

1. Powerful, exclusionary, populist nationalism centered on cult of a perceived redemptive, “infallible” leader. Rampant cronyism and corruption. Loyalty to the leader is paramount and often more important than competence.
2. Strengthen the state by subordinating the interests of individuals. Rejection/villainization of democracy, democratic institutions, and norms.
3. Political power derived from questioning reality, endorsing myth and rage, and promoting lies. Control of mass media, distorting belief in “truth”, promoting an alternate reality fixated on national decline and the blaming and rejection of liberal democracy.
4. “Action” and instinct over thought or reflection. Not focused on articulating doctrine, programs, ideas, or ideology.
5. Fixation/obsession with perceived national decline, humiliation, victimhood, national security, crime and punishment, it fosters a sense of the “nation” under attack.
6. Capitalizes on feelings about master races, their perceived “unjust” lot and rightful dominance over “inferior” peoples. Racism (often White Replacement “Theory”) is used to show that democratic ideals of freedom, inclusion, diversity, and equality are a threat. Opposes any initiatives or institutions that are racially, ethnically, or religiously diverse.
7. Pursues policies for racial purity and unity while removing those defined as not part of the nation. Identifying and targeting “enemies” or scapegoats as a unifying cause. Imprisons and/or murders opposition and minority group leaders, critics, artists, comedians... An anti-liberal, anti-Communist movement distinct from its “enemies” on the left but also its rivals on the right.
8. Supremacy of the military and embrace of paramilitarism in an uneasy, but effective collaboration with traditional elites. Fascists arm people and encourage, justify, and glorify violence as “redemptive”. Often seeking to expand territory through armed conflict.
9. Disdain for human rights. Rampant sexism.
10. Religion and government are intertwined.
11. Corporate power is protected and labor power is suppressed.
12. Fraudulent elections, undermining democratic norms, and creation of a one-party state.

Appeal? Why does this become permissible?

Fascism is not an ideology, but a reactionary political behavior – encouraging violent rejection of the status quo. Support comes from below and the fascist leader capitalizes on discontent and promotes “masculine” nationalism over universal values. That “bad” things “just happen” is unacceptable to the follower who is seeking explanations. Trauma (traditional lifestyles are uprooted or threatened by technological changes, wealth inequity, unequal access to goods and services, and/or changing social mores) allows the embrace of the irrational. Followers reclaim a sense of self-worth and dignity by venting against a world in which they feel unfairly judged and victimized. Contempt for truth and reason (reinforced by mass/social media) reflects the despair of the follower who is frightened, feels disempowered, and may be socially and spiritually adrift and cynical. Political rallies reinforce a sense of belonging, are fueled by confirmation bias, and encourages violence, rejection of and dominance over the so-called “other”.