I looked at US newspapers and newswires. I then did a smaller qualitative and basic content analysis of a sample of the day following the inauguration for each of the two Presidents. I
should say that here I'm only focusing on how the word “anger” came up in this coverage---- I'm not looking at related words like indignation, fury or frustration. I'm making this decision to maintain a clear focus on what I explicitly identified as public articulations of anger as a central political emotion.

I'm particularly interested in looking at who is represented as being angry and what are they angry about. What does this anger tell us about the mediated construction of political debate as well? First of all, we look at the question of who is actually angry in inauguration coverage. If we look at the Trump case we've got a very small number of different types of actors that dominate what we might call the subject of anger.

This is completely different from what the picture looked like for Obama's first inauguration. In the case of Obama's first inauguration you have a widely distributed form of anger in terms of who's actually angry. There were Kenyan diplomats who were angry, there were people angry about queuing for the inauguration, people angry about the appointment of the Attorney General, people angry about racists. All sorts of different types of actors who were angry.

In the case of Trump, his opponents actually represented the majority of those who were represented as angry in the stories. In many of the stories on the Trump inauguration the anger of these protesters was described as energizing a new social movement and it was frequently legitimized with reference to the substance of their grievances. This also challenges conventional understandings of how anger tends to be constructed in protest coverage. In this case, people who are angry about Donald Trump are actually represented as having legitimate political opinions that needed to be heard in the public sphere.

Trump supporters, however, were also described as being angry, accounting for 13.3% of the subjects of anger. The anger of his supporters, which usually had to do with the Washington establishment as well as with a decline in economic opportunities, was used as a way of explaining their voting decisions. In other words, when Trump supporters were described as being angry, it was used as a way of explaining why they actually voted for Donald Trump.

If we look at what people are actually angry about, when anger was referenced in the coverage of Obama's inauguration this was almost never directed at Obama himself. Instead, the most frequent target of anger had to do with the historical experience of racism amongst African-Americans. The election of Obama was seen as an opportunity to actually overcome discrimination. By contrast, the anger expressed in coverage of Trump's inauguration overwhelmingly targeted Trump himself. This was true for more than half of all references to anger in the sample and was based on extensive coverage of protestors gathering for the inauguration itself as well as for the women's marches on the day following the inauguration.
What is most striking about the construction of anger in stories about Trump's inauguration is the fact that a very high number of references to anger--20% of the--didn't identify a target. Usually when you see media coverage of anger, there's a clear target for this anger. People are represented as being angry about something in particular. There is a kind of political aim of the anger. They want to achieve something by being angry in public. So anger requires a target for it to matter politically. This is something that I've done quite a lot of work on with my colleague Mervi Pantti over the years and appears to be consistent over time.

By contrast, in stories about Trump's inauguration, anger appeared to become newsworthy in its own right. And in the vast majority of cases this unspecified anger, this target-less anger was that of Trump himself. This is important because describing anger as having a target both explains the anger and contributes to legitimizing it. By contrast, the unspecified anger of Trump and his supporters suggests that they're angry for no particular reason or cause. The image that emerges from the media coverage is that anger is essential to their identity and their worldview. They are angry people.

This essentializing of anger is quite central to understanding the place of angry populism as the emotional regime of the Trump era. It suggests that a particular brand of exclusionary populism cultivated by Trump depends upon the performance of anger as a way of dramatizing grievances. In fact, analysts suggested that Trump appealed to voters in large part because he saw the strategic utility of a new and angrier form of public discourse.

CNN noted this in its inauguration update: “Donald J Trump identified, long before anyone else did, the anger and desire for change that millions of Americans craved. He addressed that in frank, blunt terms that deeply resonated with millions who were fed up with Washington's political class and felt left behind in the globalizing economy.” This kind of widespread emphasis on Trump's performance of anger and his appeal to an aggrieved public through this anger, alongside the interest in the anger of protest and opponents, has had a significant consequence in terms of shaping public debate over his presidency.

It suggests that there is salience to this angry populism, implying that anger is a viable interpretive framework for understanding political discourse in this performance alongside understanding the motivations of political actors. More than that, it seems that Trump's populism works precisely because of the anger it expresses.

Anger is foundational to his appeal and to his political projects, but it's also what we might call an umbrella emotion, one that covers a wide variety of grievances and disaffections. I've done another study that looked at the coverage of anger in the 100 days following his inauguration. I found that mainstream media coverage has continued to interpret his policy decisions through the lens of his anger. For example, a Washington Post editorial on February 3, 2017, noted: “Donald Trump’s election was propelled by the wave of anti-globalization anger that is sweeping the
United States and other Western advanced economies. Trump has echoed that anger in his rhetoric. And now he is responding to that anger with policy.”

This has been a theme throughout his presidency. It's been used to describe everything from his trade wars, how he was angry and unglued when he started a trade war, to the constant firing rounds in the White House and beyond, and even to his response to the continued investigations into Russian interference in the US elections.

Trump's anger has become a dominant framework for understanding his presidency and understanding his brand of populism. I also want to note that these ways of talking create a climate that appears to open up for criminal action against those who have been marked out as outside the “we” group that's included in the people as imagined by populists.

For example, the FBI reported that 2016 represented a five year high in reported hate crimes, and the statistical analysis website Statista reporting a significant surge immediately following the presidential election.

I should note that we've seen very similar patterns in the U.K. after the EU referendum, where the Leave Campaign heavily relied on negative anti-immigration rhetoric and the fear and anger associated with migration. This kind of emotional regime of angry populism is worrying not just because of the anger it embodies but also because the emotional climate it creates and the actions that that facilitates.

This is not to suggest that there's a straightforward causal relationship between media discourses and racist hate crime, but rather that they form part of a climate that contributes to facilitating a view that these kinds of actions are acceptable.

I want to conclude, then, by briefly talking about some implications of this. First of all, I've argued that emotion has been historically denigrated in political thought and, as a result of that, in media and communication research. But, as media scholars, interested in politics and in populist politics in particular, we should take emotion seriously as an important political force for better and for worse.

I've tried to do this by looking at mediated anger in political life as a distinctive formation. I've proposed that we need to take a careful look at the role of such anger as a mobilizing emotion in contributing to explaining the rise of Donald Trump. I've also tried to demonstrate a shift in the emotional regime represented by media discourse as following Trump's inauguration, comparing it to coverage of Obama's first swearing in.
In particular, I have suggested that we've seen this shift towards an emotional regime of angry populism which renders anger a viable framework for interpreting political life and suggests that its performance is essential to the brand of populism represented by Trump.

I would also argue that there are a lot of complexities associated with the mediated construction of anger as a political emotion. It's not just a tool of political opportunists like Trump. The anger of Trump supporters as well as protesters against him tends to be given voice and perceived as both legitimate and pertinent.

Even if anger has long been denounced as a negative and dangerous emotion, it's also important to consider the ways in which protestors against Trump view it as positive and mobilizing. Indeed, one of the most recent studies I've done looked at how Twitter discussion which dealt with the family separation policy actually mobilized an emotional community based on the anger of people who were protesting against the policy. I would also say that this alone doesn't offer a way out of angry populism. It is also important to look at cases where related populist movements have failed.

What do the two people that we see here [Geert Wilders and Marine Le Pen] have in common, apart from having really expensively styled hair? They have both lost elections. They are both right-wing populists that were defeated by appeals for more inclusive societies and against the forms of xenophobic populism that they represent. Geert Wilders, well known for his anti-Islam stance, lost the Dutch general election in 2017 even though polls predicted that his party would finish first. Marine Le Pen lost the French elections to Emmanuel Macron, though it hasn't gone too well for Macron since then. Analysts suggest that one of the reasons Macron managed to defeat Le Pen was that he appealed successfully against the strident right-wing views she represented and for a more pro-European France. These examples remind us that collective and political emotions are dynamic and ever-changing and perhaps none more so than anger. It also shows that emotional regimes can always be contested no matter how deeply embedded they may seem.