Reinhard Heinisch | Christina Holtz-Bacha
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Political Populism

Handbook of Concepts, Questions and Strategies of Research

2nd revised and extended edition

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PREFACE

Reinhard Heinisch, Christina Holtz-Bacha and Oscar Mazzoleni

This Handbook is part of a series of works devoted to the study of political populism published by Nomos. The three editors of this volume also share overall responsibility for the entire series and view this Handbook, which has been revised and updated, as a conceptual introduction to the different questions and topics related to populism that are featured in the aforementioned series. We opted specifically for the title ‘political populism’ to demarcate the subject matter in this Handbook from the literature devoted to the study of cultural manifestations of populism, including popular religious beliefs. Thus, many of the concepts, issues and empirical cases analysed in this work should be viewed as calls for further research and, more broadly, an invitation to engage in scholarship on populism as it relates to political actors, political mobilisation and political institutions, as well as political discourse and style.

A project of this magnitude and range necessitated the collaboration of scholars from different disciplines – most notably political scientists, scholars of communication, historians and sociologists. In all cases, the authors were asked to bear the following points in mind when approaching their respective contributions. First, they were expected to use their own expertise and judgement to identify the pivotal issues, controversies and new directions in their respective areas of scholarship. Thus, contributors had considerable freedom to present their particular approaches. However, they were also asked to reflect on the core idea that populism can be conceived as a response to a crisis of conventional politics or, more precisely, a crisis of legitimacy that established institutions, mainstream political actors and the business of politics as usual have encountered. Second, due to the diversity of disciplines and research traditions, it was important that the Handbook would not present a uniform conceptualisation of and perspective on populism. Instead, the purpose of this Handbook was to introduce readers to a range of ideas. However, all contributors were asked to focus on current debates, discuss the dominant approaches to and the most prominent conceptualisations of the subject, and present shortcomings and criticisms in their respective areas of research.

While this Handbook includes chapters from different disciplines, it centers core aspects in political science and communication. These are arguably two disciplines whose insights into political populism are central to understanding the phenomenon and whose respective works most complement one another. Political scientists are keenly aware that media and communication play a significant role in the process of understanding populism’s appeal and impact, but they often lack the analytical tools to examine populism’s communication dimensions. Similarly, the rapidly growing political science literature on populism still has not yet had the impact on communication and media studies that one may expect. Thus, despite the increasing specialisation in the social sciences, it is necessary for scholars of different fields to also talk to one other and draw on each other’s ideas. Therefore, this book aims to foster a closer relationship between these two strands of scholarship.

Another goal of this Handbook is to focus on both empirical scholarship and current issues. As such, we do not present populism as a settled concept, but instead show the tension between different approaches and highlight the controversies and new directions that characterise activity in this research community. At the same time, we did not want to prevent the Handbook to become too eclectic. Therefore, the authors discuss several of the most widely used conceptualisations of populism but also highlight their respective shortcomings. In addition, this updated version includes new chapters on issues and policy areas that have since become relevant in populism studies.

The Challenges of and Opportunities Offered by Populism Research

Scholarship on populism has made substantial progress in the last two decades. After mostly historical and descriptive work from 1945 to the 1980s, which was focused on historical continuity, the 1990s saw an infusion of social science theories in the study of populism. Subsequently, after 2000, scholars began concentrate both on demand-side and supply-side aspects of radical right-wing populist politics and more clearly on populist parties, their representatives and supporters. In contemporary research works, goes to go beyond the narrow themes and policy issues, such as immigration, that have often characterised publications on populism and embrace the phenomenon in its entire complexity, especially that have been under researched. This also means dealing with emerging global issues, such as climate change, the coronavirus pandemic, and the development of digital politics and social media.

Populism's rise in popularity has presented scholars with various opportunities and problems. As research on populism has moved to the academic mainstream, securing project funding and presenting relevant research has become easier. At the same time, the term populism is almost universally employed to describe a large number of different political phenomena, political actors, policy decisions and regimes that often have little more in common than the label. The growing attention to populism has also increased the pressure on social scientists to come up with clear and easily communicable answers that satisfy the curiosity of people trying to understand the political changes unfolding from the Americas to Europe and beyond. The enormous interest in populism is drawing in new scholars who were not part of this previously close-knit research community. This development is highly welcome because it incorporates fresh perspectives and new insights. However, it also means that several ideas about populism that were once believed to be settled are now being called into question once again, renewing the impression that little has been learned thus far. At the same time, other scholars, for whom the question of conceptualisation is indeed settled, have embarked on the next phase of scholarship by no longer treating populism as an outsider or protest phenomenon, but as one that has taken hold in the centres of political power. As a result, scholars have begun in studying the impact of populism on governments, party systems and policymaking.

Despite the clearly global nature of political populism, research communities are still fairly segregated and remain reluctant to take issue with each other's approaches or draw on each other's insights and conceptualisations. For a long time, Western European researchers all but ignored decades' worth of works on Latin American and North American populism. These different ways of approaching the subject matter were also rooted in different research cultures and epistemologies. In fact, even within the European context, achieving more successful integration of the scholarship on populism in Western Europe, the Nordic countries, Central and Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans and the Mediterranean would be desirable. An even bigger challenge has been the effort to overcome disciplinary boundaries, such as those that exist between political science, history, sociology and communication. It is with these challenges and opportunities in mind that we approached the design of this Handbook. It presents a snapshot of social science scholarship on populism, which is both on the verge of new research agendas and in need of greater transdisciplinary and international cooperation.

Our Objectives

Handbooks seek to be as comprehensive as possible. While we agree that such a work needs to reflect a substantial number of different issues and geographic areas, selectivity and focus also matter: First, a Handbook is not an encyclopaedia but should rather point to those areas of research and discussions in the field that are most promising or most controversial. Thus, we have asked our authors to show why these topics matter within the overall debate and to identify the major controversies in their fields of research. Our contributors were also invited to demonstrate directions of progress and suggest where scholarship in their different areas might turn next. This was important, because we also wanted this Handbook to be especially useful for scholars just entering the populism research. Second, the Handbook is selective not only in its concentration on theory and empirical application, but also in its focus on contemporary expressions of the phenomenon. Thus, the various aspects of party-based populism in Europe form the core of the analysis. In addition, there are also extensive sections devoted to populism in the Americas and other novel manifestations of populism. Third, an important aspect is the focus on communication and the goal to bridge scholarship between communication and political science. Following the rise of populist parties, communication researchers have only recently taken up the topic. This coincided with the emergence of the internet and social media networks, which provide political actors with direct access to the electorate, thus shaking up the political communication process and the role of the traditional mass media. To emphasize the interconnectedness of political science and communication in understanding populism, this book combines their respective fields and presents the different types of analysis alongside each other.

We hope that the readers will take away a deeper understanding of the complexities and challenges of populism research. We also trust they will appreciate our intention not to convey definitive answers but rather to maintain a degree of openness towards different theoretical approaches, which are each elaborated with their respective strengths and weaknesses. Ultimately, it is for the readers to decide which ideas seem most persuasive and what avenues of enquiry they want to pursue. We hope that this Handbook will make a significant contribution to this process.

This new edition includes revised and updated versions of the chapters provided in the first edition and ten new contributions. Populism is an ongoing and open field of research, with growing numbers of publications every year on both traditional and new topics. This new edition intends to reflect this growing trend by presenting both consolidated and emerging issues. The Handbook consists of 34 chapters organised in four parts. The first one covers theories, approaches, conceptualisations and measurements in relation to political populism. The second part presents populist manifestations in Europe and the Americas; the third part is devoted to political communication; and the fourth part focuses on emerging phenomena and new research agendas. While it was not the book's intention to provide a geographically comprehensive account of populism and its manifestations, an effort was made to cover as many different cases and variations of populism in Europe and the Americas as possible. Throughout the Handbook, the focus lies on empirical research, and thus the conceptualisations and theoretical accounts introduced in the first part provide the tools for empirical analysis, either for cross-national comparisons or individual case studies in the subsequent chapters. The chapters generally end with a consideration of various unanswered questions and discuss topics for potential further research.

A Handbook is a collaborative endeavour and we, the editors, want to thank the many contributing authors for their dedication and commitment to the project. The deadline for submitting the chapters coincided with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, and we are grateful to the authors for managing to meet their deadlines and submit their chapters in these difficult times.

Apart from the editors and authors, we are especially grateful to Cecilia Biancalana, a postdoc researcher at the University of Lausanne, for corresponding with the authors and managing the texts during their various stages of development and review. We also wish to thank our many colleagues whose counsel and helpful comments on various chapters have helped improve them and have enriched this Handbook's content.

Table of Contents

PREFACE 5

List of Figures 13

List of Tables 15

INTRODUCTION 17

PART I: Defining and Analysing the Concept

CHAPTER 1: POPULISM: A HISTORY OF THE CONCEPT 47
Damir Skenderovic

CHAPTER 2: POPULISM AND POLITICAL REPRESENTATION 65
Alfio Mastropaolo

CHAPTER 3: CONCEPTUALISING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POPULISM AND THE RADICAL RIGHT 79
Dietmar Loch

CHAPTER 4: THE POPULIST RADICAL RIGHT AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS 93
Carlo Ruzza

CHAPTER 5: FIXING THE TAXONOMY IN POPULISM RESEARCH: BRINGING FRAME, ACTOR AND CONTEXT BACK IN 111
Reinhard Heinisch and Oscar Mazzoleni

CHAPTER 6: POPULISM AND DEMOCRACY: THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL CONSIDERATIONS 131
Robert A. Huber and Christian H. Schimpf

CHAPTER 7: THE GENERATIVE CONTEXTS OF POPULIST REGIMES 149
Carlos H. Waisman

CHAPTER 8: MEASURING POPULISM: A REVIEW OF CURRENT APPROACHES 163
Teun Pauwels

CHAPTER 9: RESEARCHING POPULISM QUANTITATIVELY: INDICATORS, PROXY MEASURES AND DATA SETS 177
Martin Dolezal and Marco Fölsch

PART II: Assessing the Success of Populist Actors in Europe and in the Americas

Europe

CHAPTER 10: POPULISM AND EUROSCEPTICISM: TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN? 195
Fabian Habersack and Carsten Wegscheider

CHAPTER 11: THE ELECTORAL BASIS OF POPULIST PARTIES 213
Gilles Ivaldi

CHAPTER 12: POPULIST PARTIES IN POWER AND THEIR IMPACT ON LIBERAL DEMOCRACIES IN WESTERN EUROPE 227
Tjitske Akkerman

CHAPTER 13: HOW FAR DOES NATIONALISM GO? AN OVERVIEW OF POPULIST PARTIES IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE 239
Sergiu Gherghina, Sergiu Miscoiu and Sorina Soare

CHAPTER 14: SOCIO-CULTURAL LEGACIES IN POST-TRANSITION SOCIETIES IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE AND THE RELATIONSHIP TO THE RESURGENCE OF RIGHT-WING EXTREMISM AND POPULISM IN THE REGION 257
Vlastimil Havlík and Miroslav Mareš

CHAPTER 15: ENTREPRENEURIAL POPULISM AND THE RADICAL CENTRE: EXAMPLES FROM AUSTRIA AND THE CZECH REPUBLIC 271
Reinhard Heinisch and Steven Saxonberg

CHAPTER 16: NEW POPULISM 291
Maria Elisabetta Lanzone

The Americas

CHAPTER 17: TRUMP'S POPULISM 307
Carlos de la Torre

CHAPTER 18: POPULISM IN THE UNITED STATES AND THE 2016 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION 321
Sandra Vergari

CHAPTER 19: POPULIST AND PROGRAMMATIC PARTIES IN LATIN AMERICAN PARTY SYSTEMS 333
María Esperanza Casullo and Flavia Freidenberg

CHAPTER 20: POPULIST PARTIES OF LATIN AMERICA: THE CASES OF ARGENTINA AND ECUADOR 347
María Esperanza Casullo and Flavia Freidenberg

CHAPTER 21: POPULISM AND DEMOCRATIC REPRESENTATION IN LATIN AMERICA 361
Saskia P. Ruth and Kirk A. Hawkins

PART III: Populism and Communication

CHAPTER 22: THE SYMBIOSIS BETWEEN MEDIA AND POPULISM: CONCEPTS, ISSUES, EVIDENCE 383
Lone Sorensen

CHAPTER 23: MEDIA POLITICS AND POPULISM AS A MOBILISATION RESOURCE 399
Franca Roncarolo

CHAPTER 24: REFORM IN WAR: THE MEDIA POLICIES OF LATIN AMERICA'S LEFTIST POPULISTS 413
Philip Kitzberger

CHAPTER 25: PERFORMING POPULISM: COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES FOR POLARISATION, PROVOCATION AND FEARMONGERING 429
Christina Holtz-Bacha

CHAPTER 26: POPULIST AND NON-POPULIST MEDIA: THEIR PARADOXICAL ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND DIFFUSION OF A RIGHT-WING IDEOLOGY 441
Benjamin Krämer

CHAPTER 27: DIGITAL POPULISM: HOW THE WEB AND SOCIAL MEDIA ARE SHAPING POPULISM IN WESTERN DEMOCRACIES 457
Giuliano Bobba

PART IV: Populism Between Emerging and Consolidated Research Topics

CHAPTER 28: SOCIETAL MALAISE IN TURBULENT TIMES: INTRODUCING A NEW EXPLANATORY FACTOR FOR POPULISM FROM A CROSS-NATIONAL EUROPE-WIDE PERSPECTIVE 471
Wolfgang Aschauer

CHAPTER 29: THE GENDER DIMENSION OF POPULISM 499
Sarah C. Dingler and Zoe Lefkofridi

CHAPTER 30: THE BODY IN POPULISM 515
Paula Diehl

CHAPTER 31: POPULISM AND ISLAMOPHOBIA 527
Hans-Georg Betz

CHAPTER 32: POPULISM AND LAW 543
Manuel Anselmi, Paul Blokker and Oscar Mazzoleni

CHAPTER 33: POPULISM AND CLIMATE CHANGE: A MATCH MADE IN HEAVEN? 555
Robert A. Huber

CHAPTER 34: POPULISM FACING THE CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK 569
Cecilia Biancalana, Reinhard Heinisch and Oscar Mazzoleni

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS 585

INDEX 593

List of Figures

Figure 5.1: Overview of the Principal Definitions and Conceptualisation 124

Figure 5.2: Overview of the Application of Frame Analysis to Empirical Research (Example) 125

Figure 6.1: Democracy Scores Compared: Austria (1990-2012) 141

Figure 6.2: Democracy Scores Compared: Hungary (1990-2012) 142

Figure 6.3: Democracy Scores Compared: Slovakia (1990-2012) 142

Figure 6.4: Democracy Scores Compared: Venezuela (1990-2012) 143

Figure 10.1. Effects of Ideology and Populism on Euroscepticism 205

Figure 10.2. Effects of Left-Right and Populism on Predicted Values of Euroscepticism 208

Figure 13.1 Best Electoral Results in Parliamentary Elections 245

Figure 13.2: A Comparison of the Radical Right with Nearby Competitors in Bulgaria 246

Figure 13.3: The Number of Legislative Terms 247

Figure 21.1: The Impact of Populism on Formal Representation 370

Figure 21.2: The Impact of Populism on Descriptive Representation 373

Figure 21.3: The Impact of Populism on Substantive Representation 374

Figure 23.1: Media Coverage and Citizens' Attitude Toward Anti-Elitist and/or Exclusionary Messages 405

Figure 23.2: Populistic Communication Style as a Mobilisation Resource During Campaigning and Governing 408

Figure 28.1: The Macro-Micro-Macro Explanation Scheme for Populism in Europe 472

Figure 28.2: A Typology of Six European Regions Based on the Varieties of Capitalism Approach and Welfare State Research 476

Figure 28.3: Satisfaction with Society, 2006, 2012 and 2018 (Northern and Western Europe) 481

Figure 28.4: Trust in Social Relations, 2006, 2012 and 2018 (Northern and Western Europe) 481

Figure 28.5: Satisfaction with Societal Developments, 2006, 2012 and 2018 (Eastern and Southern Europe) 482

Figure 28.6: Trust in Social Relations, 2006, 2012 and 2018 (Eastern and Southern Europe) 482

Figure 34.1: Health and Economic Feelings of Being Affected by the COVID-19 pandemic 577

Figure 34.2: Populist Attitudes and the Degree of Subjective Affectedness by the COVID-19 Crisis 579

Figure 34.3: Conjoint Experiment Showing the Change in Probability of Selecting Unconstitutional Versus Constitutional Anti-COVID Measures When Comparing Populist and Non-Populist Respondents 581

List of Tables

Table 6.1: Summary of Effects 137

Table 8.1: Overview of the Different Methods of Measuring Populism 168

Table 8.2: Four Measurements of Populism among German Parties (2002-2013) 170

Table 9.1: Comparative Data Sets on Populism 182

Table 10.1. Populism and Opposition to European Integration at the Party Level ... 204

Table 10.2. Populism and Opposition to European Integration at the Voter Level .. 207

Table 12.1: Radical Right-Wing Populist Parties in Office 230

Table 13.1: A Comparison between Several Features of Populist Discourse in Central and Eastern Europe 249

Table 15.1a: Elections for the Austrian National Parliament (Lower House) 277

Table 15.1b: Elections for the Czech National Parliament (Lower House) 278

Table 15.2: Factor Analysis of Social Liberalism for the Czech Republic 282

Table 15.3: Cronbach Alpha Test of Reliability for Austria 283

Table 15.4: Logistic Models for the Czech Republic: Voting for ANO1 284

Table 15.5: Logistic Models for Austria: Voting for Team Stronach 285

Table 19.1: Populist and Programmatic Models of Party Institutionalisation in Latin America 343

Table 20.1 Populist Parties of Latin America: The Cases of Alianza País and Peronism 356

Table 21.1: Sample of Latin American Presidents 377

Table 28.1: Results of the Multilevel Analysis to Explain Societal Malaise in the European Union 485

Table 28.2: Operationalisation of Macro Indicators 491

Table 28.3: Operationalisation and Descriptive Overview of Background Variables and Indicators of Social Integration in EU Countries (ESS data 2018) .. 492

Table 28.4: Operationalisation and Descriptive Overview of Socio-structural Indicators in EU Countries (ESS data 2018) 493

Table 28.5: Operationalisation of Societal Perceptions of Crisis with ESS Indicators 494

Table 34.1: Regression Models for the Degree of Perceived Affectedness by COVID-19 578

INTRODUCTION

Reinhard Heinisch, Christina Holtz-Bacha and Oscar Mazzoleni

Here to Stay: Populism in the Spotlight[1]

At the time when the first edition of this Handbook was published in 2017, the populist challenge to democratic government was a dominant subject in the media worldwide. The election of Donald Trump and Brexit had prompted *The Washington Post* to call 2016 ‘the year of populism’. Since then the success and endurance of populist politicians and parties have scarcely been the surprise they once were. In Europe, there are no longer countries that can be considered ‘safe’ from successful populist parties. Whereas, for example, Germany was once considered relatively immune to far right populism because of its history and the UK was thought to have a barrier against resurgent third parties in the form of its first-past-the-post electoral system, these expectations clearly no longer apply. The Alternative for Germany (Alternative für Deutschland, AfD) has since established itself as a potent political force throughout Germany. The United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) and its successor, the Brexit Party, were major forces behind Britain’s decision to leave the European Union and the post-Brexit process. Even the Nordic countries – often admired for their efficient and transparent political systems, corruption-free governments, extensive welfare states and high living standards – have each developed formidable populist parties. In Denmark and Norway, these parties have served in public office and helped shape national policy. Also, Southern Europe saw the emergence of radical left and right populist protest parties, several of which have since entered the government in Greece, Spain and Italy. In fact, in various EU member states, including Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy and Spain, more than one radical populist party has become an important political player on the national stage.

Yet, the years that followed also delivered setbacks to populists. In Austria, the candidate for the presidency supported by the Green Party (Die Grünen – Die Grüne Alternative) unexpectedly beat the candidate of the radical right populist Freedom Party (Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs, FPÖ). Again in Austria, the conservative far right coalition government formed in 2017 collapsed after fewer than two years in office when a videotape surfaced showing the leader of the Freedom Party of Austria Heinz-Christian Strache in a highly compromising political situation. In France, Marine Le Pen’s quest for the presidency was unsuccessful in the end, when, unexpectedly, a new political figure, Emmanuel Macron, beat both the establishment parties and the populist far right. In Italy too, the populists initially triumphed, forming a government consisting of the populist leftist Five Star Movement (Movimento 5 Stelle, M5S) and the far right League (Lega, previously Lega Nord, LN), whose leader Matteo Salvini became minister of the interior and dominated Italian government politics. When he overreached by trying to trigger new elections, his erstwhile coalition partner switched sides and formed a government without Salvini. In Germany, the Alternative for Germany (Alternative für Deutschland, AfD) performed well in national elections, coming in third in 2017. It subsequently became the largest opposition party and entered the regional parliament in every German state. Yet, it too seems to have plateaued and continues to be divided between its extremist wing and its more far right, conservative orientation. In Denmark, the far right was soundly beaten by the Social Democrats (Socialdemokraterne) in elections in 2019. The 2020 US elections saw the defeat of Donald Trump at the hands of a politician who embodied the polar opposite in terms of persona and political sentiment. Although Brexit became a reality, its torturous process und the upheaval it caused in the UK made other populist parties think twice about making similar demands (Heinisch et al. 2020). Lastly, in Greece, the populist party SYRIZA (Coalition of the Radical Left – Progressive Alliance) was voted out of office.

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[1] This research received funding from the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under the grant agreement n. 822337 (Project 'PaCE').

However, despite these setbacks, populism is clearly here to stay. The Austrian far right was beaten back in part because the Conservatives adopted much of the rhetoric and policies of radical right-wing populists. Also, the victorious Social Democrats in Denmark often sounded themselves more like the far right. In France, the erstwhile popular Macron has been battling unpopularity, large-scale protests and one crisis after another. In the US, even the defeat of Donald Trump seemed to some like a victory for populism given that he continues to have a lock on his Republican Party and defied expectations and poll numbers by further increasing his support among voters. In Italy, it may just be a matter of time before Salvini can return to government. In other countries, radical populists continue to govern, among others, in Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary, and as part of coalitions in Italy and Spain. Taken together, the vote share of parties generally considered populist by empirical scholarship grew in Europe from 11.81 per cent in 2000 to 27.26 per cent in 2019. Of these formations, 15.11 per cent can be classified as far right and 5.31 per cent as far left populist, whereas a further 6.84 per cent were other types of populists (ParlGov and PopuList data). Even at EU level, the growth of populism over the past two decades has been extraordinary. There, the vote share of populist parties assembled in the European Parliament for the period 2019-2024 stands at 30.6 per cent (Stockemer and Amengay 2020, 3). This constitutes an enormous growth if we consider that, prior to 2004, the percentage of Members of the European Parliament (MEP) had been only 5.1 per cent (of which 4.3 per cent were right-wing populists), with their combined vote share increasing to 14.2 per cent in 2004 and to 17.8 per cent in 2009. It is noteworthy that, initially, left-wing populists grew more quickly and were able to more than triple their presence (1.2 per cent to 4.1 per cent). Subsequently, it was the far right's turn as they increased their vote shares from 13.5 per cent to 20.9 per cent in 2014 and to 26.4 per cent in 2019 (Stockemer and Amengay 2020).

As these lines were written, the world was in the grip of the COVID-19 pandemic, the implications of which for populism and its continued success were not yet clear. However, early trends suggested that populism stands to benefit in various ways. People feeling negatively affected by coronavirus-related policy decisions taken by experts and political elites, chafing under lockdowns and mask-mandates, seeing their livelihoods at risk as businesses are shut down, or perceiving liberal democracies as too technocratic and ineffective to deal with a health and economic emergency may have nowhere else to turn but to parties outside the mainstream. It seems clear that both the coronavirus crisis and many aspects associated with it are being increasingly politicised and will continue to shape ongoing trends in democratic regimes (e.g. Bobba and Hubé 2021).

Understanding Populism as a Complex Phenomenon

Aiming to understand political populism, scholarship tends to begin with a common starting point: the people who embody ‘the heart of democracy’ (Akkerman et al. 2014) and are viewed as sovereign and virtuous. People would constitute a silent but often ignored majority, forming the basis of a good society (Canovan 1981; Mény and Surel 2002; Mudde 2004). ‘The people’ in populist diction are the ‘plebs’, the ‘underdogs’, the ‘heartland residents’, the ‘natives’, the ‘forgotten’, the ‘true’ majority, the ‘non-outsiders’ (Taggart 2002; Laclau 2005; Urbinati 2019a; 2019b). As populists call upon ‘real’ people to vote for them, this too can refer to authentic as in ‘salt of the earth’, ‘deeply rooted’ and ‘middle of the country’, or it can have a strong ethnic and nativist dimension in the sense of non-immigrant and non-minority. In leftist populism, the concept of ‘real’ or authentic may have a class or social connotation, referring to working people. Thus, the construct of ‘real people’ can have different meanings for different populist actors in different contexts. The construction of ‘the elites’ also strongly varies. Although they are generally seen as ‘arrogant, selfish, incompetent, and often also corrupt’ (Rooduijn 2015, 4), they represent a much wider variety of entities. These comprise, for example, ‘the others’ and/or ‘dangerous others’ (Albertazzi and McDonnell 2008); out(side)-groups (Heinisch 2003); the political establishment and the mainstream media (Jagers and Walgrave 2007); sub-national, national and/or supranational entities (Mazzoleni 2005); bankers, large companies, secret societies, intellectuals, academics and writers (Brubaker 2017; Blokker and Anselmi 2020). Beyond their common references to the people and the elites, different strands of populism represent varied legacies. These have been associated with both class divisions and centre–periphery cleavages, and the dialectic processes resulting from this. Populism’s provenance is the ‘heartland’, a euphemism for the hinterland, where people feel imposed upon by far-off elites in the central cities. The common thread populism represents in its various manifestations is the rejection of societal and political elites. And one of the central arguments in this book is that political populism is largely a response to a fundamental crisis of legitimacy of political institutions and actors.

When populism surfaced as a broader trend in Western Europe some three decades ago, it was initially perceived as a new phenomenon despite political precursors such as Qualunquismo in Italy in the 1940s and Poujadism in France in the 1950s. In the Americas, by comparison, populism has had a long tradition and rather different ideological associations. The term populism is inseparably linked to the word *populus* – the people –, from which it partly derives its meaning. It is also closely connected to the adjective ‘popular’, with which its shares operative logic. Populists must first and foremost remain popular to maintain credibility and legitimacy. Like the *populares,* pre-imperial Roman senators who stood in opposition to the *optimates*, the senatorial aristocracy, populists may be politically self-serving, but they need to be perceived as serving above all the interests of ordinary people. Akin to ancient Rome, where these populist senators were associated with the plebs, the unsophisticated ‘common folk’, the populists of today tend to find their voters especially among the ranks of blue-collar workers, those without university level education, and people from small towns and rural areas.

The etymology of the term populism in Anglo-Saxon and Western European usage, as Damir Skenderovic suggests in Chapter 1, is closely associated with the history of populism in the US, which arguably began with the ‘Jacksonian revolution’. In the early part of the nineteenth century, Andrew Jackson styled himself as the advocate of the yeoman farmers, the simple homesteaders and frontiersmen, whose support carried the outsider Jackson to the presidency. His followers had lost patience with the policies and posturing of the coastal elites and wanted to wrest power away from big business and the Jeffersonian 'aristocracy' in office in Washington. In the European context, Ghita Ionescu and Ernest Gellner (1969) were among the first to draw attention to populism as a problem that, in their view, superseded even that posed by communism. In an important collection of essays edited in 1969, Ionescu and Gellner paraphrased Marx and Engels by using the opening words 'A Spectre is haunting the world – Populism' and demanded that scholarship devote more attention to its study. About a decade later, the influential political theorist Margaret Canovan made an important contribution to the growing scholarship with her major work *Populism* (1981), in which she developed research strategies that would later prove significant for empirical scholarship. Whereas populism is a relatively recent phenomenon in most European countries, it has much longer roots in Latin America. There, charismatic political figures like Juan Perón and Getúlio Vargas, who pursed authoritarian leadership styles, were early but influential subjects of study, spawning an extensive and rich scholarly tradition (Weyland 2001; 2017). There, the influential Marxist philosopher Ernesto Laclau (1977; 2005) noted the connection between populism and bouts of modernisation pressure, which the political system was unable to channel into a stable democratic institutional development. In its absence, charismatic personalities created a popular hegemonic bloc through their discourse, through which these populist leaders could mobilise support and use it to their political ends.

Although it is easy to observe and even measure the segments of the population that support populism, the 'people', as evoked in populist rhetoric and imagery, are often vague and ill-defined. 'What people?' Alfio Mastropaolo asks in Chapter 2 on populist representation, since populism often chooses to be purposefully ambiguous about the people it wants to represent. However, not every form of protest by or every electoral success of a far left or far right party is attributable to populism. One engages in problematic oversimplification if all manners of unconventional or unexpected political developments are subsumed under the label of 'populism'. Crucially, there is often the conflation of the everyday use and media notion of the term 'populism' with the way the concept is understood in the social sciences. The first tends to mean a garish or folksy style politicians adopt to appear provocative or polemic so as to appeal to certain voter segments. However, this is quite different from the way much of the social sciences understand populism, as will also become clear from this book.

Ideology, Discourse, Style

Nearly as ubiquitous as articles and commentaries on populism is the assertion that it is difficult to define. Accordingly, populism is believed to have a complicated history and to be closely connected to various belief systems. In relation to this, Dietmar Loch writes about 'Conceptualising the Relationship between Populism and the Radical Right' in Chapter 3, where he discusses the party families to which radical right-wing populist parties belong. His contribution also focuses on their core agenda of advocating nativist protectionism in a globalised world. Indeed, in the field of populism research, there have been numerous conceptualisations, which are themselves derived from several fundamental approaches that differ, as has already been mentioned, in their ideas on whether populism is primarily ideational, discursive, stylistic or strategic. While the details of this debate, along with a more nuanced conceptualisation, will be discussed throughout this book, it is important to understand that these differences in approach have much to do with the way populism has been concretely experienced in distinct historical, political and social contexts. In Europe, the most influential approach in empirical research to date was put forth by the Dutch Scholar Cas Mudde (2004). In 'The Populist Zeitgeist', he defines populism as 'an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, "the pure people" versus "the corrupt elite", and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people'. This conceptualisation forms the basis of what is often called the ideational approach to populism (Hawkins et al. 2018). It conceives of populism as a 'thin' ideology or set of ideas that can be activated in people and which can be combined with 'thick' ideologies to form radical right-wing and radical left-wing populism.

Other scholars have conceived of the concept quite differently, such as Aslanidis (2016a) (*populism as a discursive claim*), Moffitt (2016) (*populism as a political style, performance and representation*) and Takis (2019) (*populism as illiberal democracy*), who all provided their own alternative accounts. This echoes significant criticism that the application of the ideational model may be too reductionist, which especially concerns scholars working on populism outside Western Europe (Aslanidis 2016; de la Torre and Mazzoleni 2019). Even Michael Freeden (2016) himself, whose work on thin ideologies inspired the appropriation of this concept in theorising about populism, distanced himself from the notion that populism is a thin-centred ideology. In his view, it is 'too thin' to be meaningfully conceived as an ideology. As a result, less restrictive versions of the ideational approach think of populism in terms of degree, whereas in its strict form, populism is categorical. For empirical scholarship, this matters less because quantitative indicators generally measure the extent of a phenomenon, not the absolute. Building on these approaches and criticism of the 'dominant paradigm' in Chapter 5, Reinhard Heinisch and Oscar Mazzoleni suggest, for instance, a finely grained framework for empirical research that seeks to bridge existing conceptualisations by conceiving populism as both a discourse and a practice. This framework emphasises aspects of populism that the ideational approach deemphasised, but which may help explain its success and widespread discursive practice. Populists aim primarily at responsive politics and thus often make intrinsically ambivalent claims that challenge the status quo in favour of people's empowerment and elite change. Populism's affinity to eschew dogma and adapt its message to what is popular, its propensity for incongruous or contradictory claims, and its frequent ambiguity in position-taking on most but their core issues, in short populism's chameleonic quality, sets it apart from its radical and extremist rivals as well as from its consistent mainstream competitors.

Leadership, Protest and Organisation

Populism is not only a matter of discourse or ideology. Some authors identify organisational patterns in it, arguing populism expresses strategic linkages with unorganised followers through personalistic leadership (Weyland 2017; Barr 2018). This approach has some advantages in that it highlights the relevance of populism as a relationship with and within a heterogeneous constituency. This highlights the role of the 'charismatic' leader in shaping the 'true' people, the relevance of emotions and certain forms of mobilisation in the pursuit and preservation of power. Populism capitalises on and exploits social grievances in society through leaders and certain repertoires of action (Jansen 2011). Within this perspective, one might, for example, focus on social roots and the link between political parties and social movements, as Carlo Ruzza suggests in Chapter 4.

Although movement specialists and party scholars regrettably do not collaborate with each other very often, we should not lose sight of the many affinities between the phenomena they each study. First, a movement perspective may allow us to understand the foundational moments of a populist insurgence, as was the case with the AfD in Germany (Berbuir, Lewandowsky and Siri 2015). Second, often the difference between a party and a movement may be more a function of a scholar's need to categorise and make distinctions than with a manifest empirical cleavage. While protest parties, including populist ones, have embraced repertoires of action and frames of social movements to mobilise networks of individuals, such as employing social media (Kitschelt 2006; Aslanidis 2016b), many social movements have developed forms of institutionalisation and professionalisation, as has been shown by resource mobilisation theory (McCarthy and Zald 2002). Third, social movement perspectives, along with a strategic conceptualisation of populism, provide a way to move beyond a Western European focus, which seems particularly relevant for understanding the activism behind the Trump phenomenon in the United States. Formally, Donald Trump's more ardent grassroots supporters are counted among the Republican base and clearly play a role in that party's primaries. However, like their Tea Party predecessors, the Make-America-Great-Again or MAGA activists have more in common with a movement and remain beyond the control of the formal party. They have also made clear their intention and ability to break with the Republicans and create their own electoral platform should the former distance themselves from Trump. Whether or not populist parties are characterised by low institutionalisation and unmediated relationships between authoritarian leaders and followers, such as in the US, depends on the context and political legacy. In Western Europe, where mass party legacies and formal grassroots party membership endure, successful populist parties have been able to survive their founder leaders precisely because of developing strong institutionalisation and party organisation (Heinisch and Mazzoleni 2016).

Party Systems, Liberal Democracy and Populist Regimes

The surge of populism has to be seen in relation to changes in political parties and political systems. It is specifically connected with modernisation, its impact on both established and new democracies and how established parties reacted to these changes. If we regard modernisation as having contributed to a 'silent revolution' (Inglehart 1977), which we elaborate on further below, the growth of populist and other outsider parties constitutes something of a (not so) silent 'counter revolution' (Ignazi 1992). Mainstream parties have tended to manage such change by offering technocratic policy solutions that are often indistinguishable from those of their establishment competitors, which in turn provides opportunities for outside actors to present themselves as agents of radical change. Populism itself and the emergence of populist actors as influential political figures have increasingly come to shape national and international politics. Thus, a recent wave of populism research is centred more closely around its effects on and consequences for party systems and democratic institutions. An important initial strand of this literature deals with the interaction between populist and mainstream parties, with specific attention paid to policy influence (Akkerman, de Lange, Rooduijn 2016; Albertazzi and Vampa 2021; Bale and Rovira Kaltwasser 2021; Pereyra Doval and Souroujon 2021). In many countries, especially where populists are not in a dominant position, mainstream parties have pushed back, employing several strategies that range from selective exclusion to full accommodation. In some cases, such as in Belgium, the radical populists were effectively isolated in a political *cordon sanitaire*; in other countries mainstream parties adopted populist ideas or 'parroted the pariah' (van Spanje and van der Brug 2007) in an effort to steal back their voters.

Another major strategy entailed 'defanging' the radical political actors by bringing them into government, as was tried by the Austrian Conservatives in 2000, when they formed a coalition with the FPÖ and broke a taboo of sorts among member countries of the EU at the time. As we move away from the long-consolidated party systems of Western Europe to political systems in (post)transition or that have been formed relatively recently, such those as in Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans, the complexity is even greater as the distinction between mainstream and radical political outsiders becomes murkier (Minkenberg 2010). Since strong populist parties, in particular right-wing formations, have become dominant actors within political systems, increasing attention has been devoted to the impact of authoritarian tendencies on liberal democratic norms and practices. The concept of a populist regime seems to be called into question when principles of liberal and representative democracy are attacked, not only from outside but from within the state and its leading political exponents.

In general, the literature on democracy and populism has consisted of two camps. One has generally argued that despite all its problems, populism may mitigate what scholars have called a growing crisis of representation (Mair 2002; Taggart 2002; Kriesi 2014). As populist parties succeed in breaking up sclerotic political structures and drawing previously marginalised or depoliticised population groups into the political process, populist mobilisation may in fact improve the quality of democracy. Few have tackled this question empirically on a large scale, especially by comparing Latin America and Europe. In this sense, Chapter 6 by Robert A. Huber and Christian H. Schimpf is an exception as they provide a comprehensive theoretical debate on and detailed empirical analysis of the relationship between populism and democracy. A second strand of literature underscores the relevance of populism as a regime that differs from democracy and related polity dimensions (Chapter 7, Carlos H. Waisman). Thus, populism is seen as threat to liberal democracy and the rule of law (Blokker 2019; Urbinati 2019a; 2019b;). According to this view, instead of accepting checks and balances, powerful populist actors demand majoritarian voting and/or plebiscitary forms of political decision-making, which are better suited to the mass mobilisation strategies in which populists excel. Moreover, by suggesting that established parties are all alike, populists engage in 'de-differentiation' (Schedler 1996, 295) and deny pluralism and the representative function of other parties. Divisions among members of the community are seen instead as the result of outsider meddling so that compromises designed to resolve differences are seen to serve the interests of outsiders and are often regarded as less than fully legitimate (Müller 2018).

Demand-Side Perspectives

Which perspective an investigator chooses will depend on their research question and the level of analysis. At the individual level, when it comes to voters and politicians, the ideational school can offer important insights into the relationship between attitudes, preferences and behaviour and thus readily provide plausible causal explanations for the success of the phenomenon. At the level of party systems or political systems, other frameworks may be more helpful, such as when examining the effect of a decline in antagonism in politics and its consequences (Mouffe 2000; Müller 2002; Enyedi 2016). In this context, it is worth noting that cultural norms and values underlie democratic regimes. To the extent that citizens fear losing control over important political and economic decisions which affect their lives, they become receptive to the promise of returning to a stable order in which everyone has a clear place. Populism, in combination with radical right notions such as authoritarianism and nativism, becomes attractive to voters who feel abandoned or ignored by the established political parties. Its emotional appeal lies in recreating a community that seems to have been lost to modernisation (Bauman 2001). Trump's slogan 'Make America Great Again' captures this populist appeal perfectly by promising to obtain in the future a past that seems to have been lost in the present. The idea of restoring sovereignty to the people may be seen as a central political demand in populism (Basile and Mazzoleni 2020).

At the same time, the rise of the new middle class, growing levels of education and the increasing importance of new technologies has not only resulted in economic changes but also established new political orientations that have increasingly shaped political contestation. What Inglehart (1977) had termed the 'silent revolution', a noticeable shift in the 1970s and beyond towards green, liberal and postmodern value orientations, subsequently triggered a backlash (Norris and Inglehart 2019). Ignazi (1992, 3) labelled the electoral response by people alienated by the trends of modernisation a 'silent counter revolution'. He also noted that, in part, the emerging radical right parties were not connected with the old far right with their 'fascist imprint' but new formations benefiting from changes in the cultural domain and in mass beliefs favouring radicalisation and system polarisation (ibid., 3). Thus, the challenge for scholarship is both a theoretical and an empirical one. In quantitative approaches, major obstacles to empirical research on populism had long been the lack of relevant and reliable data on key indicators and on a wider selection of countries. Another problem was the frequent use of proxy and partial measures, which continually raised questions of internal and external validity. Yet, this situation has improved in recent years as new comprehensive data sets with valid measures have become available, as will be discussed by Martin Dolezal and Marco Fölsch in Chapter 9 in this Handbook. Within the ideational approach, Chapter 8 by Teun Pauwels presents methods of operationalising and measuring populism empirically. On the so-called demand side, referring to the political preferences of voters, surveys can determine citizens' attitudes, whereas on the supply side, analyses of party manifestos and leaders' speeches can detect the populism contained in party programmes and policies. This does not mean all issues related to the link between supply-side and demand-side approaches can be easily fixed without a truly relational perspective (Ostiguy, Panizza and Moffitt 2021, 7–8).

Regional Variations

Despite its commonalities, populism boasts a varied history on different continents each with its different contexts of time and culture. This heterogeneity of legacies across regions is made more complex by the growing number of political systems and circumstances affected by populism, and the ability of populist parties to adapt to local circumstances has added new layers of complication if we try to understand populism's causes and effects. These developments have presented obstacles to a universally shared understanding of the phenomenon and thus a coherent conceptualisation of it. The variation in the way in which populism has been perceived at different stages and in different localities has shaped how it is understood by the public and also by scholars.

The Western European Populist Right: From Protest Politics to Migration and Identity

In Western Europe, radical populism first appeared as a major phenomenon after the Second World War in the form of Poujadism, which referred to a movement of 'common man' populism led by Pierre Poujade. In the 1950s, his forceful blend of anti-intellectualism, xenophobia, antisemitism and anti-parliamentarism combined an anti-dirigiste tax revolt with a sociocultural agenda in which state bureaucrats and ethnic others were the villains and small shopkeepers the heroes. Populism resurfaced in the 1970s and 1980s mainly in the form of radical anti-system protests. In 1972, the former Danish lawyer Mogens Glistrup founded the Progress Party (Fremskrittspartiet) to protest against his country's high taxes. Its enormous popularity soon made his party the second largest in Denmark and spawned a sister party in Norway. Whereas taxes and an overbearing (welfare) state were fuelling protest sentiments in Scandinavia, excessive forms of insider politics and *partitocrazia* were stoking the anger of citizens in parts of continental Europe, such as Austria, France and Italy. The perception that mainstream parties had a monopoly on power, used to engage in extensive clientelism and were often implicated in high profile cases of political corruption prepared the ground for political outsiders and new formations to take on the political establishment. The National Front (Front National, FN) in France (now the National Rally, Rassemblement National, FN) and the aforementioned FPÖ are two early examples. In other instances, populist parties sprang up in the context of secessionist protests against 'corrupt' or 'non-responsive' national governments, such as the Flemish Block (Vlaams Blok, VB) in Belgium and the LN in Italy. Protests against the erosion of national sovereignty through accession to the European Union was another factor in the rise of populist protests, as exemplified by the Swiss People's Party (Schweizerische Volkspartei, SVP), an early champion of the anti-European cause, which ran several referendum campaigns that contributed to keeping Switzerland outside the EU. Another motivating factor for anti-European populists in the richer Western European and Nordic member states was the accession of poor countries from Eastern Europe and the Balkans to the EU, given that this required significant subsidies from the wealthier members and caused substantial labour migration across Europe.

As populist parties mutated from middle-class protest parties into parties for voters who felt threatened by modernisation and internationalisation, especially men with lower levels of education in traditional and non-professional occupations, populists adapted their agenda accordingly. The fact that radical right-wing populist parties were less dogmatic than other far right formations, which were more attached to their ideological principles, was an advantage in the electoral marketplace. The current strength of populist parties in Europe raises the question of its electoral basis, which is examined by Gilles Ivaldi in Chapter 11, which probes the motivations of voters in supporting such formations. The politics of identity, anti-immigration positions, Euroscepticism, criticism of globalisation and free trade, as well as law and order became fixtures in the programmes of nearly all populist parties across the continent (Minkenberg 2001; Mudde 2007, 158–98; van Spanje 2010; Rooduijn et al. 2014). The European financial and economic crisis only deepened these sentiments. However, no agenda has been more important to populists in recent years than the issue of refugees, migration, security and also Islam, which has resonated across Europe but has been especially salient in Austria, Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Italy, Denmark, Switzerland and Norway (see, for example, Marzouki et al. 2016). As a consequence of electoral success, one of the most recent transformations of populism in Western Europe is its increasing role in public office either by supporting minority governments or entering government office outright. However, government participation always exposes populist parties to mainstreaming and potential change. The complex effects of this step on the parties themselves and on policy are examined in Chapter 12 on ‘Populist Parties in Power and Their Impact on Liberal Democracies in Western Europe’ by Tjitske Akkerman. Nonetheless, the clearly defined pattern of populist outsider opposition versus insider mainstream government may be breaking down as a result of these developments, something that has already happened in Eastern European countries.

Identity Politics in Post-Transition Societies: Populism in Central and Eastern Europe

In Central and Eastern Europe, as well as in the Balkans, populism, as discussed by Sergiu Gherghina, Sergiu Miscoiu and Sorina Soare in Chapter 13, seems to be ubiquitous. In these regions, it is not merely an oppositional phenomenon, as is mostly the case in Western Europe, but appears to be an attribute of the major parties and even some governments. Bulgaria, Poland, Slovakia and Hungary are most often associated with it and each have competing groups with similarly radical right-wing and populist programmes. However, the chameleon-like nature of far right and populist parties (Taggart 2000), along with the fluid character of the political systems across the region, also makes it more difficult to identify and classify political actors as being clearly populist. As a result, there has been much debate about whether political leaders like the Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and his party Fidesz (Hungarian Civic Alliance) should be labelled populist or simply conservative nationalist. The same can be said of the various Polish governments controlled by the Law and Justice party (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, PiS). In Chapter 14, Vlastimil Havlík and Miroslav Mareš discuss socio-cultural legacies in post-transition societies and the emergence of a ‘crowded world of populist politics’ (Heinisch 2008, 29), in which populist actors need to differentiate themselves from each other by adopting a variety of positions. The variability of populism also means that in relatively stable party systems, new populist parties can suddenly appear and thrive. Reinhard Heinisch and Steven Saxonberg highlight such a case in Chapter 15, showing how populism can also manifest itself in the ‘radical centre’, as exemplified by the Czech party Action of Dissatisfied Citizens (Akce nespokojených občanů, ANO) and its leader Babiš. This Central Eastern European case is one of several prominent examples elsewhere, from Silvio Berlusconi to

Ross Perot and Donald Trump, where an electorate supports businesspeople who claim that what they can do for their successful business, they can also do for the country. However, an essential difference to populism in Western Europe is the fact that all parties in post-communist societies stand in some relation to the previous regime or the transition and its effects. This forms a subtext in which populist agenda items such as anti-capitalism, anti-Western rants, ethnocultural identity politics (for example, the Slavophile devotion to Russia, as is the case with the Ataka party in Bulgaria) on the one hand and anti-communism on the other take on a meaning distinct from that in Western Europe, where such experiences are absent.

A history of distrust of the state and its officials, a long tradition of insider politics and significant corruption all reward political outsiders who appear decisive and promise to deliver change. Instead of appealing to liberal political traditions and new democracy – a system more often viewed as flawed than is the case in Western Europe –, appeals to 'the nation' or 'the people' and its destiny as a grand historical project are the more common approach and also provide an emotional glue that connects populist leaders and their supporters. Whereas Western European populists want to recover a supposedly purer version of the political system – hence, with slogans such as taking the country back to its truer form and promoting forms of direct democracy –, Eastern European populists often aim to take the country in a new direction based on some claim of historical destiny (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). This is because most countries in the area cannot connect to a previous system as they were (parts of) communist, fascist or imperial states. Moreover, many Western populist parties have descended from libertarian economic and anti-dirigiste roots, which often leads to contradictory policy positions when protectionism, welfare chauvinism and anti-globalisation rhetoric is mixed with liberal economic positions and criticism of regulations. In Central and Eastern Europe, radical populism seems to have ceded this liberal economic agenda to mainstream parties, which, in response, have also begun mobilising their supporters around protectionism and identity. The fact that Central and Eastern Europe has long been dominated by outside empires and only became fully independent after the end of the Cold War makes these countries especially wary of external influences. At the same time, their integration into the Western economic system, along with their transformation and modernisation, has brought to the surface repressed or dormant socio-cultural divisions that can be readily exploited by new political parties. Thus, fears of outside domination, unresolved ethnic conflicts and competing claims of victimhood can be easily used for political gain (Heinisch 2017).

Mediterranean Populism

An influential factor in the European academic reception of populism was that in major research communities, such as those in the UK, the Netherlands, Scandinavia and Germany, attention was paid to the populist radical right rather than the left. As a result, there was initially a significant debate in academic literature as to what extent these parties were in fact populist rather than merely new versions of the old far right (Betz 1994; Kitschelt and McGann 1995; Ignazi 1996; Koopmans 1996; Betz and Immerfall 1998). However, in the southern countries of Western Europe, a growing interest has been devoted to left-wing or progressive populism. The Italian Five Star Movement (Movimento 5 Stelle, M5S) is descended from a virtually left-wing protest movement. It shares a strong disdain for the country's economic dependence on European institutions with Greek and Spanish leftist populism and thus rejects outside interference in domestic affairs, especially in formulating economic policy. The strength of the Five Star Movement at its peak was also a reflection of the low credibility of Italian political institutions and parties. As such, the party primarily mobilised its supporters against national and European elites, which it considers to be corrupt and incompetent. From the beginning, it has been difficult to pinpoint the party's ideological orientation as it does not fully fit the profile of either a right-wing or a left-wing party. In response to its rivalry with the radical right Lega, which evolved from a regional into a national party, M5S became increasingly regarded as a leftist party. As such, it eventually formed a coalition government with the centre-left Democratic Party. In Chapter 16, titled 'New Populism', Maria Elisabetta Lanzone analyses new populist parties in detail, such as SYRIZA, Podemos and M5S, which have emerged from social movements and protest groups.

To some extent, contemporary populism in the Mediterranean countries of Greece and Spain appears to have similarities to manifestations of populism in Latin America, as they share some ideological traits in their leftist ideological orientation and the ways in which they take issue with liberal internationalism and global capitalism. This Southern European form of populism strongly favours national autonomy in economic decision-making, pursues a redistributive agenda and rejects the interference of European and global institutions and international corporations in national policymaking. Its rather recent emergence is clearly linked to the economic and financial crisis in Europe, but it is also a consequence of the decline of domestic party systems, especially of the traditional left, which has seen its support eroded (in Spain) or plummet (in Greece). Leftist Mediterranean populism is not only the most recent addition to the populist 'family' in Europe, but it is also distinct in its emergence out of protest movements. Moreover, beyond the right and left divide, what specifically concerns European parties, both in the north and the south and the west and the east, is their relationship with the European Union. Their hostility stems from the fear that unaccountable transnational elites and opaque Brussels institutions are usurping national and popular sovereignty. It also results from an apprehension about the liberal and universalist normative framework undergirding the European project. However, not all populists are opposed to transnational (McDonnell and Werner 2020) forms of cooperation or even demand that their countries leave the EU (Heinisch et. al 2021). In our Handbook, Fabian Habersack and Carsten Wegscheider tackle the thorny issue of the relationship between populism and Euroscepticism in Chapter 10.

Nativism and Rural Populism: The United States and Elsewhere

On the other side of the Atlantic, from early on, American populism has also been strongly connected with claims for popular sovereignty and criticism against elites, which was vividly on display in Donald Trump's campaign rhetoric and is a common feature of populist parties' discourse from Austria to Bolivia. Trump ties in with a right-wing populist legacy that deals with nationalism, xenophobia, ethnocentrism and racism (Chapter 17, Carlos de la Torre). While American populism has frequently mobilised the native population against poor immigrants especially, such as the Irish and, later, Jews, Eastern Europeans and Italians, as well as more recently Latin Americans and Asians, populism in the contemporary US of Donald Trump finds expression in the wall on the border to Mexico or the 'tearing up' of free trade agreements and the associated order of liberal internationalism, which was expressed in Jackson's time through the idea of a free land grab, supported by 'manifest destiny', running all the way to the Pacific coast. US populism also taps into the long-standing narratives about American exceptionalism, which is weary of international entanglements and has periodically boosted US isolationism, aspects of which we can discern in Trump's foreign policy. Another feature of populism in the US is its connection to religion and the idea that Americans are righteous and chosen people, who are in danger of being corrupted and contaminated by cosmopolitan ideas and foreign influences.

Not unlike Trump's supporters, who relish the idea of 'draining the swamp' in Washington, the Jacksonians also wanted to curb the power of the central state in favour of greater local control (Bonikowski 2019). The urban modernisation propagated by American business and supported politically by the Whigs remained anathema to Jackson and his support base (Benson 1961; Decker 2000, 139). In the end, Jackson, who was a polarising figure like Trump and sought to communicate with people directly in a straightforward manner, reshaped America by expanding the power of the presidency and turning the nationalism of south-western frontiersman into the central ideational framework that has defined the country ever since. Whereas the Founding Fathers appeared to be more like accidental revolutionaries, who otherwise resembled English country gentlemen and were treated in popular narratives as an exalted and saintly group, the heroes in Jacksonian and post-Jacksonian America were different: the new mythology celebrated rugged individualism and the 'common man' doing uncommon things. It is this radical break with the elites and the positioning of the common person at the centre of America's story that makes Jackson the precursor to populism in the US, as the man who laid the foundations of its positive future image. Following the Civil War, the US underwent yet another period of tumultuous societal and economic change to which – not unlike today – the established political system failed to respond adequately. The increasing concentration of economic wealth, the growing power of industry, the economic decline of rural populations, especially in the south and the enormous influx of immigrants crowding into urban areas led to the formation of political movements that embraced the ordinary white native-born male American as the central figure in national mythology. Often these movements were strongly xenophobic and, especially in the south, overtly racist. In urban and industrial areas, similar pressures resulted in the emergence of radical leftist political currents with syndicalist and anarchist tendencies. Common to both was the idea that simple hard-working people were threatened by a conspiracy of powerful elites and their economic interests. These elites were said to have betrayed the foundational ideals of the US, which is reminiscent of Donald Trump's theme that America needs to be taken 'back' to an earlier, better place.

The idea of conspiracies and backroom deal-making by unaccountable insiders permeates populist discourse the world over. It is this very notion that, in the eyes of populists, has given representative democracy a bad name as it is often associated with trading off general interests for special interests and, thus, making undue compromises and engaging in deception behind the people's back. Frustrations with the political order in the US culminated in the foundation of the Populist Party (1892-6), which sought to establish itself as a third force in politics. The central figure at the time was William Jennings Bryan (1860-1925), an advocate of small-scale farmers against big industry. Ultimately, the Populist Party did not survive the political embrace by the Democrats, who offered Bryan the opportunity to run as their joint presidential candidate in 1986 and 1900. However, the memory of the Jacksonian revolution, the Populist

Party and the Progressive Era that followed these phenomena has given populism a more positive image in the US – even President Obama referred to himself at one point as a populist – than it attracts in other countries, where populists generally reject the label.

Whereas Bryan's influence waned and populism became a minority faction in the Democratic Party in the early 20th century, Trump's electoral success and the transformations of the Republicans into a party voted by the working class may indicate that populism is likely to remain a much bigger factor in that party. As these lines were written, it was too early to tell which consequences the storming of the US Capitol by mobs professing loyalty to Trump, the second impeachment and the consequences of the coronavirus pandemic would have on American politics. Before Trump, populism in the US was largely a third party phenomenon, such as in the case of Henry Agard Wallace and Ross Perot, who ran for the presidency as third party candidates in 1948 (Wallace) and 1992 as well as 1996 (Perot) respectively. By contrast, Trump's ascent to the White House shows, as Chapter 18 by Sandra Vergari explains, how it is that a person as controversial and conventional as Trump could become so popular and why an established party was taken over by what was once thought to be an outsider phenomenon. Moreover, recent election results indicate that against all odds and predictions, Trump was able to mobilise more than 70 million voters in his favour and demonstrated the popularity of his political brand and agenda (Bonikowski 2019). If we take populism to be a rural answer to capitalist modernisation and industrialisation, as has been suggested by the historian John B. Allcock (1971), then the Russian Narodniki also deserve a mention, who, as approximate contemporaries of the American populists, organised themselves in traditional village communities in the pursuit of an idealised, simple rural life. However, the futility of the Russian populists' efforts to change society persuaded other radicals to pursue another direction. For the Marxists, it was not the rural villagers but the industrial proletariat who was to become the agent of transformation.

Presidentialism and Social Mobilisation: Latin American Populism

Whereas in Europe, the United States and Russia, populism remained at the margins of politics for a long time, it has often been at the centre of political change in Latin American history. In fact, when Europeans began grappling with what they considered to be a novel phenomenon, Latin America was already moving from its second wave of populism, also known as neo-liberal populism, to a third associated with the leftist regimes of Hugo Chávez and Nicolás Maduroin Venezuela and Evo Moralesin Bolivia. Latin America's presidentialised political systems have been far more receptive to personalities and leader figures who purport to be the saviours of the people than the parliamentary and party-based systems that prevail in Western Europe. Representing a tradition going back to the colourful strongmen or *caudillos* in the nineteenth century, these figures have shown disdain for established and often corrupt elites, styling themselves as men of action on behalf of ordinary people. María Esperanza Casullo and Flavia Freidenberg show in their Chapters (19 and 20) how, in the twentieth century, spurts of modernisation resulted in political mass mobilisation. However, under conditions in which the political institutions were insufficiently developed, such movements could often not be channelled in order to implement the necessary political changes. As a result, charismatic leaders, like the Argentine president Juan Perón, sought to bypass traditional politics and institutions by turning directly to the masses to push for political reforms. Whenever economic developments brought about popular mobilisation that could no longer be absorbed and directed by the existing political system, a new wave of populist leaders rose to prominence such as Juan and Eva Perón, Carlos Menem and Néstor and Cristina (Fernández de) Kirchner in Argentina, Getúlio Vargas in Brazil, Lázaro Cárdenas and Andrés M. López Obrador in Mexico, as well as Juan Velasco Alvarado, Alberto Fujimori and Alan García in Peru.

In recent decades, Hugo Chávez and Nicolas Maduro in Venezuela, Evo Morales in Bolivia, Rafael Correa in Ecuador, and Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua, among others, have become the leading exponents of leftist populism. What this latest group of populist politicians share with their predecessors is the presentation of themselves as charismatic agents of change who want to deliver, especially for poorer people, the kinds of political achievements the previous system could not. Right-wing and left-wing populists the world over now share a disdain for liberal internationalism and globalisation in favour of national autonomy. The claim of being able to deliver for the poorer strata of Latin American society rests on the argument that populism has boosted the representation of the lower classes in the institutions of government, thus creating a more inclusive and also more democratic model of society. Chapter 21 by Saskia P. Ruth and Kirk A. Hawkins tackles this question, and they find that populism does indeed do better in terms of descriptive representation, such as in the inclusion of ethnic minorities, than other forms of representation.

Europe, the US and Latin America

This short overview of the different manifestations of populism shows why the understandings of populism in the European and American traditions have varied. This has also influenced debates in scholarship about whether populism should be seen as a discourse, ideology, frame, strategy or mobilisation (Madrid 2006; Roberts 2006; Subramanian 2007; Madrid 2008; Stanley 2008; Barr 2009; Hawkins 2010; Jansen 2011; Aslanidis 2016a; Weyland 2017). Whereas Trump may fit the mould of European-style radical rightist populists much better given his propensity for nativist claims and authoritarian attributes, the American business leader and erstwhile third-party candidate, Ross Perot, may be a better example of what one might call the populism of the radical centre typical of North America. In both the western parts of Canada and especially the US, inherent egalitarianism, a concomitant strong anti-elitist bias and a certain degree of populist rhetoric, especially during political campaigning, are not only tolerated but even welcome as an antidote to the elitism associated with coastal regions and major metropolitan centres. Consequently, populism in North America has come to be regarded as more of a style, strategy or ethos designed to reach ordinary people, appeal to commonly held beliefs and convey anti-metropolitan sentiments, and, until the era of Trump, less as an ideology in itself.

In Latin America, where there has been a long tradition of popular strongmen promising political change and where personalised presidential political systems have dominated, populism is often seen to express itself through the rhetoric leaders employ to reach the people (Weyland 2001; Madrid 2008; Hawkins 2009; Levitsky and Roberts 2011). Populism has also been regarded as a discourse designed to attract and channel the sentiments of politically orphaned classes or societal groups mobilised by economic modernisation (Filc 2010). Charismatic figures, either those already in government or in opposition, employ discursive strategies designed to appeal to voters through appeals to nativism and nationalist narratives. Both the Latin American and Eastern European models suggest that populism occurs along a continuum where political actors engage to varying extents in making populist claims. Traditionally, in Western Europe, where one major populist outsider party often confronts the entire political mainstream, the perception of populism is more binary. Although this perspective is less clear in some cases, Western European scholarship has often taken a dichotomous approach, viewing populists as supposedly distinct from mainstream parties. Moreover, the centrality of political parties in European politics compared to the much more personalised American system has also turned populism into a party-based phenomenon. Moreover, the focus has been on populism as a system of ideas and defined political orientations that manifest themselves in voter preferences for certain parties and party programmes, at the heart of which is the antagonism between (virtuous) people and corrupt elites (Carter 2005; Norris 2005; Mudde 2007; Ivarsflaten 2008; Art 2011; Berezin 2013).

Communication Perspectives

Aside from political science, no area has been more important and continues to be more central to understanding the spread and effectiveness of political populism than communication. In fact, populism's affinity for new media and new forms of communication is impossible to understand without thoroughly appraising the ongoing research in communication science. What critics consider to be the echo chambers of social media and the ability of populists to gain unfiltered access not only to their activist base but also to much larger receptive audiences have been causes in the successes of populist campaigns. 'Post-truth' politics, declared Oxford Dictionaries' 2016 word of the year, has been associated particularly with major events like the Brexit campaign and the 2016 presidential election in the US. Compared with political science, communication is a latecomer to the populism bandwagon. This has changed with the rise and success of populist parties in Europe and, at about the same time, the emergence of a new media environment. The overall growing importance of the media in fostering understanding within society has also made politics more and more dependent on the media for addressing citizens and legitimising its decisions. This dependence, and the attempt to nevertheless keep the power of definition, set the agenda and frame the discourse, has led to the increasing mediatisation of politics, in the sense that the political arena has continuously adapted to the logic of the media. The development of the internet, and social networking sites in particular, has thoroughly redrawn the communicative map and opened new ways for political actors to speak to citizens directly without the uncomfortable interference of journalists.

Populism as a Style

From a communication point of view, populism primarily presents itself as a certain world view that comes along with a specific communicative style. Taking a communication perspective on populism stands for, as Lone Sorensen (Chapter 22, original emphasis) succinctly puts it, 'a shift in focus from *what populism is* to *what it does* and *how it does it*'. This shift opens the way for a broader view on populism and at the same time acknowledges the constitutive role of communication in the political field. How populism does it not only refers to its style and how populism is enacted but also encompasses how populism relates to the media and how it reaches the people through the media and with what effect. Empirically, research is mostly based on content analyses of populists' discourse and the media, on interviews with the actors involved in the populist communication process or on experimental settings mainly to assess how people deal with and react to populist performances. In their seminal study, Jagers and Walgrave (2007) developed a concept for measuring the degree of populism in populist discourse that can be applied to all kinds of political actors and all forms of populism. At the core of their concept lies a 'thin definition' that considers populism to be '*a political communication style of political actors that refers to the people*' (Jagers and Walgrave 2007, 322, original emphasis). Appealing to the people, identifying with the people, and purporting to speak in their name is the 'master frame' (ivi) that underlies and constitutes populist discourse. Thin populism becomes thick populism if appeals to the people combine with an anti-establishment/anti-elitist position and the exclusion of certain groups from what is conceived to be a homogeneous people (ibid., 323–5). By developing indices for measuring not only the proportion but also the intensity of thin and thick populism in political party broadcasts from Belgian elections, the authors go beyond a binary approach and establish populism as a graded phenomenon.

Political Discourse and the Media

The aforementioned study acted as an initial spark for research from a communication perspective and provided the standard reference for studies assessing populism in political discourse and in the media. The employment of a graded instrument for gauging the degree of populism makes it possible to demonstrate that populist elements are not an exclusive characteristic of the performances of those who are commonly referred to as populists, but that they also, and sometimes even to a greater extent, appear among those who are usually referred to as non-populists (e.g. Bos and Brants 2014). Yet another step in the study of the communication aspects of populism was taken by widening the perspective from case studies to cross-country comparisons. Comparative research, particularly when the same methodological instruments are applied, allows overarching developments and contextual factors that provide for and explain differences among countries to be assessed. While much research has been done on individual countries and various aspects of populist political communication in recent years, which, put together, allows, if at all, tentative generalisations only, the studies presented in the edited volumes by Aalberg et al. (2017) and Reinemann et al. (2019) are based on multi-country comparisons and a common methodological approach and therefore portray a comprehensive picture of populist political communication in Europe from different perspectives and under different conditions.

The surge of right-wing populist parties in Europe directed attention onto their relationship with the media and, in particular, raised questions about the role media play in the spread and growth of populism. Their coalescence and intertwined nature are reflected in terms such as 'telepopulism' (Taguieff 1997; Peri 2004) and 'media populism' (Mazzoleni 2003). The relationship between the media and politics, journalists and politicians unfolds against a backdrop of ongoing profound changes in the media environment. As Franca Roncarolo emphasises in Chapter 23, mediatisation has reshuffled the cards in a relationship of mutual dependence and left the traditional media with increasing influence *vis-à-vis* politics. Right-wing populists maintain an ambiguous and somewhat paradoxical relationship with the media (e.g. Krämer 2018; Fawzi 2020). On the one hand, and as Lone Sorensen ascertains in his own chapter, because they are 'fundamentally opposed to all forms of mediation', populists display a hostile attitude towards the so-called mainstream media, which is based on the anti-elite stance of populism and finds its expression in delegitimising and disparaging attacks (Fawzi 2019; Van Dalen 2019; Bhat and Chadha 2020). Name-calling ranges from *fake news* to *Lügenpresse* (lying press) and seems to successfully undermine trust in the news media. At the same time, populists accuse the media of being biased against them and of thus betraying the interests of the people. Apart from allegations of complicity with the established political forces and a one-sided view, populist criticism laments the way the media deal with certain topics – a complaint that in recent years has focused primarily on reporting on migrants. Krämer (2018, 453) calls this side of the populists' ambiguous relationship with the media 'anti-media populism'.

The Media Policy Impact of Populism

Not much research has so far been done on how populists' attitudes towards liberalism and the media translates into their media policy and impacts them on a structural and systemic level. However, authors discussing the relationship between populism and democracy usually also point to the ramifications of this for freedom of speech and press freedom (e.g. Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2012; Waisbord 2018). Basing his analysis on data from 91 countries and a time span of 35 years, Kenny (2020) found that populist rule is more often than not associated with a decline in press freedom. Specific cases of populist media policy have been addressed in country studies (e.g. Ellinas 2010; Liebhart 2018; Holtz-Bacha 2020). In Europe, Hungary and Poland have recently provided cautionary tales with respect to restrictive media policy (e.g. Batorfy 2019; Klimkiewicz 2019). At the same time, the West European model of public service broadcasting, which is supposed to be independent of the state and particularly dedicated to pluralism, has come under fire from populists who often join forces with neo-liberal forces (Holtz-Bacha 2021). In Chapter 24, Philip Kitzberger analyses the media policies of Latin America's wave of leftist populist governments but draws the conclusion that politicisation is their only common characteristic.

While cultivating their anti-media attitude and despite the availability of the social networking platforms that allow them direct access to their supporters, populists, like any political actors, are dependent on and seek the spotlight of the big stage of the mainstream media. Therefore, populists attempt to harness the media to their advantage by exploiting journalists' professional routines, thus breeding what Esser et al. (2017, 367) classify as populism through the media. This is facilitated by the media offering 'favourable opportunity structures for populist actors' (ibid., 370). These arise out of political and commercial interests, the dependencies of media owners and certain characteristics of media logic. Freedman (2018) calls 'media policy failures' to account for the normalisation of right-wing populism. He identifies failures to control concentration of ownership, regulate tech companies, safeguard an effective fourth estate and support independent public services as reasons that help to explain easy access for right-wing populist movements.

Communication Strategies

The reference to media logic hints at journalists' selection and production routines and specifically their preference for conflict and strategic framing. Frames are interpretative patterns of media reporting that emphasise certain aspects of an issue, attribute causes of and responsibilities for problems, and suggest solutions to them. Thus, frames can influence the interpretation of issues and events by the media audience and guide their attention towards certain elements, direct the ways in which the news is processed and, in this way, may have an impact on the audience's attitudes. The term 'conflict framing' identifies the media's use of a conflict perspective in its coverage of an issue. Strategic framing is employed to steer the audience in a desired direction, as is done, for instance, with poll reporting. Populists and non-populists alike tailor their communication style to meet the media's attention criteria. Their strategies extend to all kinds of verbal, visual and non-verbal expressions. While elements of the populist style can be found in everyday populism in the media and the communication of political actors who are not deemed populist, populists excel in provocation through the permanent transgression of social and political norms and, with it, the infringement of moral boundaries. Drawing on analyses of populist discourse (e.g. Wodak 2014; 2015; Moffitt 2016), Christina Holtz-Bacha shows in Chapter 25 that populists rely on a number of provocative strategies that play well on the media's appetite for conflict and crisis and secure them the public attention deplored by their opponents. Thus, in their handling of populism journalists get caught between the fronts. In view of populist electoral successes, and most distinctly on election nights, they have to put up with accusations from established parties of paying too much attention to populist actors, granting them visibility and, in this way, fostering populism. How the media respond to anti-media populism and react to populist strategies of capturing media attention is, however, very much dependent on (national) context (Herkman 2017; de Jonge 2019; Goyvaerts and De Cleen 2020; Koliska et al. 2020; Krämer and Langmann 2020).

In addition to populism through the media, Esser et al. (2017, 367) identify populism by the media, which corresponds to Krämer's (2014, 42) assessment of 'media populism as a distinct phenomenon: populism among the media themselves and independent of any relationship to populist movements'. The media share the anti-establishment attitude and an inclination to align with and represent common citizens with populism (Esser et al. 2017, 370). In the case of the media, this derives from their control and criticism function with respect to the political powerholders that the press has in democratic systems. Therefore, the media inevitably, but mostly unwillingly, support the cause of populism, establishing the paradoxes that are also elaborated by Benjamin Krämer in Chapter 26. Several authors have linked media populism to the increased commercialisation of the media industry, and the prevalence of 'commercial imperatives [...] produce content that caters to the tastes and needs of vast and largely undefined audiences' (Mazzoleni 2014, 49) and have brought about the popularisation of style and content. The attribution of a specific responsibility for the proliferation of populism to the tabloid style media (Mazzoleni 2003, 8), however, did not hold empirically (e.g. Akkermann 2011).

New Communication Technologies

The development of new forms of communication and the ensuing changes to the media environment played out in favour of populism (e.g. Engesser et al. 2017; Ernst et al. 2017; Krämer 2017). Political newcomers and outsiders often face a barrier in the media to getting the visibility they need to address voters and increase their electoral support. The internet and social networks allow political actors to circumvent the gatekeepers in the traditional media and address their target groups directly and often hidden from public scrutiny. In Chapter 22, through reference to three sites of mediation, Lone Sorensen demonstrates the closeness of populism to the new communication technologies. Based on the argument that social networks have acquired a role as 'the people's voice and the people's rally' for populist movements, Gerbaudo (2018, 745) speaks of 'an elective affinity' between social media and populism. Jacobs et al. (2020) show that populists employ the most important platforms (Facebook, Twitter) as a 'double barreled gun' for different strategies. In Chapter 27, Giuliano Bobba proposes reflection on the role of digital media in the success of populism, and disentangles the concept of 'digital populism' from the triple perspective of populist actors, the media and citizens. Because of their distrust of the traditional media, populists have also resorted to alternative media (Figenschou and Ihlebæk 2019; Holt et al. 2019), whose spread was fostered by digital communication technology. Once reserved for the political left, alternative media more recently emerged among populists on the (extreme) right side of the political spectrum. Alternative media such as Breitbart.com present themselves as 'a self-perceived corrective' of the legacy media and professional journalism (Holt et al. 2019, 862). Social networks have also brought about the proliferation of disinformation and conspiracy beliefs, which have proved to be associated with populist attitudes (e.g. Castanho Silva et al. 2017; Bergmann 2018; Van den Bulck and Hyzen 2020).

Research on the effects of populist communication at the individual level has only taken off recently. Exploring this missing link, that is, the impact that populist communication has on attitudes, emotions and cognition, is crucial in explaining its success with citizens. Drawing together knowledge from the field of political communication, Alberg and colleagues (2017, 386) outlined a model of populist communication effects that incorporates the macro, meso and micro levels and considers intervening factors at all levels. Theoretical considerations and a review of an increasing number of studies on how populist messages are received and used finally led to a specified individual-level model of populist communication effects (Hameleers et al. 2019). Findings from empirical research demonstrate that, in addition to individual predispositions, the national context plays an influential role in the effects of populist communication, thus rendering any generalisations difficult.

Consolidated and Emerging Topics

Without a doubt, the study of populism has benefited enormously from the contributions made by research in political theory, sociology, psychology and economics. Yet, these important new insights have also resulted in additional factors to be considered and additional explanations to be contemplated. As an area of research, populism has clearly moved to the centre of social science research, given the number of scholars from all subfields that have devoted themselves to the study of this phenomenon. In past years, it would have been rare for researchers in environmental politics, international relations, trade, and welfare politics to consider the role of populism in their respective research areas. Not long ago, even in the community of mainstream electoral behaviour scholars, one often encountered the opinion that populism was little more than old wine in new bottles and could be effectively traced through indicators of political trust, anti-elitism and authoritarianism. This has clearly changed if we consider the large number of publications, conferences and conference panels in recent years devoted specifically to populism. Research on populism has also attracted increased attention from funding agencies and public officials. In its recent funding cycle, the European Commission financed no fewer than three multimillion Euro Horizon 2020 projects devoted to the study of radical populism and potential counter strategies to it. There is now even a Brill's journal, *Populism*, dedicated to this phenomenon. Some innovative research is using artificial intelligence, computer simulations and deep text analysis to push the boundaries of current research. New qualitative research has been trying to deepen our understanding of the complexities and contradictions of people's attitudes, especially if they support populists that advocate policies which seemingly running counter to the interests people express (e.g. Hochschild 2016).

As much as both populism itself and the reasons for its emergence present us with important theoretical challenges with respect to its conceptualisation and hypothetical causes, populism has encouraged a set of new research agendas related to traditional and new topics. A frequently mentioned question, but one which has still not been fully explored empirically, asks to what extent the conditions that give rise to contemporary populism are grounded in a distinct socio-economic situation. This approach reminds us that populism is also a sociological phenomenon. Wolfgang Aschauer tackles this question from a sociological perspective in Chapter 28, titled 'Societal Malaise in Turbulent Times', in which he seeks to understand how globalisation und unresponsive political systems have contributed to precarious economic conditions and increased people's fear of declining social standards and diminishing economic opportunities. Many more empirically unresolved puzzles concern 'The Gender Dimension of Populism'. These are identified in Chapter 29 by Sarah C. Dingler and Zoe Lefkofridi, who discuss populist parties' ideologies, leaders, candidates, members and electoral support from a comparative and empirical perspective. The question of the leader, beyond his or her discourse, is also crucial. In Chapter 30, Paula Diehl argues that the body has a particular function in populism through its activation of emotions and as an object of identification. In terms of religion and populism, the most important relationship is arguably that between radical populism and Islamophobia. Right-wing populism in both Europe and the United States draws on and promotes Islamophobia. Especially in conjunction with the refugee crisis and the spread of international terrorism, the fear of Islam and Muslim immigrants has arguably become the most important stance of populist parties in many countries. In current electoral campaigns across France, Germany, the Netherlands and the US, the question of Islam is a central issue as it affects both the dimension of individual identity, national character and values, as well as personal security. The aforementioned Hans-Georg Betz tackles this question in Chapter 31, titled 'Populism and Islamophobia'.

A growing body of research literature is devoted to the connection between populism and different policy areas. The influence of radical right-wing populists on shaping immigration policy (Shehaj et al. 2021) is well established. Another area of research is radical right populism's curious connection between its common man ethos and right-wing policy stances. Deviating from other rightist parties, radical right-wing populists often distance themselves from neo-liberal positions and adopt a welfare chauvinist approach by advocating social protection for deserving segments of the native population. In other instances, they seek to blur their true positions (Rovny 2013) as radical populists need to appeal to population segments in the working and lower middle classes who benefit strongly from the social safety net (Ennser-Jedenastik 2016; 2020). An emerging policy area is represented by 'law-and-order' issues and, more broadly, by dimensions related to populism's opposition to an institutionalised order, such as the rule of law, to which research by political theorists, sociologists, political scientists and criminologists have made important contributions. In Chapter 32, Manuel Anselmi, Paul Blokker and Oscar Mazzoleni provide an account of the literature on constitutional challenges, the politicisation of the judiciary and the populist use of penal justice, bridging concerns about polity, policies and politics.

The environment and climate change have become another policy area of increasing importance for radical populists. Their inherent opposition to liberal internationalism, globalisation and commercialism initially turned the radical right into supporters of conservation, tradition and protection of national resources *vis-à-vis* foreign commercial interests. However, environmental and climate policy initiatives fuelled by urban protests and the rising influence of green parties has been met with hostility by voters that typically support populists, which in turn has affected the direction of the parties themselves. The policy changes pursued by climate activists affect not only the lifestyle (sustainable farming, meat consumption, carbon footprint) of the working class, lower middle class and rural base of these parties, but also their jobs and thus their livelihoods. This has pushed radical populists to embrace climate scepticism, which is thoroughly explored by Robert A. Huber in Chapter 33. A closely related area appears to be the coronavirus pandemic, during which populists initially demanded strict policy measures (a strict lockdown, police enforcement of rules, border closures). However, whereas populists in government have largely kept to their restrictive policies to combat the virus, populists in opposition have subsequently gravitated towards supporting coronavirus deniers, vaccine sceptics and opponents of lockdowns by blaming 'elite' scientists for engaging in scaremongering and by accusing mainstream politicians of wanting to establish a police state. In Chapter 34, Cecilia Biancalana, Reinhard Heinisch and Oscar Mazzoleni examine the relationship between populism and the COVID-19 pandemic.

This introduction hopes to have made a compelling argument, as the book in its entirety also hopes to do, for why populism, in its various facets, is possibly the most important political concern of our time. It permeates all political dimensions and has the potential to shape all policy areas from war and peace to trade, to European integration, and all manners of domestic politics. Much about the story of populism and its various dimensions has not been written. This works intends to provide an impetus, foundation and intellectual tool for those willing to delve into this critically important subject area.

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PART I:
Defining and Analysing the Concept

CHAPTER 1:

POPULISM: A HISTORY OF THE CONCEPT

Damir Skenderovic

Introduction

'There can at present be no doubt about the *importance* of populism. But no one is quite clear what it *is*,' write Ghita Ionesco and Ernest Gellner (1969b, 1; emphasis in original) in the introduction to the influential anthology, *Populism. Its Meanings and Characteristics*, which appeared in 1969. While the current relevance of populism has led to a revival of interest in the almost forgotten populist movements of the nineteenth century, as Ionesco and Gellner go on to state, the question arises as to whether 'populism' is 'simply a word wrongly used in completely heterogeneous contexts' (Ionesco and Gellner 1969b, 3). More than forty years later, Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser (2012a, 1; see also 2017, 1–2) make a similar critique that, 'one of the most used and abused terms inside and outside academia is undoubtedly populism', and point out that there have been repeated calls to simply abandon the term and that the academic debate is some distance away from reaching a minimal consensus on the definition and meaning of populism.

The history of the concept 'populism' has been accompanied by scepticism over its definition and reservations over its phenomenology, which have not only led to the stimulation of regular academic debates, but also continually reflected strong concerns about the common and everyday political usage of the term. The lack of semantic precision and ambiguity with regard to content has led to it being used for very different phenomena and developments in politics and society, which has resulted in doubt over its heuristic and explanatory value. In addition, the term 'populism' is normatively loaded in political and academic language and thus always includes statements and findings on the state of democracy. Even the core idea of the term that populism speaks, as the etymology of the word implies, in the name of the people, rather than the elites, power blocks and privileged special interest groups, is rooted in normative dichotomies.

Conjuncture and Controversy in Politics and Academia

Despite these substantial weaknesses, in the course of the last fifteen years, there has been a striking increase in the use of the concept of 'populism' in the public media as well as in the everyday political life of Europe, and particularly in the context of the increase and consolidation that has been seen in recent years among parties on the right-wing margins of the European party system. The expression '(right-wing) populist' has established itself as the descrip-

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tion for a number of parties, such as the Austrian Freedom Party (Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs, FPÖ), Alternative for Germany (Alternative für Deutschland, AfD), the Swiss People's Party (Schweizerische Volkspartei, SVP), the National Rally (Rassemblement National, RN; previously National Front, Front National, FN) in France, the League (Lega; previously Lega Nord, LN) in Italy, Flemish Interest (Vlaams Belang, VB) in Belgium, Hungarian Civic Alliance (Fidesz) in Hungary or Law and Justice (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, PiS) in Poland. At the same time, the term is applied on a global scale to powerful political leaders, such as Narendra Modi in India, Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil and Donald Trump in the USA. However, 'populism' is not only used specifically for parties, tendencies and politicians, but is also often used much more generally, whereby it is seen as a supposedly new way in which politicians and parties seek to woo their supporters and, in the process, to employ new means of communication and strategy. On the whole, the term 'populism' has been widely established in terms of language and the media, and for some it even seems to fulfil the claim of contributing to raising and nurturing awareness of various social and political developments at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

In the vocabulary of politicians and parties, too, 'populism' as a political catchword has experienced a pronounced boom. In its function as a negatively connoted battle cry, it is primarily used in politics to disavow the opponent, serving as a reproach and attack, as denunciation and accusation. With the use of the term 'populist' in political day-to-day events, it is suggested to the adversary that he or she responds to complex facts with phrases and simple formulas, and ultimately pursues the goal of polarising society in order to take advantage of instantaneous moods and make unscrupulous political capital. Something that also contributes to the pejorative understanding of the term is the long shadow cast by the plebiscitary mass politics, demagogic mobilisations and the invocation of the so-called 'will of the people' by leaders who have caused historical catastrophes in Europe. Basically, the political and public debates about populism are constantly concerned with the dangers it may pose to democracy and its cornerstones of freedom, plurality and representation (Müller 2016; Urbinati 2019).

In recent years, therefore, the controversy surrounding the issue has intensified in academic debates over the question of whether populism should be seen as a threat or a corrective to democracy and whether, alongside its negative impacts, it might also have positive influences on the function and legitimation of democracy (Canovan 2002; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2012b). Many authors suggest that populism has an ambivalent relationship with democracy, which is built on the population participating as broadly as possible, but is also characterised by a complex, partially opaque decision-making system, which is associated with the representative and delegating character of (parliamentary) democracy. It is suggested that populists seek to exploit a lack of transparency and immediacy and the resulting dissatisfaction with political institutions in order to promote a return to 'true' democracy, which must be realised beyond intermediary institutional settings and political elites. It should not be forgotten, however, that populists do not reject the principle of representation, *per se*, but rather those who are, in their eyes, the wrong representatives. Consequently, there is no doubt that there can be '[p]opulism without participation' (Müller 2016, 29). It is emphasised, furthermore, that populist actors insist on the indivisible power of the majority, thereby undermining not only liberal democratic principles, such as minority rights and the division of power, but also important democratic practices, such as the principle of checks and balances or the search for political consensus solutions.

There has also been a marked increase in interest in the subject of populism in empirical research (Rovira Kaltwasser et al. 2017a). In countless social science studies, the wide variety of contemporary political movements and parties has been examined and their affiliations and organisational structures analysed, along with their parliamentary and programmatic work, their political and institutional opportunity structures, and their social framework conditions. There is also a lively debate over the question of the analytical and operational uses of the concept of 'populism'. On the one hand, there is a group of authors who primarily seek to identify certain characteristics of movements and parties as conceptual criteria, while on the other, there are those who view stringing together characteristics as an insufficient means of working out a concise conceptualisation of 'populism', and therefore call for more generally valid core elements of the kind that are useful for a broader comparative analysis (Taguieff 2007a). In the root cause analysis, there has been a growth in explanatory approaches, in which many interpret the recent upswing of populism as a side effect of globalisation and Europeanisation, and the medialisation and personalisation of politics (Jörke and Selk 2017; Eatwell and Goodwin 2018). It is also often argued that the reasons behind the examples of successful populist mobilisation are a crisis of political legitimacy that the system of democratic representation created, and not least, as Theda Skocpol and Vanessa Williamson (2012) argue in connection with the Tea Party in the USA, that in the decline of traditional political participation, such as electoral turnout and party membership, populism is, as it were, a new form of political engagement. For many, it does not seem to be surprising that in times of an increased sense of crisis among parts of the population, there should be a call for the soothing and assuring responses of politics, to which populist actors respond with offers of interpretations and solutions in which community feeling, cohesion and orientation are central references.

In view of the inflationary, but often historically amnesic, use of 'populism', it is all the more important to cast a historical look at its academic conceptualisation. As Federico Finchelstein (2014, 467f) has remarked, 'at worst, populism appears as a concept without history' and this view reduces populism 'to a transcendental (or trans-historical) metaphor of something else'. More recently, as a historian, he has started to study how populism and fascism have been 'connected historically and theoretically' and has emphasised how '[m]odern populism was born out of fascism' (Finchelstein 2017, xii). The study of continuities and changes in populist phenomena, as well as central moments in academic debates, makes it possible to show certain denominational characteristics and analytical categories that have proved to be sustainable in the definition of 'populism'. In addition, the epistemic negotiations on concepts, meanings and definitions – and this is often forgotten today – involved representatives from a number of different disciplines, including history, social anthropology, economics, political science and sociology, with the result that meanings have also been generated on the basis of specific empirical foundations and methodological approaches. As a consequence, the conceptual history of 'populism' is strongly linked to the study of concrete historical phenomena and conditions; heuristic findings have resulted from the fact that structural analogies and functional equivalences have been produced, and different contexts and framework conditions considered. In a history of what is meant by 'populism', it is also a question of acknowledging the historicity of the concept, which thus contributes to the historicisation of the academic approaches and interpretations that accompany the historical development of an important key concept of political and academic language (Steinmetz 2011). To a certain extent this is how, at the forefront of theory formation, a mixture of linguistic and material history emerges, which is concerned with social and academic rules and seeks to expand the interpretative horizons of ongoing public and academic debates that mainly focus on the present.

Lexical History of the Concept

A look at the dictionaries, lexicons and encyclopaedias that are important indicators of knowledge production and are among the central function carriers of knowledge transfer illustrates the relatively late onset of the problematisation of the concept of 'populism'. Until the 1990s, the lemmata for 'populism' were concerned almost exclusively with concrete historical phenomena, without discussing 'populism' as a concept or establishing the content of its meaning. The earliest entries deal with the political movements in Russia and the USA in the nineteenth century, with the People's Party and the Narodniki, both of which, despite being created in completely different contexts, were long regarded as the epitome of populism. Thus, in 1922, in the 26th volume of the Spanish language *Enciclopedia universal ilustrada europeo-americana* (1922, 451), at the time by far the most extensive reference work in the world, a brief entry describing the American movement was to be found under the heading *Populista*. The *Encyclopaedia Americana* (1919, 560f), which was published three years earlier, also contained longer articles on the 'People's Party' and 'Populists', but contented itself with a brief presentation of the history of the party, like that which can be found in the most recent edition, published in 2000 (*The Encyclopaedia Americana* 2000, 413f).

In France, the term *populisme* was first introduced to French dictionaries in 1929, and denoted a literary trend based around Léon Lemonnier and André Thérive, which stood as a countercurrent to the tendencies of the literature of the time, which was perceived as being bourgeois, exclusive and detached (Hermet 2001, 20). The authors were concerned with writing down-to-earth texts that were close to the everyday life of the simple man. Until the 1990s, the French language lexicons also limited themselves to naming historical examples in literature and politics, in which it is noticeable that significantly more space was dedicated to the Russian Narodniki than to the American farmers in the *Dictionnaire d'Histoire Universelle* (1986, 1706f), for example, or in the *Dictionnaire encyclopédique d'histoire* (1986, 3760), where talk was of the 'rather vague' ideology of the Narodniki, which was described as having 'a messianic foundation, a belief in the privileged faith of the Russian people'. It is also the case that under the keyword 'populism' in the German language *Brockhaus Enzyklopädie* (1972, 813), there are, until the 1980s, only brief references to the French literary movement, whose aim it was to portray 'the life of the common people'.

From the beginning of the 1990s, there has been an accumulation of entries that give 'populism' both an analytical and a heuristic function. It seems that a change in the experience of contemporary politics and strong journalistic interest led to a rise in the demand for explanatory and interpretational lexical knowledge, with the result that, to a certain extent, 'populism' grew from being a descriptive to an elucidating concept. Accordingly, an entry on *populisme* can be found in the ninth edition of the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* (published since 1992 and accessible online), which lists the usual historical examples, but also interprets the term in a broader context of political action. Populism is here described as an 'often pejorative attitude, as the behaviour of a person or a political party, which, in opposition to the ruling elites, act as defender of the people and as a mouthpiece for its aspirations, putting forward ideas that are most often simplistic and demagogic'. In the 19th edition of the *Brockhaus Enzyklopädie* (1992, 364), too, the definition of 'populism' is now extended and is briefly described as an 'opportunist, demagogic form of politics', which 'seeks to win the approval of the masses (with regard to elections) by overstating the political situation', before being described in a longer entry in the last published edition (2006, 75) as 'a strategy used by political elites and individual leadership personalities to mobilise and secure consensus'.

A similar development can be seen in the specialist social science lexicons which reflect the exponential increase in the number of studies, articles and research projects on populism since the 1990s. In the meantime, substantial contributions on 'populism' have appeared in the important encyclopaedias of sociology and political science, which not only contain research summaries, but also take a position on ongoing academic debates and thereby make a contribution to improving the conceptual awareness and analytical operationality of the term (for example, *International Encyclopaedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences* 2015; *Lexikon der Politikwissenschaft* 2010; *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Sociology* 2007). This tendency is also reflected in the fact that renowned, sometimes controversial scholars in the field have acted as the authors of contributions, for example Torcuato S. Di Tella, who appeared in *The Encyclopaedia of Democracy,* published by Seymour M. Lipset in 1995, Pierre-André Taguieff in the *Encyclopaedia Universalis*, which came out in 2008, or more recently Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Ideologies*, which was edited by Michael Freeden and Marc Stears and published in 2013. In the wake of the recent large growth in scholarship on populism, specialised handbooks on the subject have been published in English (Rovira Kaltwasser et al. 2017b; de la Torre 2019), as well as in French (Dard et al. 2019b).

While, for example, *Das Politiklexikon* (2016, 244) operates on the basis of the instrumentalisation thesis, and thereby postulates that populist politics use 'the emotions, prejudices and fears of the population for its own purposes', the contribution in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary Of Politics* (2009, 422) speaks more generally of 'populist beliefs' that involve the 'defence of the (supposed) traditions of the little man against change seen as imposed by powerful outsiders, which might variously be governments, businesses, or trade unions'. On the whole, this broad entry into the specialist lexicons of knowledge transfer emphasises the boom in the reception and the use of the concept of 'populism' in academic research and in the social sciences in particular, while the respective explanations also show the fundamental difficulty that there is when it comes to meeting certain theoretical requirements and generalising about conceptual proposals for the analysis of populism as a political and social phenomenon. Accordingly, the detailed contribution on 'populism' in the *International Encyclopaedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences* (2015, 611) arrives at the somewhat sobering fact that the 'difficulty in pinpointing exactly which actors are populist or not has added to the concept's unsystematic use and the more general conceptual confusion surrounding the term'.

The Founding Forms of Populism

The conceptual genesis of 'populism' is strongly influenced by the use of specific historical case studies which served as the subject for the diagnosis of populism and which were mainly researched by historians (Rioux 2007; Finchelstein 2014). Their focus lay above all on classic populism, or, as Guy Hermet (2001) called it, the 'founding populisms'. By this he meant the American farmers' movement with its party-political arm, the People's Party and the Narodniki in Russia, both of which were formed in the second half of the nineteenth century. For Anglo-Saxon and Western European conceptions, dealing with the American populists was central. As neologisms, 'populism' and 'populist' entered the vernacular and everyday political circulation in the USA at the beginning of the 1890s (*The Oxford English Dictionary* 1989, 128). This was, to a certain extent, the birth of the political and journalistic debate on 'populism', in which the expression simultaneously found itself being used as the actors' self-designation, a political slogan and an analytical concept, thus transgressing the boundaries between political and construal use. The starting point was the founding of the People's Party in 1891, which was also known, significantly, as the Populist Party, and which developed out of a number of farmers' alliances in the South and the Midwest of the USA over the course of the 1870s and 1880s. Consisting mainly of farmers, the lower middle classes and agricultural workers, the party made financial and economic policy demands, such as the nationalisation of the railways, the abolition of the national banking system, a progressive income tax and increased money supply, on the one hand. While, on the other hand, it also demanded reform of the political system, including the direct election of senators, the limiting of the presidential term and the introduction of direct democratic means (Postel 2007).

The research history of the American farmers' movement illustrates in an exemplary way how controversial discussions have been when it comes to the assessment of populists, as well as to the content and meaning of the notion of populism, and how interpretations and conceptual understanding have changed over time within the field of the historical research. The central question in all of this was whether it was a reactionary, backward-looking and authoritarian movement, or whether it had a progressive, social-reformist and grassroots orientation (Canovan 1981, 46–51). The idea that long dominated the research on the People's Party and its agrarian precursor movement was that populism was to be seen as a democratising and socially progressive phenomenon, a point of view that was mostly inspired by the influential work *The Populist Revolt*, published in 1931 by the social historian John D. Hicks. In the book, Hicks presented the farmers' movement as the expression of an agrarian proletarian protest that had rightly drawn attention to the grievances of agrarian capitalism and the corruption in American politics. From this standpoint, populism is also mainly to be viewed in terms of its reformist effect on the political and economic system of the USA. Such a positive use of the term 'populism' was increasingly questioned in the 1950s, to the point that it is possible to talk of a 'revisionist turn' in the American research debate. Not least against the backdrop of the emerging McCarthyism, which, with its paranoid, anti-intellectual and ostracising features, was seen by many contemporaries as a new form of American populism, US historians began to re-evaluate the farmers' movement, adding additional meaning to the concept of populism. While emphasising the ideological dimension of populism, Richard A. Hofstadter highlighted nativism, anti-Semitism and conspiracy theories as the hallmarks of the farmers' movement in his work *The Age of Reform* (1955). On the side of the sociologists, too, critics, such as Edward Shils (1956), who spoke of an 'ideology of resentments', or Wilhelm Kornhauser (1959), who, in his work on the so-called *Mass Society*, described populism as a rejection of social pluralism, and as the maintenance of uniformity in reaction to increasing levels of social differentiation.

A new twist in the interpretation of the term can be determined in the 1970s and can be seen in the context of the spread of radical participatory issues and the associated movements for grassroots democracy. Once again, 'populism' was now being given a positive connotation when linked with the broad forming of political opinion, direct participation in democratic decision-making processes and socially progressive ideas. Of particular influence was Lawrence Goodwyn's *Democratic Promise* (1976), which emphasised the direct experience of democratic politics and cooperative collaboration as being central to the farmers' movement. As he noted, it was crucial for the mobilisation of the time that 'the Populists believed they could work together to be free individually' (Goodwyn 1976, 542). It was this combination of the individual and the collective, the fulfilment of the individual through collaboration in the movement that produced the movement's strength and solidarity. While Hofstadter had particularly emphasised the conspiracy theory elements in farmers' political and economic criticisms, Goodwyn was now largely content to reproduce the movement's assessments, namely that the concentration of financial and economic power lay in the hands of a few large companies.

Essentially, according to Goodwyn's core statement, as critics and reformers, the populists pointed the way to the democratic organisation of industrial society, harking back to the 'democratic promise' of the founding fathers, Thomas Jefferson and Andrew Jackson. For Goodwyn, it was also a question of broadening the notion of populism, rather than just being a party-political phenomenon: 'Self-evidently, the People's Party was a political institution. But it was also "Populism" – that connotes something more than a party, something more closely resembling a mood or, more grandly, an ethos' (Goodwyn 1976, X). Until today, therefore, in American debates, populism has been widely interpreted as a reaction to centralist Statism and the omnipotence of public officials and experts, and therefore stands as a symbol of federalism, local autonomy and direct democracy (see also Kazin 1995). To a certain extent, populism is also a part of a democracy's horizon of experience, and thus also stands as proof of democratic participation in politics. However, the rise to power of Donald Trump has again produced a switch in the interpretation of populism, since his presidency bluntly shows the radical right-wing version of American populism that builds on authoritarianism, racism and conspiratorialism. In addition, it has triggered a renewed research interest in modern media and new forms of communication, which are at the core of his populist strategy (Kazin 2016; Winberg 2017; Jutel 2019).

The Russian Narodniki constitute a second incarnation of the founding forms of populism. The movement consisted mainly of intellectuals and students who began to move from the cities to rural areas in the early 1870s – in some way 'going to the people' (*narod* means people) – in order to live with the peasant population and to carry out revolutionary educational work in the countryside. Inspired by pioneering thinkers such as Alexander Herzen and Nikolai Cernyševskij, they saw a social model capable of posing a challenge to emerging agricultural and industrial capitalism in the archaic Russian village community and its collective, cooperative traditions. In their romanticised notion of Russia's peasant population, the Narodniki firmly believed that there was revolutionary potential in the rural population and in the traditions of the Russian peasantry (Venturi 1960). From 1875, in an attempt to describe this current and its ideas, the term *narodničestvo* emerged, translated into English as 'populism' (Pipes 1964; Ionescu and Gellner 1969b, 2), while the terms *Volkstümlertum* and *Volkstümler* were to be found in German as translations for Narodniki (Breitling 1987, 28). In French, a Russian émigré used the term *populisme* to describe the Narodniki movement in a book that was published as early as 1912 (Dard et al. 2019a, 11f). In *narodničestvo*, a social revolutionary self-image was expressed, which was based on the idea that the revolution not only corresponded to the interests of the people, who became a revolutionary subject, but that the revolution was actually in direct accord with the will and the desire of the people. Among Marxist theorists, *narodničestvo* increasingly took on an economic significance because it showed the potential for realising a socialist order in Russian society without having to go through a phase of capitalism (Berlin 1960; Pipes 1964; Walicki 1969).

Among French historians, too – to a certain extent *ex post* – the founding forms of populism of the late nineteenth century also include *Boulangisme* (Boulangism) among their number (Hermet 2001; Winock 2007). Thus, *populisme* became, as it were, a kind of substitute term in French, replacing other terms such as *Césarisme* or *Bonapartisme*, which had been used by contemporaries as well as by historical literature for Boulangism. The use of the notion of 'populism' is intended to help develop continuities in certain forms of thought and action in French politics. Factors that are seen as being indicative of the populist character of Boulangism include its radical rejection of the ruling *classe politique*, the plebiscitary credo and the call for a strong president, but also the marked cult of personality, as well as the communicative and media marketing and self-presentation of the movement (Passmore 2012). These are also characteristics that were identified in a series of twentieth-century movements and parties, from the interwar *Ligues* to Jean-Marie Le Pen's National Front. There are also contextual factors, such as the lack of reform of the Third Republic, and constitutional revision with little democratic improvement and rampant corruption, which led the *Boulangistes* to see themselves as a movement of the discontented, who were waiting for their saviour. Furthermore, Boulangism cannot be filed away within the French political dualism of republicans and monarchists at that time, but was rather the expression of the opposition between oligarchs and democrats, and combined forces from both the left and the right (Hutton 1976; Garrigues 1992; Prochasson 1994).

It is noteworthy that this belated designation of Boulangism as an early expression of populism took place in literature at a time when, in connection with the rise of the National Front, the term 'populism' experienced a remarkably increased use in French academic language (Dupuy 2002; Taguieff 2007b). Originally published in 1979, the book by the historian Pierre Birnbaum, *Le peuple et les gros*, can be taken as evidence of the, presumably also profitable (for the publishing industry), use of the concept of 'populism', which appears in its 2012 reissue under the revised title: *Genèse du populisme. Le peuple et les gros*. While Birnbaum shows in his book how, since the end of the nineteenth century, the assumption that 'the good people' have been worn down by leading figures in economics and politics has had a striking continuity in the political life of France, his analysis does not deal with the concept of 'populism', despite what the new title might suggest. The same can be observed in the research on Pierre Poujade and his *Union de défense des commerçants et artisans* of the 1950s. In the classical study by Stanley Hoffmann (1956), the movement is by no means described as 'populist', yet it is declared some forty years later by Alexandre Dorna (1999, 75) as a 'paradigm of French populism'. This not only gives Poujadism a precursor role in post-war right-wing populism in Western Europe generally, and particularly in France, but highlights once again the effectiveness of using 'populism' as an analytical concept.

Transnational and Transdisciplinary Expansion

Despite the wide variety of application fields for 'populism' already described, it was relatively late on that the concept began to be discussed from a cross-national perspective. From the mid-1960s onwards, the use of the concept began to intensify across national and disciplinary boundaries and to circulate within the international academic community. In the sense of Mieke Bal's (2002, 24) notion of a 'travelling concept', 'populism' increasingly began to travel 'between disciplines, between individual scholars, between historical periods, and between geographically dispersed academic communities'. The question thereby arose as to whether there was a 'populist minimum' that would make it possible to capture past and present phenomena of populism and enable a journey through space and time with the concept. It was also shown that while it had previously been historians who were primarily interested in populist movements, they were increasingly being joined by social scientists, and issues concerned with the contemporary social and political framework were more and more the focus of research into their causes.

From the middle of the 1960s onwards, the entry of the concept of 'populism' into research on South American movements and regimes (Dix 1985; Conniff 1999; de la Torre 2010, 2017) can be seen as the first indicator of this transnationalisation and transdisciplinarity. Sociological studies, especially those of Gino Germani (for example 1955), on the respective regimes of Getúlio Vargas in Brazil (1930–1945) and Juan Perón in Argentina (1946–1955) were the starting point. In an article published in 1965, it was Torcuato S. Di Tella – a sociologist and a student of Germani – who subsequently imported the concept of 'populism' when he first applied it against the background of the specific socio-economic and political situation in South America. In contrast to Europe, neither liberal nor socialist currents had great influence here, which made the social and political space more open to populist movements. The specific nature of the Latin American variety of populism is also linked to the region's late industrial modernisation and its subsequent economic crises. What is characteristic of populism in South America is, on the one hand, its anti-status quo agenda and its nationalist and anti-imperialist features. On the other hand, it was able to draw on relatively broad support among different social classes, and the subsequent lack of organisation proved beneficial for the installation of populist regimes (Di Tella 1965).

Ultimately, the marked influence of personalism played a much more central role in many Latin American examples of populism (Weyland 2001) than the historical examples of the Narodniki and the American farmers' movement. The examples from South America have greatly contributed to the fact that questions over the structure of leadership as well as the style, appearance and personality of leader figures have been incorporated into the definitions of 'populism'. The leadership of South American populist movements was highly individualised and personalised, and the connection between the leader and the supporters usually took place directly and immediately, without intermediary organisations. Leaders such as Perón and Vargas also exerted an authoritarian style of leadership, acting like people's tribunes and casting themselves as representatives of the people and defenders of the popular will. To their followers, they were attributed – in the sense that Max Weber uses the term – with a charisma, which in turn decisively contributed to the cohesiveness of the supporters (Craig 1976; Conniff 1999; Roberts 2006).

A second caesura in recent populism research came in the form of an international conference staged at the London School of Economics in 1967 and organised by the journal *Government and Opposition*, and the resulting, aforementioned anthology, *Populism: Its Meanings and National Characteristics*, which was edited by Ghita Ionesco and Ernest Gellner (1969a), and which Paul Taggart describes as '*the* definitive collection on populism' (Taggart 2000, 15; emphasis in original). On the one hand, the conference, which was attended by political scientists, sociologists, historians, social anthropologists and economists, highlighted the strong interdisciplinary interest in the subject. On the other, there was the intention to subject 'populism' to a kind of conceptual and theoretical examination, and to test its reach as a comparative concept, with a broad scope of focus in terms of time and geography and encompassing a wide spectrum of example countries. Although Isaiah Berlin was somewhat laconic in his concluding comment to the conference, saying that all the participants agreed 'that the subject was much too vast not merely to be contained in one definition, but to be exhausted in one discussion' (Berlin et al. 1968, 179), he identified a range of characteristics and circumstances that had arisen from the case studies presented: a specific notion of community, or *Gemeinschaft*, as a coherent and unified society; speaking in the name of the majority; a basically apolitical stance, since society is favoured over the state; the transfer of values from the past to the present; the evocation of enemies and threats that menaces the united, integral group; the belief in an ideal, unbroken man who is neither oppressed nor deceived by anyone; and the transitional edge of modernisation as the framework conditions favourable for populism (ibid. 173–75).

These two important moments in the history of scholarship on populism were due not least to the academic interest in the ongoing processes of decolonisation and the strengthening of the liberation movements, which were accompanied by mobilisation or led to the establishment of regimes whose formation could be understood with the analytical categories of 'populism'. They were also the starting point for a new methodological dynamic, which was characterised by globally comparative perspectives, but did not lose sight of the heterogeneity and contextuality of the phenomena investigated. Margaret Canovan made a significant contribution to this search for comparative, practicable criteria in her book *Populism* from 1981, when, on the basis of a typology, she designed a historically and spatially comprehensive outline of populism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Her aim was to refine the notion of 'populism' by detailing 'different functions of the term as well as the different phenomena to which it can refer' (Canovan 1981, 300). Proceeding phenomenologically, Canovan distinguished between two main types of populism, the agrarian and the political, whose central commonality was their appeal to the people and the mistrust of the elite.

Canovan subdivided agrarian populism into rural radicalism (with the Farmers' movement in the USA, the agrarian movement in Germany of the 1890s and the Canadian Social Credit Movement of the 1930s serving as examples), intellectual agrarian socialism (represented by the Russian Narodniki and various twentieth-century movements in Algeria, Tanzania and Bolivia), and the peasant movements in Eastern Europe of the early twentieth century. According to Canovan, populist dictatorships, such as the regime of Juan Perón, were also a part of political populism, as well as populist democracies, where the call for direct democratic means was particularly strong, as the impression prevailed that certain groups and interests were over-represented in a dominant representative democracy. In addition, there was reactionary populism, among whose ranks Canovan included the Governor of Alabama, George Wallace, with his segregated racial policy, the British politician, Enoch Powell, with his anti-immigration policy, and the so-called 'politicians' populism', which was, according to Canovan, characterised by the fact that it was built on a non-ideological coalition that came together by means of an appeal to the people. Essentially, however, Margaret Canovan found it difficult to filter out a nucleus of populism, and she limited herself to creating a taxonomy of populism by means of the case studies discussed. This is reminiscent of the understanding of 'populism' as a syndrome, as Peter Wiles (1969) described it when he identified a number of characteristics and factors whose common occurrence was essential to populism. Canovan (1982, 551) also conceded, therefore, that the types of populism she identified 'do not really look like seven varieties of the same kind of thing: on the contrary, some of them seem quite unconnected with others'.

Populism as a Strategy or Ideology?

A central discussion that continues to characterise definitions of 'populism' even now revolves around the question of whether, first and foremost, the concept encompasses the strategies and forms of politics of movements and parties, or whether it is more of an ideology, a world view (Aslanidis 2016; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2017, de la Torre and Mazzoleni 2019). For example, Pierre-André Taguieff (2008, 457) insists that today a rigorous use of the term can only be a limited one, that 'populism' can only denote a dimension of 'political action and discourse' and is not epitomised by a 'defined type of political regime', or by its 'specific ideological content'. In this understanding, populism is seen as a political method, a discursive means and a rhetorical style, and its appeal to the people is primarily about political communication and performative repertoires (Jagers and Walgrave 2007; Moffitt 2016). If populism is to be understood as a political strategy, then there is a need to examine the incentives for gaining support, the way in which it is positioned with respect to the political system, and the links between citizens and political actors. Depending on the context, populists use their rhetorical means to differentiate between different target groups, such as farmers or workers, while the anti-attitude towards the establishment remains constant (Barr 2009). All populist movements therefore pursue a policy of negation, opposition and protest in keeping with their anti-elite self-understanding and anti-establishment attitude. So it is hardly surprising that the so-called 'protest-voter thesis' is particularly popular in electoral research on populist parties, as they see mistrust and resentment of the political and social elites and institutions as being the central voting motives for adherence to these parties (Bergh 2004; Schumacher and Rooduijn 2013).

Overall, the dominant conviction in these positions is that the notion of 'populism' primarily covers functional and strategic aspects and makes no kind of statement about ideological quality and content (Aslanidis 2016). This is also supported by the assessment that populist movements lack their own comprehensive, theoretically oriented programme, as well as by the fact that there are hardly any populist theorists (Betz 1994). Thus, Paul Taggart (2000, 4) writes of the 'empty heart' of populism, for since it contains no core values and no great visions, populism is marked by its ideologically empty interior. According to Karin Priester (2007, 13; emphasis in original), it is this kind of interpretation of the concept that has led to the fact that in recent literature on populism 'there has been a lot of research into *how* populists act and communicate, but too little, by contrast, into *what* it is they actually have to say'. On the other hand, there are authors who stress that the concept of 'populism' is less an indication of strategic, instrumental aspects, but rather a question, first and foremost, of ideological dimensions (for example, MacRae 1969; Rensmann 2006), which some have recently started to label as an ideational approach (Mudde 2017; Hawkins et al. 2019). It is not so much about the way in which ideology is mediated and introduced into politics, but rather the content of the ideology and the ideas and perceptions that lie behind it. In the search for a 'populist minimum', the Manichaean image of the world and of society, in which society is divided into two antagonistic and homogeneous groups, the 'true people' and the 'dishonourable elite' (Mudde 2004) comes to the fore. However, 'the people' in populism are regarded, according to Daniele Albertazzi and Duncan McDonnell (2007, 6), as 'a homogeneous and virtuous community', and any divisions among the people are described as inappropriate, as something created and nurtured by the intellectual and political elites. In fact, these lines of conflict could easily be bridged, 'as they are of less consequence than the people's common "nature" and identity' (ivi.). This also has the effect, as Jan-Werner Müller (2014, 487; emphasis in original) notes, that 'according to the populist *Weltanschauung*, there can be no such thing as a legitimate opposition'. Thus, the populists, with their understanding of a homogeneous 'people', end up in an ideological conflict with pluralistic conceptions that originate from a heterogeneous society consisting of different groups, individuals and interests (Müller 2016). The populist base narrative is also continually determined by the same line of conflict that places the people in opposition to the elite. With this comes fundamental scepticism towards representative democracy (Canovan 1999). Politics must, from a populist perspective, not only always be the expression of a *volonté générale*, but it is also crucial that the people are ultimately sovereign, as Jean-Jacques Rousseau emphasised, and that they themselves exercise their sovereignty without delegating it.

In order to fathom the conceptualisation of 'populism', the question also arises as to which notions of the 'people', the central reference value of populists, are used in it. Are there differences – not least because the notion of 'the people' is one that only appears in its respective equivalents in different national languages, and its conceptual history is therefore shaped in each case by a different interpretative culture (Koselleck 1992, 142)? For example, in Anglo-Saxon language usage, 'the people' can mean both singular individuals and a collection of individuals, a political collective, particularly in the sense of a sovereign people. It is therefore not surprising, according to Margaret Canovan (2005, 86), that 'anglophone political discourse [...] makes it easy for populism and liberalism to share common ground', because they can each bring different notions of people into play. This also explains the dissent in the American debate over the interpretation of populism. By contrast, in French language usage since the French Revolution, *peuple* has largely been intended to refer to the whole community of citizens, a collective as a whole, so to speak (Julliard 1992). In the conceptual tradition of continental Europe, the individual disappears into the communal to a much greater degree, especially in the French term *peuple* and in the German term *Volk*. It is also clear that the semantic amalgamating of *Volk*, people, *peuple* or *narod* with the notion of the nation is central to populist movements from the right, for example, where the shift from *demos* to *ethnos* is decisive. In the ideology of right-wing populism, the emotionally charged and symbolically stylised image of the people is combined with the idea of a clearly definable homeland, or 'heartland' (Taggart 2000). Membership of the national community and absolute loyalty towards the people as a nation constitute the defining frame of reference for action in politics and society. According to Yves Mény and Yves Surel (2002, 6), this also illustrates how 'classic democratic orthodoxy uses 'the people' as an abstract construction […], while the populist ideology or rhetoric may add other dimensions and also perceive "the people" as a community of blood, culture, race and so forth'.

Since populism can certainly not be considered one of the 'big' ideologies, such as liberalism, socialism and conservatism, and is too one-sided to be approached only on a strategic and rhetorical level, adopting the 'thin ideology' approach offers a kind of middle way of identifying the central aspects of the concept of 'populism'. In line with Michael Freeden (1998), from this perspective, populism is to be understood as a 'thin-centred ideology' because it has no elaborate, comprehensive doctrine at its disposal (Mudde 2004; Rovira Kaltwasser 2011). Or, as Ben Stanley (2008, 95) formulated it, 'its thin nature means that it is unable to stand alone as a practical political ideology: it lacks the capacity to put forward a wide-ranging and coherent programme for the solution to crucial political questions'. Accordingly, populism needs additional ideological set pieces and connects effortlessly with other world views. The thin ideology approach also proves fruitful in defining the populism of the right since the 1990s. It is a characteristic of right-wing populism that the anti-pluralist populist reference to 'a normatively idealised and homogenised "people" is directed not only, on the vertical level, towards the "corrupt" elite (against "those above"), but also, explicitly, on the horizontal level, towards the outside' (Frölich-Steffen and Rensmann 2005, 7). In right-wing populism, therefore, the 'anti-elitist (vertical) affect', as it is generally found in populism, in addition receives a 'xenophobic (horizontal) affect' (Pelinka 2002, 284). Starting out from the assumption of natural inequality among human beings, it is the exclusionist and anti-egalitarian elements of ideology that are predominantly determinant in right-wing populism. Through the attribution of national, ethnic and cultural characteristics, differences are marked and used as legitimation of inequality and exclusion. Thus, it is a characteristic of right-wing populist actors that nationalist and xenophobic attitudes are expressed in their agendas and politics.

Finally, in populism from the left, which, not least, received theoretical attention in the analyses of the Latin American cases conducted by Ernesto Laclau (1977; 2005) and was thereby presented as a driving force in democratisation processes, its claim to social egalitarianism and criticism of power is at its forefront. In addition, it often has specific historically determined features, as is the case with the social revolutionary Narodniki in Russia or the radical reform movements in Latin America, where romanticised ideas of the peasantry or anti-imperialist ideas played an important role. In left-wing populism, the 'corrupt elite' is primarily associated with the social, economic and financial power of the bourgeoisie, while in the understanding of 'people', the classless society serves as a utopian vision (Priester 2012). Here, too, the constitutive populist element is that little space is set aside for dissent, opposition and pluralism, and it is ultimately assumed that something like a people exists as a central political subject. According to Yannis Stavrakakis (2014, 506), therefore, democratic politics can hardly be imagined without populism, that is, 'without forms of political discourse that call upon and designate the people [...] as their nodal point, as a privileged political subject, as a legitimising basis and symbolic lever to further egalitarian demands'. In recent years, this perspective has been applied in research on various political movements and parties from the left that emerged after the crisis of 2008 in European countries such Greece, Spain and France (Katsambekis and Kioupkiolis 2019; Agustín 2020).

Conclusions

The history of the concept of 'populism' goes hand in hand with disagreements over its definition, methodological scepticism and lively academic debates. As a travelling concept, 'populism' represents a story of varying degrees of intensity in terms of intellectual interest and academic output, of transfer between disciplines and changing spheres of academic communication, but above all of changes in the subject of investigation. Since the 1960s, it has constantly been a question of trying to enable a general conceptual application of 'populism', as well as a means of comparing concrete phenomena, in order to increase the analytical capacity and the empirical reach of the concept, that is, one which is not merely dedicated to describing populism's phenomena, but also to achieving a certain degree of abstraction. These challenges lie, as it were, within the nature of any conceptualisation; they are a part of the work on concepts, terms and categories, and are inherent in the search for linguistic conceptualisations and generic concepts. In the case of 'populism', however, some aspects that play an important role in the intriguing history of the concept and the controversies that continue to persist today end up in the foreground.

It must be noted, first of all, that the concept of 'populism' is characterised by a marked degree of hybridity. This can be seen in the malleability and adaptability of its definition, and is reflected in its varied, often woolly semantic content, with the result that a multitude of historical phenomena and political movements are, as it were, absorbed within it. Semantic elasticity and changes also mean that in research language 'populism' regularly takes on a substitution function, as the case of Boulangism has shown. The porous semantics, furthermore, make it tempting for various different phenomena to be equated with or, to a certain degree, explained as identical manifestations, which is the case with the example of right-wing populism and right-wing extremism, which is popular in contemporary academic and public debates. In addition, the desire for schematic analytical frameworks and functionalist models, which the social sciences are particularly fond of, also seems to lead to the fact that variability, changeability and historicity have appreciably been lost sight of, and approaches are preferred 'that replace the theory and history of populism with a more quantitative descriptive, and self-proclaimedly pragmatic approach' (Finchelstein 2014, 472).

One of the most intriguing aspects in the debates about populism is the often normatively asked question of whether populism represents a threat or a corrective to democracy. According to this logic, when it comes to establishing the significance of the concept of 'populism', democratic ideals are always also considered and negotiated; populism is explained as a symptom of serious dysfunctions in democracy. Or, as Nadia Urbinati (1998, 116) has put it, 'the debate over the meaning of populism turns out to be a debate over the interpretation of democracy'. While in public and political understanding, populism serves, to a certain extent, as a means of measuring the pulse of democracy, from a democratic theoretical perspective, it is seen as a gauge of democracy. One of the questions that then arise is whether the opportunity for individuals, for all individual citizens, to participate and engage is sufficiently guaranteed to ensure that democracy functions. Or is it not the actual engagement and participation of as many people as possible that determine a functioning democracy? From this perspective, participation and representation are seen as crucial elements of democracy and the emergence of populism is interpreted as a democratic warning sign, whereby the selective, opportunistic and ultimately contemptuous manner in which populists treat representative and participatory principles is seldom taken into consideration. So far as the homogenising understanding of the participating 'people' is concerned, with the suffix *-ism*, populism becomes an appellative form of exaggeration that also apparently underlines its fundamental contradiction with democracy. However, all these argumentations, which are mostly presented normatively, often fail to include the notion that, historically, it is possible for diverse ideas and interpretations of democracy to exist, as the difference in the past between American and European discussions on populism have made clear.

Considering these difficulties and uncertainties, one might follow Margaret Canovan's (1981, 301) dictum that the concept of populism is 'ambiguous' and that if 'the notion of "populism" did not exist, no social scientist would deliberately invent it'. At the same time, however, the fulminant rise and the progressive consolidation of a series of political parties and movements, all characterised by 'principled anti-pluralism' (Müller 2016), demand that these conceptual and analytical questions are dealt with and the historicity of populism is understood. A look into history reveals that both political diversity and deliberative negotiations, as well as cultural and social plurality, play a part in the challenges and achievements of pluralist societies in the modern age, to which populism, with its dichotomy of friends and foes, its nationalist fantasies, its identity politics and its exclusionist and discriminatory demands, is fundamentally opposed.

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CHAPTER 2:
POPULISM AND POLITICAL REPRESENTATION

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Populist Parties, Representation and the Crisis of Representation

Despite its claims of transparency, nothing is simple in the world of populism. The same can be said about the relationship between populism and political representation, which is a matter of lively debate when one considers their rather problematic coexistence. In contemporary Europe at the beginning of the twenty-first century, there are valid reasons to believe that populist parties' success is symptomatic of a deep crisis in democratic representation. This is the first issue that this article aims to tackle. At the same time, there is a widespread belief that populism is the negation of representation. Populism is an extremely vague concept, which indicates very different phenomena (Canovan 1982). Nonetheless, populists claim to speak on behalf of someone else. Therefore, populism is also a form of representation, although a peculiar one. This will be our second issue. The third will be how its observers, critics and rivals represent populism and populist parties. This representation is no less important than that generated by populists themselves, as it becomes part of their representative actions. According to several authors, the rise of populism is a symptom of a deep crisis of political representation (Taggart 2002). According to Peter Mair, one of the most insightful political scientists of our generation, who shares this view, the indicators of this crisis are a decline in voter turnout – even in democracies where the phenomenon was previously limited – a rise in electoral volatility and protest votes, an increase in discontent with mainstream parties and traditional institutions, and the success of populist parties. Recalling the theory of the 'cartel party', which he developed with Richard S. Katz (Katz and Mair 1995), Mair has provided an exemplary analysis of the current state of democratic representation (Mair 2000; Mair 2002; Mair 2013) by focusing on the atrophy of parties' fundamental function as a 'linkage' between state and society.

In the not too distant past, parties were large voluntary associations that voiced the needs of specific social groups. In contrast, twenty-first century parties identify themselves with government. Thus, they have abandoned their role as citizens' advocates. Due to the influence of the media, contemporary parties address a blanket audience and, for the most part, are more interested in serving as brokers of different interests than in their traditional role as spokespeople. Consequently, the position of mainstream parties has become awkward. According to Katz and Mair's 'cartel party' theory, parties have defended themselves in various ways, but the discontent that they attract has not decreased. In actual fact, the task they face is rather difficult. On the one hand – and despite the fact that voters are offered only vague promises during electoral campaigns –, these parties tend to create high expectations around certain issues. On the other hand, they are urged on by interest groups to promote specific agendas that often arise out of the mainstream parties' conflict with voters' expectations and their failure to meet them. Caught between Scylla and Charybdis, mainstream parties smash against the cliffs of electoral discontent, which are readily and fruitfully exploited through forms of protest on which populist parties capitalise. These parties sow even further discontent and perform the same representative function that mainstream parties have abandoned. According to Mair (2000; 2009), this dynamic has generated a peculiar division of labour in which mainstream parties dedicate themselves to government-related activities, while populist parties invest their resources in representation. At the same time, the rhetoric and symbolic acts populists employ and perform in campaigns cause significant damage to democratic life.

Hanspeter Kriesi (2014) is another well-known political scientist who has offered an alternative viewpoint on political representation. He criticises Mair by arguing that representation is not at all in crisis but rather that the traditional function of representation is no longer carried out by political parties. These parties have ceased to guarantee representation, not because they are more interested in government, but because the world around them has changed. This is due to the fact that Western societies are now governed differently for several reasons, including multilevel governance and new techniques of media communication. Nevertheless, this does not mean that representation is in crisis if we consider that electoral representation has never been the only form of representation. Citizens can still make use of alternative channels to push their demands, protest movements have earned their political place, and the European Union and other international actors have 'reinforced representation in the administrative channel to the detriment of the electoral channel' (Kriesi 2014, 365). Hence, according to Kriesi's thesis, we do not see a crisis of representation leading to the success of populist parties but rather the opening up of a new structural cleavage in Western societies, which are now divided between the 'losers' and 'winners' of globalisation. The first are the social strata that have experienced the delocalisation of enterprise, deindustrialisation, unemployment and an inevitable decrease in welfare-state services, while they have limited abilities to adapt to change. The winners, we can assume by contrast, are the well-educated, creative, cosmopolitan and flexible individuals who have been able to rapidly adapt to these inescapable transformations brought about by technological progress and globalisation. Populist parties have mobilised the losers' discontent and become their defenders. While claiming to protect national culture and traditions, right-wing populists oppose immigration regimes and refugee resettlement programmes. Moreover, these parties stand for a strong nation state and are against European integration. In contrast, left-wing populists oppose the liberalisation of financial markets, multinational corporations, deregulation policies and privatisation, and they mobilise the discontent of citizens, which has been generated by the downsizing of the welfare state.

According to Kriesi's interpretation, not only do the 'losers' respond to populists' anti-establishment appeal, but they are also culturally or socially conservative and incapable of adapting to change. A similar view is widely shared in both political and media debates. In considering the many comments made in political and media arenas concerning the United Kingdom's EU membership referendum in 2016, alongside those related to the effects of France's European constitution referendum in 2005, we find that, according to such an interpretation, the more 'traditional' elements of British and French societies prevailed over the modern ones, thus giving both right-wing and left-wing populists a reason to rejoice. Also, the interpretation promoted by Mair is widely shared. The radical leftist critics of social democratic parties, who endorse the Third Way or similar positions, share his views. Nevertheless, the two interpretations – the one promoted by Mair and the other suggested by Kriesi – are far from being as incompatible as they may seem at first sight. According to Mair, once mainstream parties' representative function declines, populists fill the political void left by them. Kriesi rejects the idea of a crisis in representation in general, but acknowledges that populists play the role of advocates on behalf of the social strata that resist change de facto by supplying an alternative to the void left by mainstream parties. In any case, in both interpretations there is some political bias. Mair is critical of mainstream parties, while Kriesi interprets populists' success as a sign of the defensive reaction and anti-modern conservatism of those 'left behind'.

Representing the People: Which People?

According to a widely held view, populism and representation are incompatible. Populists formally respect democracy and its electoral practices but, at the same time, question the rules of political representation. In their rhetoric, the people are one, their unity must not be called into question by party political competition and their voice should not be distorted by forms of pluralistic representation (Müller 2016). Thus, populists imagine a 'plebiscitary' democracy or a personal leadership-centred democracy (Urbinati 2014, 173), which they already practise within their own organisations. Nevertheless, populist parties are fully fledged representative agencies, depending, of course, on the definition of representation one is willing to accept.

If populism seems complicated, then political representation is even more so. The conventional view of representation suggests that the represented come before the representatives. The first are the principal and the second the agent (Pitkin 1967). But this view is not the only plausible one in the political domain, where the principals are made up of collective bodies. There are good reasons to believe that political representation works the other way around. The principal is represented, and even exists, only because someone provides representation by claiming to speak on their behalf (Bourdieu 1991; Saward 2010). Modern political representation came into being in seventeenth-century England, when members of the new ruling political class who had entered parliament sought political legitimacy by proclaiming themselves to be representatives of the people. Ever since then, we have been able to perceive representatives as political entrepreneurs who engage in the struggle to claim power in order to represent somebody. Therefore, representation manifests itself, first of all, in a performative act. Through their discourses, political entrepreneurs identify, classify and categorise people. Furthermore, considering that, from time to time. the represented must be exhibited, political entrepreneurs organise and gather people into lasting or temporary collectives. Seymour M. Lipset and Stein Rokkan (1967), through their theory of cleavages, provided an exhaustive map of the social, cultural, religious and economic premises on which the modern activity of political representation has developed in Europe. Of course, if we consider that representation implies the complicated action of gathering people who usually do not even know that they have something in common, the actions of representatives necessarily also require a great deal of fabrication, manipulation and translation (Latour 2003).

As is usually the case in the analysis of populist parties, one of the first questions to be asked is: Whom do they represent? Who are their supporters and voters? This question is answered – without total agreement among them – by electoral specialists, who delineate in detail who votes for whom. In accordance with the different perspectives on representation summarised above, one can raise the question differently: How do 'populist parties' construct, define and represent those they claim to represent? And how do they define themselves as representatives?

The representatives also have to invent and represent themselves. They must assume a role *vis-à-vis* those they claim to represent and play it out on the theatrical stage of representation. The obvious answer is that populists claim to be representatives of the people. Perhaps this is the reason that they have been labelled populists. However, it is a very generic label that raises some serious doubts. Populist parties are neither the first nor the only ones to have championed the people. Democracy legitimises itself as 'government of and by the people'. Since the invention of representative regimes, not a day has passed without someone invoking government of and by the people and declaring themselves a representative of the people. The parties that celebrate the people in their official names or define themselves as 'popular' are countless. Many confessional parties, of the Christian democratic kind, refer to themselves as 'people's parties'. At the present moment, all these formations are joining together (often with other parties) in the European Parliament to make up the European People's Party group (EPP group). Moreover, this term has also been used by many left-wing parties. In the 1930s, parties participating in the Communist International called for political convergence with the socialists against fascism; the alliances that followed were called 'popular fronts'. In France, the *front populaire* won the 1936 elections, while at the same time in Spain the *frente popular* opposed Francoist insurrections. In 1948, Italian socialists and communists joined together in the elections as the *fronte popolare*.

Therefore, populists do not have a monopoly on the term 'the people', and no single conception of the people has ever existed. On the contrary, there are various ideas about what 'the people' signifies. These conceptions are inconsistent with each other and incoherent when placed together (Canovan 2005). What is, therefore, the populist perspective on the concept of the people? Traditional mass parties used to define the people as the *demos*, an ambivalent term that was not fully clear even to the ancient Greeks who coined it. The *demos* were both the citizens who took part in the democratic government of the polis and the lower classes. The same could be said of the concept of the people recognised in mass parties. In both cases, the underlying idea is very distant from that shared by right-wing populists and is rooted in radically different political beliefs. The populist idea of the people is that of *ethnos* (Portinaro 2013). Nonetheless, not many observers are willing to admit that this notion of the people is not so different from that promoted by the Nazis (*Volk*) and the Vichy regime (*peuple*).

The *ethnos* corresponds to a communitarian and generic image of the people, unified by blood, land, history, language and culture. Right-wing populists invoke 'the people' chiefly in cultural and racial terms, promising to keep this group safe by reviving its traditions. They do so, principally, to counter threats of cosmopolitanism, which promotes transnational policies, such as open markets and increased migration. An instructive example of the people as *ethnos* is provided by arguably the forefather of all the current generation of right-wing populists: the French politician Jean-Marie Le Pen. A former paratrooper in Indochina who took part in the Battle of Suez, Le Pen entered politics by joining a right-wing party, which today would be labelled populist, led by Pierre Poujade. Later on, Le Pen left his seat in the French National Assembly and volunteered to fight in Algeria. Finally, in 1972, he founded the French National Front (Front National, FN) by gathering Vichy veterans and veterans of the Algerian War, while emphasising the qualities of the French people within the terms of the *ethnos*. While addressing his 'dear compatriots', Le Pen had begun to stress the perilous issue of immigration by the early 1980s. His stance was based on three aspects: demographics, economics and culture. Immigrants, he asserted, had already been welcomed into France with excessive generosity, and were soon to alter French demography, considering their high birth rate. In addition, according to Le Pen, they were 'polluting' French culture and religious traditions. Le Pen also argued that they were too much of a financial burden since they increasingly took advantage of the French welfare system at the expense of French taxpayers, who, at that point, had been unjustly 'abandoned' by the state. Le Pen thus called for the rejection of immigrants. The second evil he denounced was the poor condition of French workers, taxpayers and national, especially small to medium-sized, enterprises. The people as *ethnos* were overtaxed and received inadequate and inefficient services from the state, namely poor education and insufficient healthcare. In Le Pen's eyes, nobody defended the rights of new mothers or did anything to secure their children's upbringing. Equally, nobody fought against crime, which was spiralling out of control. And nobody provided aid to French companies that were facing hardship on the international market. To combat all this, France, Le Pen concluded, had to be 'strong, fraternal, French'.

Similar issues were emphasised by Jörg Haider, the leader of the Austrian Freedom Party (Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs, FPÖ) between 1986 and 2000 in his invocation of the 'fatherland'. The party's mission is to defend values, culture, language, families and children against 'multicultural experiments' (Wodak and Pelinka 2002, 28). Such statements are similar to those made by the Italian Northern League (Lega Nord, LN) too, which lumped immigrants together with Southern Italians (Diamanti 1993), and also to those of the UK Independence Party (UKIP). Its 2015 electoral manifesto stated that 'UKIP celebrates Britain and will promote a unifying British culture. We will not condone the philosophy of multiculturalism because it has failed by emphasising separateness instead of unity'.

Socialist parties used to divide the *demos* into classes, while confessional parties acknowledged the deep social cleavages within society but attempted to overcome them. In contrast, right-wing populists consider the people to be unitary. For them, any kind of division is strictly artificial. The *ethnos* consists of the 'common' and 'small' people (for example, small-scale entrepreneurs, tradesmen, craftsmen, farmers, blue-collar workers and so on), who are the 'real', authentic people. These people are the embodiment of morality, honesty and hard work, taxpayers who are in need of efficient hospitals, good schools, fair pension payments and so on. Nevertheless, if it is not divided, the *ethnos* has fierce enemies. The first category of enemies consists of the establishment, namely professional politicians, mainstream parties, trade unions, public bureaucracy, major corporations and international financiers, Eurocrats in Brussels and Frankfurt, who are corrupt and unjustly privileged. A second category within this perspective are immigrants (though rarely do official populist discourses and manifestos explicitly use xenophobic and racist language), particularly Muslims. The third category, coherent with the *ethnos* model, are drug addicts, homosexuals, unmarried mothers and other vulnerable categories of people assisted by welfare programmes. Right-wing populists differ among themselves only with regard to the EU. While Northern European populists criticise EU policies for being too generous towards Mediterranean Europe, populists from Southern Europe criticise Brussels for being mean-spirited and tight-fisted. Nonetheless, all populists advance the same strategy for standing against these adversaries: national sovereignty must be fully restored.

Concerned with the *ethnos*, the new far right parties have no objections to the market economy. Curiously, however, in their rhetoric they take advantage of, and profit from, the deteriorating socio-economic situation of the middle and lower classes and social inequalities, which have intensified as a result of globalisation. This raises an interesting question regarding European populism in comparison to other experiences of populism, for instance the frequently cited Latin American one. According to Gino Germani (1978), the latter supplied a sense of identity to the lower classes and called for substantial redistributive policies that benefited them. In a significant difference, this doesn't seem to be a function that European populists want to fulfil. However, what do they want to do to reduce social inequality once they get into power? Their experience of taking part in coalition governments with centre-right and conservative parties teach us that no welfare policies were promoted, but they did support policies aimed at cutting taxes and privatising public services (Akkerman et al. 2016).

It is highly probable that populist parties learned from each other through tactical emulation. Le Pen's first achievement as leader of the French National Front dates back to 1984, when the party successfully passed the 10 per cent threshold in the European Parliament election. Since then, political emulation has become evident. The FPÖ, which initially viewed itself as a nationalist and pan-German party – albeit with a large number of ex-Nazis among its ranks – and had even supported a social democratic government, became a right-wing populist party under the aegis of Haider. In the 1990s, Christoph Blocher took over the leadership of a moderate Swiss party – the traditionalist Swiss People's Party (Schweizerische Volkspartei, SVP) – transformed it into a far-right populist party, led it to victory and turned it into the largest party in Switzerland within a ten-year time span. This model was then imported to both Scandinavia and the United Kingdom.

Certainly, there are plenty of variations to the aforementioned model. The family of right-wing populists has become crowded, and also includes some ethno-regionalist parties that divide the people into subnational categories: the Northern League in Italy (Lega Nord, LN, from 2018 renamed as Lega), the Flemish Block (Vlaams Blok, VB) in Belgium, which was replaced by Flemish Interest (Vlaams Belang) in 2004, and the Ticino League (Lega dei Ticinesi) in Switzerland. The Flemish party is overtly secessionist, whereas the Italian League has now abandoned its separatist cause; the party based in the canton of Ticino does not wish to let go of the rights they enjoy within the Swiss Confederation, but proudly defends the Italian-speaking people of the territory.

In addition, we face a true paradox in populist discourse. Right-wing populists negate representation but represent themselves as the people's spokesmen and spokeswomen, and there is no doubt that they represent something and somebody. Furthermore, they make great efforts to organise their people in the ways in which mainstream parties once did (Heinisch and Mazzoleni 2016). 'Narrating the people', which by itself does not really exist, is clearly a form of representation. What the populist parties do is balance their representative activity with a peculiar democratic fundamentalism. They usually appoint their leaders by acclamation, which implies, however, a heterodox form of representation. Populists give noteworthy preference to referenda, but this is after all a means of mischaracterising representation as direct democracy. This was the case with UKIP when it claimed in its manifesto that the referendum on British membership of the EU was 'the opportunity for real change in our politics, rebalancing power from large corporations and big government institutions and putting it back into the hands of the people of this country'.

Furthermore, populists add another distinct and rather disquieting feature to political representation. Their idea of democracy is anchored in their prejudice against pluralism (Müller

2016). Not only do they characterise the people in absolute terms as an inviolable collective totality, but they downsize, if not actually exclude, minority rights and any other fundamental rights protecting the individual.

The tradition of European constitutionalism is based on the rule of law and a system of checks and balances. After the world had witnessed the manipulation of popular sovereignty and electoral democracy by fascism and Nazism, in the post-World War II era, these elements were reinforced by, among other things, the introduction of national constitutional courts. The point here, as argued by Yves Mény and Yves Surel, is that populism may simply be the other side of the democratic coin (Mény and Surel 2000). In line with their view, we might argue that populism has currently been rediscovered, along with the spectres that accompany it: most significantly, the tyranny of the majority. According to populists, the people as *ethnos* exist due to their oneness, and they must be granted the right to unitarily rule themselves through identification with those who guide it. This is clearly not the most conventional or healthy way of conceiving representative and pluralistic democracy. Nevertheless, even if populists might not be fully aware of this fact, there is no doubt that they still ultimately find themselves in the realm of representation.

Western societies are, on average, more educated and better-informed today than they were after World War II. Therefore, citizens are more inclined to criticise those who represent and govern them (Gaxie 2004, 152). This inclination is certainly one of the causes of what is commonly referred to as democratic discontent, which Mair (2000; 2002; 2013) identified when discussing the crisis of political representation. The reaction by mainstream parties has been to emphasise popular sovereignty and reinforce direct democracy through referenda, primaries, personalised leadership and the presidential turn of representative government (Poguntke and Webb 2005). Should we therefore consider this to be an indirect success for right-wing populist parties? Contemporary democratic regimes have been defined as 'output-oriented democracy' or 'government for the people' (Scharpf 1999, 6). Traditional representative institutions, such as parliaments and parties, have been marginalised, while the executives have been upgraded. A part of governmental activity has also been displaced to technocrats, independent authorities and European Union institutions. In order to balance these changes and reduce voter discontent, mainstream parties increasingly support direct democratic practices, such as primaries, deliberative assemblies and referenda. Of course, this does incur a risk akin to the outcome of the UK referendum on EU membership and similar events with unexpected results. Democracy itself has been redefined repeatedly. Mair suggests that it is becoming a 'partyless democracy' (for example, a democracy against parties) and therefore a 'populist democracy' (Mair 2002). Populist parties are, consequently, perfectly in tune with the spirit of the time that their action helped to create.

Right-wing populists claim to represent the people but only use this argument in line with their own understanding of the concept. Nonetheless, they are not the only ones to do so, as has already been mentioned. All political actors manufacture their own versions of 'the people', including those that someone defines 'left-wing populists' (Kriesi 2014, 362). The act of gathering together and representing the people, as executed by right-wing populists, is not a particularly intellectual achievement but little more than the improvised amalgamation of a collection of loose ideas. This points to a significant difference between today's populism and fascism, whose conceptual foundation was indebted to several important intellectuals, such as Giovanni Gentile, Carl Schmitt and Drieu La Rochelle. In comparison with its right-wing manifestation, left-wing populists, such as the Spanish party Podemos (We Can), which was created by a group of young academics at the Complutense University of Madrid, include members who are capable of making sophisticated theoretical arguments inspired by the writings of Antonio Gramsci and Ernesto Laclau.

Laclau taught in the UK for many years but never forgot his Argentinian roots. He developed a theory of the people that was explicitly inspired by constructivism. According to Laclau, in a global society the Marxian interpretative frame, that is, the idea of a society divided into different classes, is entirely obsolete. Contemporary societies are scattered and contradictory; populism is a political technique able to aggregate social demands (to be reconstructed later in more universal terms) with the aim of forming political identity and groupings (Laclau 2005). The leadership of Podemos took these ideas very seriously. They are willing to mobilise and construct the 'people' by opposing it to the elites, and they suggest the end of the dichotomy of right versus left. Nevertheless, their system of dichotomous and antagonistic relations, such as lower/higher social classes, democracy/oligarchy, majority/elite, old/new politics and change/continuity (Cano 2015; Caruso 2017) is extremely different from the right-wing dichotomy between the pure ethnos and the corrupt cosmopolitan elite.

According to Podemos, one part consists of a popular majority, which is national, republican and loyal to the 1978 constitution: this is the people. The other part consists of 'a minority of the privileged who systematically disregard the law' and 'systematically live on the margins of the law because of their corruption and tax evasion activities': this part consists of politicians, businessmen, bankers and financial speculators (Caruso 2017). However, it must be clear that Podemos understands the people to be a pluralistic and unrestricted *demos*. There is no prejudice against immigrants, and Podemos supports the politics of acceptance, while recognising social diversity. The party acknowledges the multinational character of Spain and endorses the Catalan, Galician, Valencian and Basque populations' right to self-determination. Therefore, unlike other Spanish parties, Podemos has no objection to the Catalan referendum on the region's independence. This kind of pluralism also exists within the party, where former activists from the Communist Party of Spain, protesters from the Indignados movement and Anti-Capitalist Left (Izquierda Anticapitalista, IA) supporters, as well as regionalist activists, have all found their place. Equally compatible with their pluralism is their endorsement of participatory and direct democracy, even when exercised online. But the latter is practised to strengthen democratic representation and not to replace it. Despite this, there is no trace of plebiscitary or 'populist' democracy within Podemos. It promises to fully uphold Spanish constitutionalism, which must be based on the separation of powers and on a system of effective checks and balances. Finally: could the *demos* Podemos means to represent be more different from the *ethnos* right-wing populists call upon?

Representing Populist Parties

As it turns out, political representation is more complex than first expected. The represented exist because they are represented by the representatives. Nevertheless, the performative act of representation is not unilateral in all cases but rather relational. Representation is also a product of elaborate acts of representation by other political agents, who are neither disinterested nor indifferent. Representation happens in a competitive sphere, crowded with numerous actors – competitors and observers of a more or less sympathetic inclination – who all comment, criticise and, above all, classify. This makes the act of representing a matter of contingency, above all things. No party, movement or ideology remains the same over time. Contingency is unavoidable; this is also the case for populist parties, which are only rarely aware of themselves being populist. It is here that we can trace one of populism's major features. Political parties usually align themselves with a specific political family (Seiler 1980; Mair and Mudde 1998). Socialist parties belong to the socialist family and communist parties to the communist family. The same is equally true for liberal, confessional and fascist parties. This is to say that most parties from different countries are usually willing to share the same label when representing common ideological positions and thus adhere to a political family (most tangibly at the international institutional level). The European Parliament, for instance, has even institutionalised such political affiliation by grouping nationally elected parties under the same label. By contrast, the populist family is a complete invention by observers and political competitors. Populist parties have neither a clear international umbrella nor, for instance, a unique space in the current European Parliament. Consequently, the label populist is a paradoxical Nansen passport for homeless parties.

Who invented the populist family? Certainly not those who have been labelled populists (leaving aside the Russian and American populists, who belong to a completely different time and political *modus operandi*). Contemporary European populists, as well those from Latin America, Africa and Asia, are not born with the populist label. When this term was first attributed to some parties and regimes in South America and post-colonial countries – where the masses were being mobilised as a political force – it was fairly residual and vague (Ionescu and Gellner 1969; Canovan 1981). The act of classifying Peronism, Nasserism, Nakrumah's regime in Ghana and that of Sukarno in Indonesia, among others, was extremely difficult by Western standards. These were neither socialist nor fascist regimes. However, they were egalitarian and anti-imperialist. Therefore, observers made a choice to classify them as populist. The classification of a number of outsider parties that have emerged in Europe since the 1970s was not so different. They could not be clearly assigned to, and/or refused the right to belong to, any known political family. This probably explains why academic debate on the definition of populism has become so contested (Hubé and Truan 2017). The process of classifying such heterogeneous phenomena, which developed in markedly different circumstances, could not avoid a degree of inaccuracy. As a result, there is often the impression that each scholar of populism has his or her own way of describing populism, which is variously defined as a political and communicative style, a kind of rhetoric, a discourse, an ideology (maybe just 'thin') or a peculiar way to occupy democratic institutions.

All classifications make simplifications to some extent. However, in this case the classification not only simplifies but is also far from being flattering (Collovald 2003; Collovald 2004). In addition, those labelled populists have only recently accepted this representation. It is, after all, a stigmatising classification. Nobody takes into account the tradition of North American populism. Accordingly, the attribution of the same label to a new generation of European parties and movements, which can hardly be compared to the liberal idea of democracy, does not dignify them with sufficient status at all. The people of non-Western populists were made of anonymous and formless masses and were, therefore, the opposite of the social classes represented by European parties. And formless and frustrated popular strata seem to be the people for European populists, as observed and defined by some commentators who are far from being as generous as Laclau was. Equally ungenerous and unsympathetic is the label of 'modernisation's losers', which represents them as individually beaten by change and responsible for their own condition. After all, there are many good reasons to consider them victims of modernisation.

Is there any other label one could attribute to populists? Calling them fascists would be too hasty. There are no traces, for instance, of scientific racism, although populists inarguably draw on the murkiest repertoire of the extreme right. The French National Front, recently renamed as National Rally (Rassemblement National, RN) has an evident fascist ancestry, and previously invoked flagrant anti-Semitism. It even made use, albeit with minor changes, of the same symbol as the Italian neo-fascists. The origins of the Austrian FPÖ, of the Swedish Democrats (Sverigedemokraterna, SD) and the (Northern) League in Italy are not so different. The UK Independence Party (UKIP) has some connection to the anti-immigration stances of Enoch Powell (Goodwin and Milazzo 2015). On the other side of the political spectrum, the attention paid to social inequality, injustice and exclusion, as well as the demand for more egalitarian policies and redistribution, reveals the ideological ancestries of both Podemos and the Greek party SYRIZA. It is also possible to draw some conclusions from the parties' leadership. Pablo Iglesias, the leader of Podemos, has mentioned his past record as an activist for the communist left. SYRIZA in Greece is an agglomeration of different left-wing groups, while its leader, Alexis Tsipras, comes from the ranks of the Greek Communist Party (Kommounistikó Kómma Elládas, KKE). Among the members and activists of UKIP, the RN and Alternative for Germany (Alternative für Deutschland, AfD), there are many former activists from the British Conservative Party, the French Union for a Popular Movement (Union pour un mouvement populaire, UMP) and the German Christian Democratic Union (Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands, CDU) respectively.

The question of who votes for right-wing populist parties is not at all clear. Commentators from different *milieus* (politics, the media and academia) compete against each other, while putting forward their own representations of populist voters. Let's consider, for instance, the French case. According to some observers, the National Front's success was the result of a dramatic shift to the right by many former leftist voters (Perrineau 2001). Others assume that even though a shift did occur, it was not dramatic (Lehingue 2003). On the one hand, it is a well-known fact that a significant share of right-wing voters has always come from the working class. On the other hand, nothing is more questionable than labelling those who support the SVP in Zurich, the Ticino League, Flemish Interest in Belgium or the League in Italy as losers. Herbert Kitschelt and Andrew J. McGann (1995) argue that the supporters of populist parties are nothing but 'welfare chauvinists'. In any case, if a considerable number of UKIP voters have indeed been 'left behind', their political roots are to be found more in the Conservative Party than in the Labour Party (Goodwin and Milazzo 2015). This is similar to the French National Rally's voters (Crépon et al. 2015) and those of the Italian (Northern) League, who came mainly from the Christian Democracy Party. This has also been the case for Podemos and Syriza (from the other side of the political spectrum), both of which attracted many former voters from the mainstream left. On closer inspection, there are 'winners' and 'losers' everywhere. Therefore, the hypothesis regarding the radicalisation of former mainstream right-wing voters, including the working class, is as plausible as it is for the mainstream left. This would confirm Mair's hypothesis but would also call into question underlying political loyalties. Have they really changed? Or is voting for populists simply a form of protest, which is perhaps transitory yet more vigorous than the traditional form of abstention?

Populist parties are also represented as (destructive) protest parties in contrast to the (constructive) programme-based parties. In fact, with the exception of some populist parties that do develop complex political programmes (in the case of the AfD and Podemos), the weakening of programmes is a general phenomenon which Otto Kirchheimer, in his famous article on catch-all parties (1969), coupled with another general phenomenon: the personalisation of politics. Anti-intellectualism is another general typical addition to populist attributes. Nevertheless, if the level of intellectual development of post-World War II mainstream parties was very high, and their leaders were often well-known intellectuals, current party leaders are not. Moreover, we must acknowledge that the leadership of Podemos comprises a large number of academics from the Complutense University of Madrid and that that of the German AfD was initially run by a respected economist.

A similar consideration concerns leadership itself. Charisma is often attributed to populist parties (Taggart 2004), and the cultivated elites are keen to consider the uncultivated masses to be particularly receptive to appeals to the emotions. There is no doubt that some populist parties also owe their initial success to the popularity of their leaders. Nonetheless, if we take into account the history of party politics, we find this is neither new nor remarkable. The appeal of the 'founding fathers', whoever they may be, is not new to politics but rather the political norm. Kirchheimer, in his article on catch-all parties (1969), commented on how, in order to adapt to new media (particularly television), the figure of the leader was becoming a symbolic shortcut on the way to making parties recognisable, while diminishing the relevance of controversial issues. By aiming to expand their political reach through propaganda, personalised parties could appeal to a larger number of voters than had been previously possible. Personalisation is common to many parties nowadays, mainly because of the 'media logic' that seeks out attractive figures in order to increase audience share. In addition, populists tend to employ simplistic, emotional, informal, provocative, coarse and even violent language (Canovan 1999, 5–6). But not all of them are the same, and they do not use the same language in all circumstances. Different leaders of the same party can speak very differently. Besides this, language is subject to constant change. Moreover, informal and emotional language has become much more common in current politics. It might reflect the needs of the audience. In the case of populist parties, it might even be considered a necessity. Let's not forget that they face an already crowded political market with intense competition, where established parties have many more resources at their disposal, such as the possibility of making use of public policies. Populist 'start-ups' do not usually have public funding at hand.

Politics is always rich in paradox. Right-wing populists often make unacceptable statements. On formal occasions, they may moderate their tone, but they are used to preaching xenophobia and racism. More than half a century after fascist regimes collapsed, the success of populists highlights the difficult conditions that plague contemporary democracies. Yet, this does not stop mainstream parties from adopting an ambiguous attitude towards right-wing populists. On the one hand, mainstream parties deal with right-wing populists as if they were a threat to democratic life, considering them unworthy and unreliable. On the other hand, calling them populists is also a way, perhaps unconsciously, of playing down that same threat to democracy without excluding the possibility of the political exploitation of populists by mainstream parties. The exploitation of right-wing populists has a long history. It was anticipated by the leader of the Socialist Party (Parti socialiste, PS) in France, François Mitterrand, who changed the French law on elections in 1981 to enable the then National Front to win seats in parliament, which consequently made things difficult for mainstream right-wing parties. After it had already formed an alliance with the Austrian People's Party, the FPÖ joined the Austrian government in 1999. The Northern League has joined Italian governments several times, as has the Danish People's Party (Dansk Folkepart, DF), and both of them have deeply influenced immigration policies in their respective countries. At the same time in France, mainstream right-wing parties vigorously debated the option of joining forces with the National Front/ Rally at the local level. It is too early to know whether the same treatment will be reserved for left-wing populists as well: at the end of 2016 in Spain, the Socialist Party (Partido Socialista Obrero Español, PSOE) preferred to support the Popular Party rather than join with the alliance between Podemos and the United Left (Izquierda Unida, IU) (Unidos Podemos). At the same time in France, the largest right-wing party, The Republicans (Les Républicains), has in some cases discussed the option of joining forces with the Rassemblement National, at least at local level. So far this has been averted. By contrast, in Spain the Socialist Party took three years to decide to ally with Podemos and the United Left (Unidos Podemos).

Labelling right-wing parties populist is much less unfair than labelling them fascists or extremists. There might also be an argument for calling them anti-system parties (Sartori 1976, 132f). After all, they undermine the legitimacy of representative democracy. What mainstream parties probably do not take into account is that the vague and rough classifications attributed to these parties might have helped the populists. Not only might this label have provided populists the opportunity to gain new voters, but it may also have indirectly normalised their political discourse. A 'populist' party does not seem as repulsive as a fascist one and thus does not discourage voters from voting for it (though many such voters tend to conceal their votes, as many surveys reveal). Meanwhile, racism and xenophobia seem to have become less illegitimate. This is not really surprising considering that established parties, which are dogged vote-seekers, sometimes endorse truly questionable policies regarding human rights.

It is very likely that populism will continue to challenge democratic regimes, and also social scientists, for many years to come. It is difficult to imagine a sudden decline in the appeal of populist parties. Let us not forget that political representation is an extraordinary invention by Western politics. For more than a century, the 'outsiders' who have crossed the threshold of political representation have, in many cases, if not all, been polished, tamed and, consequently, transformed. Can we imagine that the populists of today may go through the same process of political assimilation as those who preceded them? It is an argument that deserves great attention and that is worthwhile observing carefully in terms of the future of populist parties. The state of political representation changes all the time. Political opportunities and circumstances influence political parties in many different ways. How do and will the so-called populist parties react to their success? Furthermore, populist parties are not all the same. They are different from one country to the next, and right-wing and left-wing populists are extremely different. Will they have different destinies? A second issue that needs to be studied is how these parties manage their representative activities both at the local and national levels. A third issue that deserves attention is how and to what extent the political agenda will be influenced by populist parties. Will mainstream parties become more sensitive to social problems, such as immigration and social inequality? A fourth issue that needs closer consideration concerns party organisation. In the past, mainstream parties represented the people by gathering their supporters not only symbolically but through organisation as well. Recently, these parties have largely abandoned their grassroots activities. What will populist parties do on the ground and within 'civil society'? Answering these crucial questions may help us to understand better what is happening and what may happen to democracy.

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CHAPTER 3:
CONCEPTUALISING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POPULISM AND THE RADICAL RIGHT

Dietmar Loch

Introduction

The rise of radical right populist parties began in the 1980s in Western Europe with the French National Front (Front National, FN, since June 2018 National Rally, Rassemblement National, RN), the Freedom Party of Austria (Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs, FPÖ), the Belgian Flemish Block (Vlaams Blok, VB), the Norwegian Progress Party (Fremskrittspartiet), The Republicans (Die Republikaner) in Germany, and others (Betz 1994). With the transformation of the Central and Eastern European countries (CEECs) after 1989 and the subsequent enlargement of the European Union, political parties such as The Movement for a Better Hungary (Jobbik) in Hungary, the Slovak National Party (Slovenská národná strana, SNS) in Slovakia, Attack (Ataka) in Bulgaria or the League of Polish Families (Liga Polskich Rodzin, LPR) in Poland joined this family of parties with their specific regional profile (Minkenberg 2015). Initially interpreted as a product of post-industrial society in Western European politics (Ignazi 1992), the populist radical right has become a central research subject in the context of party politics and globalisation, first in Western Europe (Loch and Heitmeyer 2001; Kriesi 2008) and then through the political impact of the economic and financial crisis of 2008 on all of Europe (Kriesi and Pappas 2015; Loch and Norocel 2015). This role underlined the electoral importance of so-called 'globalisation losers' during periods of modernisation and highlighted the issue of economic protectionism in the ideology of radical right parties. Yet, the subsequent 'migration crisis' shifted the focus of research again, directing the latter to the anti-immigration core of these parties. Finally, Brexit and the role played in it by Nigel Farage's United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) drew special attention to these parties' importance as Eurosceptical and Europhobic political actors, who have accelerated the crisis in the European Union and prepared the ground for Britain's departure from the EU.

Meanwhile, radical right populist parties have established themselves in European party systems, achieving different rates of success. Gaining access to political power, they moved from a position of marginality to one of having the potential to blackmail larger parties and finally to full participation in subnational and national governments. In fact, in several countries of the EU they support or supported the government (Denmark, United Kingdom), participate in it (e.g. Italy, Slovakia) or even control it (particularly in Hungary). Even a country like Germany, long considered a special case given its historical legacy (Loch 2001), has had a formidable radical right populist party for several years in the form of the Alternative for Germany (Alternative für Deutschland, AfD). After two short periods of neo-fascist and extreme right renaissance in the 1950s and the 1960s and after its rise and organisational consolidation from 1980 to 2000, the (populist) radical right has been in its 'fourth wave' since 2000. The current political power of the populist radical right, and with it of nationalism and racism, becomes globally evident in the fact that today 'three of the five most populous countries in the world have a far-right leader (Brazil, India, and the USA)' (Mudde 2019). However, it is not only this access to office and a certain revival of the extreme right in Europe that is challenging Western democracies, but also the impact of the radical right on the ideas, positions and conflicts of mainstream politics.

In the following section, I will first provide a short *historical overview* of this rise of the radical right and populism to show how these two strands have converged into today's populist radical right. Second, I will focus on *populism* by analysing the ideological limits of this concept, before, third, in the main part of this section, I examine the ideological profile of the *(populist) radical right* and its links to economic, cultural and political globalisation more deeply by taking into consideration supply-side and demand-side explanations. This includes some answers to the question of how radical right populist parties can be distinguished from other right-wing or populist parties at the end of this par.

Populism and the Radical Right: A Historical Perspective

From the Extreme Right to the Contemporary Radical Right

Populism and the radical or extreme right have different historical, geographical and ideological origins. As a part of European history, the extreme right emerged at the end of the 19th century. From the beginning, nationalism and racism were its ideological pillars. Despite all the contextual differences between the 19th century and contemporary societies, both have been central in the ideology of the radical right up to this day: nationalism serves as protection against globalisation, and racism/Islamophobia calls for structural and systematic discrimination against migrants/Muslims. This kind of thinking was also present in European fascism, a unique and incomparable phenomenon which was nevertheless a violent expression of the extreme right in its aggressive and imperialistic pursuit of nationalism as well as its genocidal pursuit of racism and anti-Semitism respectively.

After World War II, the extreme right was morally and politically discredited. In the decades thereafter, its electoral successes were embedded in specific political contexts and types of society. In fact, during the thirty years of post-war economic growth in West European industrial societies, the extreme right was practically non-existent. The marginal Socialist Reich Party (Sozialistische Reichspartei Deutschlands, SRP) and the neo-fascist Italian Social Movement (Movimento Sociale Italiano, MSI), which appeared immediately after the war, can be neglected as a political force. Even the short-term electoral success of the National Democratic Party of Germany (Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands, NPD) in West Germany in the 1960s has to be seen, from a sociological perspective, in the same light, namely as a sort of deviant behaviour in the context of normal politics. Thus, the extreme right was interpreted as a form of 'normal pathology' in liberal industrial society (Scheuch and Klingemann 1967). This view began to change with the rise and establishment of the radical right after the 1980s.

Coinciding with the end of the post-war economic boom and full employment in the 1970s, the rise of the radical right fell into the period associated with the emergence of the post-industrial society (Wieviorka 2013, 17–24). In the 1980s, this produced an authoritarian 'silent counter-revolution' (Ignazi 1992) in reaction to the libertarian and post-materialist values that had developed in the decade before as a 'silent revolution' (Inglehart 1977), which refers to a quiet shift in middle-class values and orientation among the mass Western public. The polarisation between these libertarian and authoritarian values has reshaped West European party systems (Kitschelt and McGann 1995), resulting in stark opposition between Green parties, on the one hand, and those of the new radical right, on the other. This polarisation continued to develop and can be explained by cleavage theory as being a major contemporary societal split between those advocating 'open' cultural integration and promoting 'closed' cultural demarcation. It can be concluded that the populist radical right is currently experiencing its electoral success by representing nativist protectionism against globalisation and denationalisation (Zürn 1998; Kriesi 2008).

From Populism in the World to 'Neo' Populism in Europe

As already discussed in this book, the origins of populism – in contrast to the history of the radical right – lie in the Narodniki movement in Russia and the People's Party in the United States. There, the leaders had, in the Russian case, revolutionary objectives and, in the US case, reformist ones against modernisation. From there, populism spread to other parts of the world, taking root especially in Latin America (Hermet 2001). It reached Europe mainly only after World War II, impacting first France, where the traditions of identity and protest populism gave way to Poujadism a movement named after its leader, Pierre Poujade (Winock 1997), and then Denmark, where it manifested itself in the Progress Party (Fremskrittspartiet) under Mogens Glistrup, an anti-tax crusader. The temporary success of both parties was due to an anti-taxation movement supported by the 'old middle class', merchants and craftsmen, whose mode of production was in decline due to modernisation in the decades after the Second World War. It was only in the 1980s that populism became a more common phenomenon in Europe, first on the right and then on the left. Thus, both tendencies – populism and the radical right – and the research about them converged in that decade with the result that some authors have called this new phenomenon *national-populism* (Taguieff 2007; 2012; 2015), while others refer to it as the populist radical right (Mudde 2007; Rydgren 2007; 2013, 2018; Betz 2018; Loch 2019;) or extended, to the 'far right' (Mudde 2019), which includes the radical and the (anti-democratic) extreme right.

Populism: More than a Thin Ideology?

Comparatively speaking, populism can be characterised by the differences with which it presents itself: these lie in the historical (country) and structural context (political system), the ideological tendency (right-wing, left-wing, religious and so on) as well as the kind and degree of organisation and institutionalisation ('charismatic' personality, political party, political regime and so on). Given this multitude of differences, using the term populism has often been considered 'concept stretching' (Canovan 1981). However, there are at least three commonalities or similarities that may justify treating populism conceptually as belonging to its own category (see especially Mény and Surel 2000): first of all, there is the context of modernisation in which populism develops; second, there is the corrective function it can have in liberal democracy by representing 'ordinary people', which can hardly be qualified as 'pathological'. Instead, it is characterised by demands for more plebiscitary democracy, more charismatic political leaders and more emotion in politics. The third similarity is the political ease with which it aligns itself with various political ideologies. Although populism's constant references and appeals to 'the people' are its central defining characteristics, this, too, may be analytically subdivided into three connected spheres: economic populism (class people), cultural populism (nation people) and 'political' populism (sovereign people). Thus, it can be concluded first that, based on its underlying similarities, 'populism may be considered neither a political ideology nor a type of regime, but a political style based on the systematic use of the rhetoric of the appeal to the people and on the implementation of a kind of charismatic legitimation, the most appropriate to value the "change"' (Taguieff 2007, 9). Second, populism can have a mediatory function through plebiscitary democracy in times when the 'intermediary institutions' of representative democracy (political parties and so on) are in crisis.

In fact, the ideas of populism as a *political style* and also as performing a *mediatory function* are widely accepted in research. By contrast, the main controversy concerns populism's ideological content as it is not based on a substantive core. Populism has no value system of its own but is built on a concept of relationships to other phenomena (Priester 2012). For these reasons, it has been qualified as a *thin ideology* (Freeden 1996; Fieschi and Heywood 2004) such as nationalism, feminism and the like, which depend on a *host ideology* such as liberalism or socialism. The thin centre of the ideology is based on four core ideas: the existence of two homogeneous groups, 'the people' (as distinct from the state) and 'the elite'; the antagonistic (and vertical) relationship between the two; the idea of popular sovereignty; and a 'Manichean outlook' that combines positive valorisation of 'the people' with the denigration of the 'elite' (Kriesi and Pappas 2015, 4). Research rarely treats populism as a 'thick' ideology, such as in the attempt by Priester (2007, 9), who defines populism '[...] as a revolt against the modern state and a popular variation of conservative thinking which is situated in a triangle between anarchism, liberalism, and conservatism'.

Populism's dilemma of incoherent form and substance also relates to the similarities and differences between right-wing and left-wing populism, as represented by SYRIZA (Coalition of the Radical Left – Progressive Alliance) in Greece, Podemos (We Can) in Spain and the Left Party (Parti de gauche) of Jean-Luc Mélenchon in France. If both leftist populism and rightist populism use the same political style, then the differences that remain are ideological. In fact, both tend to invoke the dialectical form of inclusion and exclusion. But whereas *leftist populism* stands for the *inclusion* of *socially* disadvantaged groups ('class people'), *right-wing populism* stands for the *exclusion* of *culturally* different groups in favour of the autochthonous 'nation people'. Here again, the main difference lies in the opposite content of the host ideologies on which the various types of populism depend. To sum up, the fact that populism does not contain a sufficient ideological core is inadequate in yielding a satisfying definition. Thus, we have to shift our analytical focus to the radical right and its ideological content.

A New Party Family: Populist, Radical and Right-Wing

Terminology, Ideology, Concepts

In the 'war of words', the *terminology* employed depends on various criteria: Linguistic preferences usually depend on national academic culture, such as the use of right-wing extremism or radical right in the Anglo-Saxon context, extreme right (*extrême droite*) in France or right-wing extremism (*Rechtsextremismus*) in the German-speaking world. The choice of 'extreme' can also be based on a research interest in political attitudes and the objective to measure such positions methodologically along the left-right scale. Also, the theory of democracy contains, but for different reasons, the notion of 'extreme' in connection with the concept of totalitarianism. In fact, rightist and leftist political extremism often rejects the fundamental rights of liberal democracy. For this reason, political parties such as the German National Democratic Party (Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands, NPD) and the British National Party (BNP) can be qualified as part of the extreme right. In ideological respects, this type of extreme rightism is akin to neo-fascism. In contrast to this terminological choice and its legitimation, we agree with Rydgren (2007; 2018) by defining the phenomenon by its substantial *political ideas* or *ideology*. This means, first of all, that radical right populist parties belong to the political *right*. They represent rightist values, such as individual liberty, versus *leftist* values, such as equality, solidarity and social justice. Norberto Bobbio (1996) has shown that the fundamental values of the right and the left remain; only their significance varies in relation to social and political change. Second, these parties are *radical,* particularly with respect to their values, given that these formations reject individual and social equality (essentially on the basis of racism) and, thus, universalistic principles of liberal democracy. Third, all these formations apply a *populist* political style.

In order to define these parties, it is furthermore necessary to know their *organisational forms* (Heinisch and Mazzoleni 2016) and their connection to the *intellectual 'new right'*, a discussion of which in its various forms would go beyond the scope of this chapter (Camus and Lebourg 2015). Moreover, the political radical right goes beyond the idea of the party and can manifest itself in various forms: as a proper political party, a social movement or a subcultural phenomenon (for example, the often violent skinhead *milieu*) (Minkenberg 1998). Normally, the social movement precedes the party, but populist parties generally maintain their movement's character (see Ruzza's chapter in this book). These radical right manifestations may attain different levels of prominence in different contexts: For example, the violent skinhead *milieu* was quite important in Germany for a long time because then right-wing extremism had no political legitimacy in that country. Koopmans (1995) has shown the interactive effect between parties and this *milieu* in terms of organisation when comparing France and Germany. The absence of extreme or radical right parties in Germany pushed the phenomenon onto the streets, whereas in France, the strong party organisation of the National Front managed to absorb and integrate this *milieu* into its youth organisation. Of all these forms, the political party is the dominant one. This insight takes us to the concept of the party family, which is historically and sociologically based on cleavages and their effect.

Cleavage theory explains how basic and conflictual developments in society – such as industrialisation or the formation of the nation – have formed political conflicts and, with them, entire party systems. The cleavage structure of Lipset and Rokkan (1967) reflected the conflicts of the modern nation state in industrial society. However, ethnic conflicts did not exist in this 'frozen' cleavage structure and the extreme or radical right was not foreseen. More recently, Hanspeter Kriesi (2008) especially has given this factor new significance by showing the role of globalisation in cleavage formation. In terms of economic and cultural positions ranging from 'integration' to 'demarcation', radical right parties are seen as firmly positioned close to the end of the axis marking the demarcation pole. By contrast, in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, other cleavages have emerged, the most important of which is the one that pits the centre against the periphery (Bafoil 2006). This cleavage, which is related to globalisation, has also been conceptualised in terms of polarisation between 'globalists' and 'plebeians' (Lang 2009), where the position of the radical right in CEECs is located on the side of the periphery and 'plebeians'. Cleavages form and modify political parties, which can be regrouped into *party families*. Importantly, radical right populist parties constitute a new party family of their own. The concept of party families (Mair and Mudde 1998) includes, on the one hand, historical, geographical and cleavage-related sociological aspects and, on the other, more political aspects, such as ideas and programmatic positions. In relation to the concept of cleavages and the economic, cultural and political sphere, I will now discuss, first, the link between globalisation and radical right populist parties, second, their respective positions, third, their electorate and, fourth, the corresponding explanations for (the absence of) their success.

Economic Protectionism: Class Politics for 'Modernisation Losers'

The hypothetical link between economic globalisation and the electoral success of the populist radical right is plausible but difficult to verify. However, for the time following the economic and financial crisis of 2008, this effect has been shown by Kriesi and Pappas (2015), among others. Cleavage theory can provide us with important insights (Kriesi 2008): the economic cleavage between integration and demarcation tends to structure what is supplied politically by the populist parties and also shapes the alignment of the electorate. However, what radical right parties offer politically reveals an old ambiguity. 'Socially, I am on the left, economically I am to the right, and nationally, I am from France,' said Jean-Marie Le Pen during the presidential campaign of 2002. This is the traditional ambiguity between the pro-capitalist and socio-ethnically (pseudo-)egalitarian positions of the extreme right.

In the 1980s, the radical right used to represent more liberal positions. However, since the 1990s there has been a shift towards economic protectionism. Radical right parties have become a 'new type of working-class parties', whose political discourse is particularly directed against globalisation and has received a boost since the economic and financial crisis of 2008. This prompts the question of whether the parties' positioning actually matches their electorate. Who votes for these parties? Indeed, the voters may be qualified as the 'losers of globalisation', meaning that they come from the lower classes and are less well educated than other parts of the electorate (Arzheimer 2008; Rydgren 2013; Werts et al. 2013). If we asked where these voters tend to live in Europe, we would often find them in or near urban areas characterised by the social impact of economic decline due to deindustrialisation. In contrast to such similarities, national particularities are more linked to specific regions with their corresponding political culture, such as the Alsace in France, Thurgovia in Switzerland, Carinthia in Austria or partially in the former East Germany. Research on the French case has shown, for example, that FN/RN voters often live in intermediary areas between the centre and the periphery (Fourquet 2014), and in the rural periphery itself, where they feel excluded and frustrated.

Finally, we need to ask why people vote for these parties. Here it is important to note that the voters in question are often considered an electorate of fear (de Vries and Hoffmann 2016). How can this be explained? For one, there has been a renewed focus on socio-structural causes (Rydgren 2013). Corresponding demand-side explanations have a long tradition and analyse the ‘breeding ground’ for populist party voters, so to speak. They are mostly based on modernisation theory and consist of two research streams offering the sociological approach of anomia and that of relative deprivation (status politics). Their aim is to explain the radical right through modified social ties or/and with respect to social structure. For instance, the rise of the French Front National has been interpreted as ‘the political echo of urban anomia’ (Perrineau 1988; 2014, 105–171). Yet, although anomia is not a recent phenomenon in the disintegrating working class *milieu* of the ‘red suburbs’, the success of the FN/RN continues. Thus, status politics seems a more plausible explanation for the electoral success of the Rassemblement National. In fact, status politics attracts voters who experience or face a real loss of their status. These individuals either find their aim of upward social mobility thwarted or fear losing their position. This can result in the experience of relative deprivation (Gurr 1970) because the goal to be achieved does not correspond to social reality. The ensuing frustration can then transform itself into political behaviour, such as voting for a xenophobic party when the political party succeeds in providing a scapegoat in the form of immigrants, who are blamed for people not achieving their goals. In the context of status inconsistencies, the radical right is not only present at the margins of society, but even more so in the midst of it. This ‘extremism of the centre’ thesis (Lipset 1981) suggests that we may be seeing a shift from the ‘normal pathology’ of industrial society (Scheuch and Klingemann 1967) to ‘pathological normalcy’ in modern contemporary society, as expressed by the successes of the populist radical right (Mudde 2010). In fact, Mudde argues that this means a shift in the respect that previously marginalised radical right values are becoming mainstream. In sociological respects, research would then have to revise the use of the concept of ‘deviant’ behaviour for the radical right given that the radical right and its voters have become too important to be considered either marginal or deviant in their behaviour. To sum up, socio-structural explanations help us understand the relevance of socio-economic factors, but they are not sufficient to give us a full account of them.

Cultural Protectionism: Nationalism and Islamophobia

Cultural and political approaches can complete these explanations. Cultural issues are related to the cleavage positions of either cultural integration or cultural demarcation, which extends to the opposition between libertarian and authoritarian values. The latter largely overlaps with the ideology of the radical right. In fact, the very ideological core of the radical right consists of the ‘rejection of individual and social equality’. The cornerstone and even legitimation of this ideology is racism and (to a lesser extent) nationalism, which matters in the context of national identity in two ways: Internally, national identity relates to the relationship with immigrants, which, in turn, is affected by racism in two ways, as both inegalitarian (biological) and differentialist (cultural) claims (Taguieff 2012) are directed against migrants. As such, ‘immigration’ represents the main cause advocated by radical right parties. It defines their positions on migrants, refugees, a multicultural society and other issues linked to migration. In Western Europe, such anti-immigration positions are increasingly turning against Muslims. Islamophobia can be considered a particular form of racism. By contrast, in Central and Eastern Europe, the functional equivalent of Islamophobia is Romophobia or anti-Tsiganism.

Externally, national identity refers to the relationship with 'Europe'. Here, it is important to note that nationalism is *per se* not a contradiction to the cultural and political nature of Europe. In fact, nationalism has even become 'polycentric' as there are arguably many different variants of it on the continent. Moreover, even Europe as a whole is accepted and defended by the radical right on Christian and cultural grounds ('Europeanism'). However, 'Europe' also implies transnational community building, which causes a breakdown in the division between internal and external factors. In short, for the radical right, this means that the threat of 'communitarianism' is now coming from both directions, from poor neighbourhoods and from abroad, and is thus raising the issue of 'security' or 'crime', to which two kinds of authoritarian solutions are proposed: internally, the radical right uses them to justify *law and order* positions, such as tougher criminal laws for delinquent immigrant youths. Externally, the fear of terrorism particularly is instrumentalised by radical right populist parties to broadly label Muslims as Jihadists and as involved in international terrorism. As for the voters of the populist radical right parties, they are characterised by 'strong nativist opinions' and by a 'strong emphasis on the nation state coupled with an aversion to strange others, more precisely negative attitudes against immigrants' (Rooduijn 2016). Furthermore, voters with traditional values are closer to radical right populist parties than those of other parties (de Vries and Hoffmann 2016, 22). The case of the French National Rally shows great consistency in that 'immigration' has been the important motivation for its voters over the years.

Cultural explanations, such as the 'silent counter-revolution' (Ignazi 1992), also show very well how the radical right managed to profit from its resistance to the libertarian and post-materialist values that were then sweeping across European societies. For certain groups, the values of the liberal elites and the middle class appeared to be going too far (de Vries and Hoffmann 2016). Yet, this explicitly cultural approach has only limited historical depth. In light of the fact that 'immigration' is the central cultural core issue of the radical right, its effect may be explained specifically by two theories: the *ethnic competition thesis* explains voting for the radical right on the basis of the ethnicisation of social problems (for example, competition with migrants in the labour market). Then there is the *ethnic backlash thesis*, which refers to the regulation of cultural differences. The latter concerns the relationship between the political and cultural inclusion of immigrants. Since neither republican colour blindness nor multicultural identity politics seems effective in mitigating ethnic conflicts, the radical right has been able to benefit politically. As a result, these parties have proved to be successful both in republican France and in multicultural Britain. Finally, national models of citizenship formation do not work as well as in the past any more. As pragmatic approaches to conflict regulation have disappeared, urban riots based on economic dissatisfaction have ensued, as again both the French and the British cases show (Loch 2014). How can the radical right conceivably be countered when ethnic conflicts play such a prominent role in modern society?

Political culture plays an important role here. This is the concept to which we need to pay attention if we want to know whether the fascist past of a country may be a plausible historical explanation for the success (or its absence) of the radical right. Mudde (2007, 243–248) has shown that in more than half of the European countries he selected to examine this question, there was a systematic relationship between the existence/absence of a fascist past and the presence/absence of a radical right party. For the cases in which the fascist past is relevant, political culture has an impact on the extent to which the radical right is seen as a legitimate political actor (Winkler et al. 1996). In Germany, for instance, this threshold for the legitimation of extreme right actors has always been high. This was a result of the student movement of May 1968, which publicly confronted the older generation and the students' parents for their involvement with the Nazi regime, thus institutionalising a political culture that protected Germany from the extreme right. By contrast, in Austria this part of history was largely suppressed after 1945. There, the leader of the right-wing populist FPÖ, Jörg Haider, through his political activities, helped lower the threshold of accepting the far right (Betz 2004), thereby legitimising offensive speech and action before collective memory work could develop appropriate public awareness and a corresponding political culture. Finally, in France, the political culture always succeeded in defeating fascist parties and movements. Yet, with the success of the AfD the threshold in Germany has meanwhile decreased, while in France the power of the Rassemblement National has become a serious challenge to the country's political culture.

To sum up what role economic and cultural factors have played in the rise of the radical right, it is crucial to link both by asking why a worker or an employee would vote for such parties? The evidence seems to suggest that even though socio-economic motivations have become stronger since the economic and financial crisis, the main motivation for these voters has been cultural: cultural issues can be considered a kind of identitarian filter for socio-economic problems (Rydgren 2013). Finally, whereas the two cleavages discussed here represent the politicisation of the economic and cultural sphere in profound ways, there are narrower political issues and conflicts that matter as well. These relate to the political ideas the radical right holds about the institutions of the state and democracy, specifically about the sovereignty of the nation state and representative democracy.

Advocating Euroscepticism in Favour of National Sovereignty

Political globalisation does not seem to be an alternative to the nation state. By contrast, political denationalisation (Zürn 1998) in the form of European integration has become a real challenge to national autonomy. While the development of the EU has been shaped by federalist and supranational ideas, there has been a renaissance of a Europe of nation states, which has destabilised the integration process all the way to Brexit. Populist radical right parties are the spearheads of Eurosceptical and Europhobic criticism of the supranational regime the EU represents. However, this does not mean that the radical right is fundamentally opposed to a political Europe, but according to them, it must be based on the idea of a *Europe of nation states*. Their demand for national sovereignty is based on the concept of a nation as defined by ethnically exclusive solidarity. The Europhobic positions of the radical right populist parties correspond to the negative attitudes of their voters, who are receptive to the populist calls to decelerate the process of integration, because they believe that the integration process of the EU has undermined their country's popular sovereignty (Werts et al. 2013). Whereas this Europhobic criticism can be interpreted as a nationalist reaction to political denationalisation, the situation is different in Central and Eastern Europe. There, national sovereignty was initially regained through democratic nationalism in the context of velvet revolutions. Many of these regimes became more authoritarian and ethnically exclusive only later.

A Populist Authoritarian Voice in Representative Democracy

In European nation states, political denationalisation can be interpreted as one of the external reasons for the 'crisis' of political representation. In fact, the decreasing congruence between these nations and democracy coupled with the partial denationalisation of the political and administrative elites has produced a lack of democratic legitimacy in these political systems. Individualisation, cultural differentiation and social inequality accompanied by urban segregation are some of the internal reasons for the 'crises' of representative democracy. Its indicators include 'declining party membership and party identification, declining voter turnout, increasing volatility of the vote, and declining shares of voters who choose the mainstream parties' (Kriesi and Pappas 2015, 2). Yet, although the nation and democracy are no longer congruent, elections at the national level remain the most important ones. This is the moment of triumph for populism, for which the elites have become the main target. The paradox is that, by showing off movement characteristics, populism criticises political parties despite being itself a political party. The appeals made to the people reach voters who are dissatisfied with politics and for whom the populist radical right constitutes a credible alternative (for example, Arzheimer 2008; Rooduijn 2016). The main question is whether a vote for a populist party is 'only' political protest or, more deeply, one of political support? Finally, in this political process, the success of a populist party depends on several variables, such as the political opportunity structure, the role of the populist party as a political actor (Art 2011) and its position in its interaction with other political actors (cooperation or confrontation).

Other Far Right or Populist Parties

The interaction between radical right populist parties and other political actors leads to the question of how this party family can be distinguished from others. Without doubt, differences exist, within the radical (or far) right populist party family and across party families. An internal differentiation can be made according to the position the parties take *vis-à-vis* the sovereignty of the nation state and in the context of globalisation. In fact, in Western Europe, the party family of the populist radical right is characterised by national populist parties (FN, FPÖ, Dansk Folkeparti, and so on) as well as by regional separatist and populist parties (Vlaams Belang, Plataforma per Catalunya, Lega Nord – since 2015 Lega – and so on), even though the Lega has widened its regional origin successfully to national Italian territory. In Central and Eastern Europe, the positions are different and marked, as already described, by the cleavage between the centre and periphery.

A distinction to other right-wing parties can be made on ideological and/or constitutional grounds, first of all staying within the far right, i.e. separating radical right populist parties from clearly neo-fascist and/or anti-constitutional extreme right ones, such as the former MSI in Italy, the BNP in Great Britain, the NPD in Germany or Golden Dawn (Chrysí Avgí) in Greece. These parties for the most part do not use the populist style. However, finding more similarities between them is quite difficult given the increasing heterogeneity of the far right. Then there are and have been populist parties with conservative or neo-liberal origins, such as the National Democrats (Nationaldemokraterna, ND) in Sweden, the Pim Fortuyn List (Lijst Pim Fortuyn, LPF) in the Netherlands, Silvio Berlusconi's Forza Italia (Forward Italy) in Italy or Fidesz (Hungarian Civic Alliance) in Hungary. This last case is particularly instructive for analysing ideological adaptation. In fact, Fidesz, originally a conservative party, has transformed into a party near the radical right under Victor Orbán, while Jobbik, the Movement for a Better Hungary, initially the prototype of the Eastern European radical right, has become more moderate. Similar transformation and diffusion effects crystallise when conservative parties compete against the radical right, particularly under conditions of coalition governments. The radical nativist populism of the Austrian ÖVP under Sebastian Kurz, the Chancellor of this country, is the best example of that.

Finally, it is difficult to classify other parties or movements such as the Five Star Movement (Movimento 5 Stelle, M5S) in Italy. Indeed, this movement under Beppe Grillo, representing both left-wing and right-wing ideas, is, according to Piero Ignazi (2018), a unique phenomenon in Europe. Nevertheless, the M5S demonstrates that the analytical separation between, on the one hand, the political ideas of parties and movements and, on the other hand, populism is of heuristic interest. Although all these movements overlap with populism as a political style and as a thin ideology, the ideological cores of the M5S, SYRIZA or Podemos and the radical right are fundamentally different. This is even reflected in the form of populism. In fact, populist inclusion of socially disadvantaged groups corresponds to leftist egalitarianism, while populist exclusion of culturally different groups stands for racist inequality in a radical rightist interpretation.

Conclusion

The populist radical right has been analysed based on party typology and cleavage theory as an expression of nativist protectionism against globalisation in Europe. One of the core questions was to determine the relationship between the radical right and populism. If radical right parties are categorised conceptually as subordinate to populism, a terminological dilemma ensues because of the 'thinness' of the core concept and the absence of a common ideological denominator. By contrast, if populism is subordinated to the radical right category, this allows for clear ideological definitions, but excludes, for example, populist neo-liberal and populist left-wing parties. For these reasons, the focus here has been an ideological one, which provides a distinction between different populist parties or party families, such as the radical right and the neo-liberal one. This means that the radical right and populism are two different but overlapping phenomena. This is similar to other 'thin ideologies', such as nationalism, which can also be found with left-wing parties.

With its position of defending nativist protectionism against globalisation, the populist radical right is very visible in Europe today. It represents social fears about globalisation as well as authoritarian values implied in nationalist, racist and protest positions. In terms of the electorate, this means that the lower the levels of education and income and the older European voters are, the higher the probability is of them perceiving globalisation as a threat (de Vries and Hoffmann 2016). This corresponds to 'closed' positions along the economic and cultural cleavage defined by (open) integration and (closed) demarcation. Here, a political response would arguably be social and economic policies designed to address the fears of those who perceive themselves to be the losers of globalisation. In ideological terms, the populist radical right supplies nativism, that is, nationalism and racism. Whether a response based on promoting universalistic and cosmopolitan values would serve as an effective countermeasure remains questionable. Be that as it may, the paradox of populism is that it is both conventional and unconventional. This continues to pose the risk of populism having a creeping, long-term negative impact on political culture.

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CHAPTER 4:
THE POPULIST RADICAL RIGHT AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

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Introduction: The Relation Between Parties and Social Movements

In recent years, substantial scholarly attention has been devoted to radical-right populist parties (RRPPs). Scholars have particularly considered the role of such variables as electoral laws, coalition-building strategies of mainstream parties and other supply-side variables pertaining to the workings of party systems in different countries. Demand-side variables of an attitudinal nature have also been extensively considered. However, the radical-right as a political ideology also constitutes fertile ground for social movements – for instance, the English Defence League (EDL) in the UK – which are not parties but significant protest-oriented forms of political participation. These formations are prominent campaigners on several controversial issues; they interact with other RRPPs, sometimes forming broad coalitions; and they have large followings in several European countries. It will be argued that, without an understanding of the social roots, cultural significance and grievances of these movements, it is difficult to explain the appearance trajectory and sometimes institutionalisation of RRPPs. This is also because, in many contexts, parties and social movements of the radical-right coexist with and complement each other. Yet the connections between movements and parties of this type are rarely explored. This chapter will consider these connections with particular reference to Europe. In doing so, it will connect two bodies of literature: the literature on social movements and the literature on RRPPs (Mudde 2007; Zaslove 2009; Immerzeel and Pickup 2015).

There are several reasons why the linkages between movements and parties of this type have not been sufficiently examined. First, movement specialists and party specialists do not often collaborate, and this particularly concerns studies of the radical-right (Hutter and Kriesi 2013). While the multifaceted importance of movements in relation to parties has been demonstrated, the social movement research community has emerged and developed by studying different types of movements – typically the student movements of the 1970s, the new left-liberal movements of the 1980s, the anti-globalisation movements and the pro-migrant movements of recent years. With some exceptions, this has almost invariably characterised the research agenda of social movements' scholars. Secondly, in addition to a relatively limited academic focus, many movement scholars encounter problems of access when studying the radical-right because the socio-economic and cultural make-up of activists and cadres of the radical-right is often foreign to them. Thirdly, processes whereby politics is decentred from representative institutions are taking place. Politics is moving to new arenas because of processes such as the growing dominance of executives over parliaments and related processes of personalisation of politics. Arenas such as the media are redefining the sources of power of political agents. In these arenas, social movements can become visible and accepted interlocutors and acquire new importance. Fourthly, contemporary political culture is increasingly redefining political legitimacy away from representative institutions and state bureaucracies and in favour of a conceptualisation of legitimacy that empowers a host of minorities as proper interlocutors in political debates (Rosanvallon 2011). As interpreters of self-perceived minorities, social movements acquire especial importance in contemporary political culture. Their role in relation to parties, particularly cartel parties, then becomes one of providers of legitimacy, which is increasingly needed in the recurring situation of discredited and corrupt politics. This is particularly the case when populist parties are in government, and the role of social movements is crucial during electoral campaigns. As right-wing populist movements grow in salience and are often prominent supporters of right-wing candidates in elections at all levels of government, their role is increasingly important.

Finally, the relation between radical-right populist movements (RRPMs) and RRPPs is often under-thematised because the importance of movements is not always self-evident, especially if one mainly focuses on electoral arenas. However, as the resource mobilisation approach (RM) emphasised several decades ago, social movements are now often large organisations with professionalised personnel, a stable role in political systems, substantial resources and continuity over time (McCarthy and Zald 1973). Their size and stability have changed over time; they vary across different political systems and for different movements, but in Europe as well as in most Western societies they must be considered stable and important actors. Large movements, such as the environmental movement, at times, peace movements, feminist movements and increasingly RRPMs, coordinate efforts across national boundaries, mobilise large followings, exert advocacy at all levels of governance and have a stable presence in the public sphere. Their interaction with societies and their party systems is therefore a major source of mutual influence. This is also the case with movements related to the populist radical-right. Like the new movements of the 1980s, this family of movements and parties has established strong social roots. They are then cultural as well as political phenomena with an ability to link the political and cultural sectors of societies, as evidenced, for instance, by their presence in the music industry, with a substantial level of internationalisation (Love 2016). Even more important are conservative civil society associations, whose linkages to both populist parties and contentious political groups, such as the anti-abortion movements, provide them with salience, legitimacy and voters (Kalm and Meeuwisse 2020).

This chapter argues that the role of political parties, as well as the formation and diffusion of populist attitudes, should be considered in relation to the *milieu* of organised social and cultural initiatives that might or might not lead to direct electoral consequences, but which are key to explaining long-term voting behaviour, particularly with reference to this family of parties. Emphasising the role of this *milieu* is an approach not often utilised by scholars of the radical-right. More commonly, a direct linkage is assumed between political attitudes and socio-economic variables. By emphasising these socio-cultural factors, as well as movement-mediated organisational roots, this chapter innovates and broadens explanations of the populist radical-right.

Integrating the Parties' and Movements' Approaches to the Radical-Right

The literature on movements and parties benefits from a contextual examination for several reasons, most notably because similar variables often explain both forms of political participation and their frequent co-occurrence. Two main approaches seek to explain the success of RRPPs and RRPMs. One focuses on the grievances and expectations of voters, that is, on demand-side variables. The second focuses on what political systems offer, that is, on supply-side variables. The literature that focuses on voting for RRPPs identifies specific socio-economic groups and their grievances, and it is equally relevant in explaining participation in social movements of this kind.

Demand-side approaches often explain voting for RRPPs in mainly economic terms. Their success is explained by connecting the electoral outcomes of the radical-right to the changing economic situation of specific sectors of the population, such as the often mentioned 'losers of globalisation', that is, the unskilled sectors of the labour market that have been experiencing downward mobility as their jobs migrate elsewhere. Their changing economic prospects have then been linked to specific grievances and to the radical-right populist vote as forms of electoral protest and as a demand for protectionist policy changes in labour markets (Norris 2005). Similar electoral choices have also been seen as the consequence of ethnic competition for jobs, which is a consequence of a globalisation-related increase in migratory flows. A different but related argument has emphasised demand-side variables of a more cultural kind (Bornschier 2010). In this case, a sense of cultural estrangement ensues from conflicts over cultural values and lifestyles as individuals react to changing features and notably to the changed ethnic composition of their communities. There is ample evidence to suggest that both these economic and cultural grievances are at work in RRPPs (Norris 2005). They are also found to occur together in several contexts (Inglehart and Norris 2019).

Supply-side explanations for the recent success of RRPPs typically cite the role of struggles over the saliency of issues and over issue position ownership (Mudde 2010). Structural supply-side explanations stress factors such as opportunity structures arising from realignment processes; convergence between established parties in political space; electoral systems and thresholds; the presence or absence of elite allies or, more specifically, the relationship with the established political parties within the party system (Rydgren 2007). Recent explanations stress the interaction between supply-side and demand-side factors (Golder 2016). Similar variables are found in radical-right populist movements (RRPMs). For instance, nativist cultural ideas are strongly represented in a movement like the English Defence League (Kassimeris and Jackson 2015). In the same movement, economic issues are key factors in support for the EDL (Goodwin et al. 2016). This is because, in several instances, the activist bases of RRPPs and RRPMs largely overlap. However, some additional considerations on the nature of social movements are necessary to interpret the outcomes of this intersection.

If one moves from demand-side to supply-side accounts, explanations of the success of RRPMs are well examined by the literature on them, but it is necessary to clarify the boundaries of a social movement because this is defined differently by different authors. The supply-side literature on movements – that is, accounts that do not focus on grievances and the psychological dynamics that contribute to their emergence – emphasises the distinctive impact of their unconventional repertoire of political action, their ability to mobilise networks of individuals, their framing activities, which often consist in selecting specific goals seen as politically relevant and congruent with preferred systems of ideas, and their ability to act in the public sphere. Thus, a movement typically has an agenda, a constituency, one or more organisations, a set of preferred forms of action and some continuity over time. It is different from a party because it does not seek to participate in elections.

Just like RRPPs, movements have often been studied using the concept of political opportunity – a concept that, in fact, has its origins in the study of protest events. Hence, a similar set of variables can be utilised to conceptualise the success and failure of both parties and movements, and can therefore be integrated into a single model. The list of opportunities cited in the literature to explain movements is broader, however, because it encompasses societal dynamics wider than the opportunities considered in studying parties, and the concept has sometimes been criticised as overstretched (Meyer and Minkoff 2004). However, a broader concept of opportunity is better suited to studying the decentring of politics described above. Essentially, it is a concept utilised to identify the vulnerabilities of a political system, which constitute opportunities for challengers. The opportunities considered range from stable or relatively stable features of political systems, such as the state's openness to non-institutionalised actors, via their propensity for strong repression, electoral laws and constitutional arrangements, to contingent features. The latter include the availability of institutional allies that can channel resources to movements, specifically relevant policy issues on the political agenda, and patterns of interactions between movements and the media on specific issues. We believe that, although the concept of political opportunity has indeed been used to cover a growing and possibly excessive number of opportunities, there are key opportunities that have been examined by movements' scholars but not considered by party analysts. Broader societal conceptualisation of opportunities aids understanding of RRPPs and their relation to RRPMs. We will focus on two key opportunities and show how they shape RRPPs' chances of success. The first is the specific relation between movements and counter-movements. The second is the relation between movements and the media. However, before we do this, we need to clarify the specific relation between RRPPs and RRPMs because we posit that the issue of the relation between parties and movements is of key importance in understanding how broad social factors affect not only movements but also parties.

Parties, Movements and the Populist Radical-Right

The boundaries between a movement, a movement party, but also a movement sympathiser and a movement ally are conceptualised differently by different analysts, who often use different definitions of social movements. Here, we will refer to movements as forms of political participation that have a type of cognitive characterisation – a set of beliefs favouring fundamental policy changes (McCarthy and Zald 1977, 1217f) – and actors' involvement in forms of protest action. As a result of this approach, many party activists may also qualify as social movement participants if they share movements' cognitive frameworks and take part in movement-sponsored protest events. This takes into account the fact that, in many instances, movement activists prefer not to be members of movement organisations but share their beliefs and occasionally participate in forms of action. This may be due to the limited attractiveness of movement organisations – these are often short-lived organisations, only or mainly concerned with a single issue, and fairly unorganised, as was the case with several new movements of the 1980s (Rucht and Neidhardt 2002). Party activists, as well as members of the public, may also prefer not to be identified with a movement although they share its objectives and methods. This appears to be the case with several movements. For instance, European Commission personnel who support environmental movements or anti-racist movements may participate in protest events but prefer not to become formal members of organisations in order to safeguard the impression of impartiality that their role requires (Ruzza 2007). These considerations are particularly salient for RRPP supporters, given their prevalent anti-system image. In their case, the emergence of integrated political formations, which share some of the attributes of parties and some characteristics of movements, appears likely. In such a case, it would be beneficial to consider approaches to RRPPs and RRPMs contextually and integrate them. Specifically, we posit that the overlapping of RRPMs and parties is frequent and is indeed a characteristic of these formations and a foundation of their success.

The overlap of parties and movements in hybrid formations has been noted in several contexts before RRPPs and movements. Party literature acknowledges that some movements may become parties but never complete the transition or form stable alliances with some parties, as exemplified by the relationship between environmental movements and green parties. In such cases, they form or interact with hybrid formations, which the literature on this subject has characterised as movement parties (Offe 1990; Bomberg 1993; Kitschelt 2006). However, relations between parties and movements are not always supportive. In some cases, movements may compete with parties for the time and energy of activists, or they may attempt to redefine or radicalise the policy agenda of ideologically like-minded parties. In order to frame these relations, it is useful to utilise the social movement category of 'conflictual cooperation' (Bozzini and Fella 2008). According to this perspective, like-minded parties and movements interact at various levels. They compete for the loyalty, time and energy of activists. They occupy different political sectors. Movements are members of the protest sector of society, whilst parties compete in the electoral arena. Convergences and cooperation can then occur in the support that each form of political participation can lend to the other in their reciprocal sphere. However, in some cases, endorsement can be counterproductive and may lead to conflict. These complex relations are also central to the dynamics between RRPMs and RRPPs. It is useful to summarise potential relations according to a typology that categorises relations as described in the following subparagraphs.

Relations of Accepted and Consensual Interpenetration

Many RRPPs have solid roots in civil society and mobilise networks of activists that may or may not be closely connected to the party but constitute its *milieu* (Knoke 1994; Louis et al. 2016). Some of the party's activist base – typically the more radical and often younger components – function as bridges between this cultural *milieu* and the party. On occasions, this cultural *milieu* expresses independent organised forms, which have some relation to the party but are distinct from it. Conversely, in some cases, the party emphasises, supports and sponsors, or even manufactures, these organisations. This is, for instance, evidenced by the case of the Italian Northern League (Lega Nord, LN, since 2018 renamed as Lega), where a wide network of civil society organisations is utilised by the party to retain and solidify its roots in society. In the case of the Northern League, they include hunters' associations, sports clubs and language protection associations, and they can be conceptualised as belonging and giving organisational form to a larger ethno-regionalist movement (Ruzza 2010). Thus, in these cases, parties see movements as ways to legitimate themselves with their anti-system constituents. This role of movements is stressed by authors working on nationalist and right-wing parties – both those espousing nation state nationalism and those with an ethno-regionalist focus. This is often the case with regionalist parties, which are often seen as rooted in regionalist movements (see, for instance, De Winter and Türsan 1998; Swenden 2006). Through this theoretical and empirical background, social movement approaches have also been utilised to examine the social background of radical-right populist parties (Ruzza and Fella 2009; Caiani and Conti 2014). All these studies illustrate particular aspects of the relation between parties and movements, and they focus on strategic interrelations between the two forms of political participation.

Movements may also powerfully influence sections of large parties and help them in internal conflicts. This is the case with all movements, not only RRPMs. For instance, at the EU level, the environmental movement has been a historical ally of DG Environment and the Environmental Committee of the European Parliament, taking their side in recurrent conflicts with less environmentally concerned parties, as well as with other branches of the EU's bureaucracy, such as DG Industry. In doing so, they often face industrial lobbies as opponents (Judge 1992; Ruzza 2007). Similarly, in several member states and at EU level, there are pockets of labour or socialist parties that support anti-racist, pro-migrant or feminist movements and try to instil similar values and movement-friendly policies into the rest of the party (Fella and Ruzza 2012). However, in the case of RRPPs, this interaction tends to concentrate on single issues. This is, for instance, the case with the populist Berlusconi party, which, even when it was in government, supported and participated in large events with names such as the 'Family Day' supported by pro-family and anti-abortion activist groups (Il Corriere della Sera 2007a). This amounts to a party strategy to integrate the benefits of its incumbent role with those of the opposition. In some cases, parties create and sponsor more sectorial activist organisations, or accept and support activists who also engage in political protests. This is the case with movements mobilising on specific issues with the full support of the party and overlapping membership. An example is provided by northern Italian farmers' movements protesting against EU-enforced restrictions on milk production in the late 1990s and the following years. These protests utilised theatrical methods, such as pouring milk on motorways and street blockages, and they were fully supported by the League.

Relations in Which Party and Movement Memberships are Distinct and to Varying Extents Conflictual

This was, for instance, the case in relations between the 'English Defence League (EDL)' movement and the UK Independence Party (UKIP) in the run-up to Brexit. Many EDL voters voted for UKIP and used to display UKIP signs at their demonstrations, but this was frequently opposed by UKIP. For instance, former EDL members or activists were expressly forbidden from joining UKIP. Nigel Farage, the founder and ex-leader of UKIP had expressed 'grave disappointment' at the recurrent use of UKIP signs at EDL demonstrations (Culbertson 2015). Similar dynamics took place when Italian extreme right activists belonging to organisations such as the National Vanguard (Avanguardia Nazionale) infiltrated demonstrations by the Northern League and provoked reactions. The type and intensity of these reactions have varied over the years. They have been tense in the past, although they have become more supportive in recent years, particularly after the right-wing turn of the current leader Matteo Salvini and his desire to strengthen alliances with the extreme right (De Giorgi and Tronconi 2018). However, as is often the case, internal party factions might look for allies in different directions. Thus, in the League, for instance, alliances with social movements and parties of the extreme right are typically promoted by the currently ruling coalition, while an older regionalist-inspired faction tends to look at alliances with regionalist movements and parties. Different and coexisting ideologies within a party might then result in conflicting relations between movements and parties.

Distinct but Generally Supportive Relations

This was, for instance, the case with the Forconi (Pitchforks) movement in Italy and its relations with the Italian Northern League. The Forconi movement emerged in 2013 as a set of populist protests unrelated to the League and with a repertoire of disruptive action, such as blocking streets. It continued with irregular protests in the following years (Davies 2013). The Northern League supports this movement, even if it is rather different in terms of its geographical base and, to some extent, its ideology. Support, for instance, was expressed by the current League leader, Matteo Salvini, in a December 2015 radio interview reported about on the website of the Northern League.

Strong and reciprocal influences between parties and movements can take place regardless of their size and the extent of their radicalism. For instance, a large party like the Republican Party in the US has solid and influential relations with the Christian Right movement, or there are equally strong relations between the Republican Party and the Tea Party movement (Green et al. 2001; Skocpol and Williamson 2013). These influences can take place due to overlapping membership, but also due to convergent pressure on the media, as a now classic body of literature on the relations between the media and movements clearly shows (Gamson 1993). The media need news with highly emotional and personalised content; and often theatrical and either alarming or supportive reporting on social movements provides this. These interactions make movements and the media mutually dependent and amplify the reach of movements (Gitlin 1980). It also makes them potentially useful to political parties. This clearly also concerns RRPPs and RRPMs (Burack and Snyder-Hall 2013). In most polities, there will be sectors of the media that oppose movements, but there will equally be sectors which espouse them and carry their message. The concerted efforts of RRPPs and RRPMs will then provide their framing strategies with additional strength and ideational materials. The media's/movements' reciprocal influences in relation to all political formations, but also specifically RRPPs and RRPMs, also increasingly involve new media (Van de Donk et al. 2004; Caiani and Parenti 2013).

In all these instances, it is useful to conceptualise relations between RRPMs and RRPPs by using insights from resource mobilisation theory (McCarthy and Zald 1977; McCarthy and Zald 2002). This conceptualises relations between movements as taking place in a broad social movement sector which comprises all the movements coexisting at a specific point in time and further organised into competing social movement families – a subsector of like-minded movements (Zald and McCarthy 1980). Families expand and differ according to the global opportunities available to their subsector. In recent years, mainly because of the demand-side factors previously outlined, the subsectors have grown and developed differently in terms of the radicalism of their actions, their willingness to form coalitions, their ideological variations and their strategies towards other political formations. For reasons of space, this chapter will concentrate on the first type: hybrid party-movement formations.

Civil Society, Movements, Counter-Movements and RRPPs as Interacting Systems

If movement parties are a relatively general feature of contemporary European politics, it is necessary to ask the general question of why movement action repertoires are popular and even frequently adopted by parties. It will be argued that movement action repertoires are adopted not only by RRPPs but also by movement parties of the left. The opposition between the two blocs, or the two 'industries' in the language of resource mobilisation theory, is important not only in the electoral arena but more broadly in a set of social arenas which have, however, an impact on electoral dynamics. Such is the importance of this cleavage that it is played out in a number of social arenas as well, and it characterises the relations between movement and counter-movement. A process of venue shopping takes place with reference to arenas in which the two blocs compete for intermediation. Mayer and Staggenborg argue that 'the choice of arena is shaped by activists' ideologies and resources and by their perception of openings in a range of social and political institutions' (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996, 1648). A few additional clarifications are necessary on the nature of the competing movement party systems.

In this context, a relevant finding from social movement research is that successful movements often lead to the creation of counter-movements, which in turn shape and constrain their agenda, political opportunities and coalition behaviour. Over time, a relationship of competition emerges, which is played out in several arenas, such as the national parliamentary arena but also the media arena, the local politics and supranational arena, and political spaces within intermediary institutions, such as the trade unions. This competition is often focused on the political opportunities offered by emerging contextual events. In the present European context, RRPMs and RRPPs are the insurgents. In response to them, a set of counter-movements has emerged in many EU countries, and the political opportunity that has arisen is a perceived need to regulate migration. Migration has then become the key signature issue that offers a distinct identity to RRPPs and that is an equal source of identity to anti-racist movements in many EU countries and at the supranational level (Ruzza 2013). It has become a major cleavage in national and EU-level policy, and as such it permeates several areas of political life (Kriesi et al. 2008). It is now perceived as significantly structuring the EU political level, where RRPPs have made significant advances in recent elections. This emerging cleavage permeates the intermediary social and political institutions that mediate the emergence of these sentiments and their translation into voting behaviour.

The relationship between left-liberal views on migration and the movements that they inspire, on the one hand, and the views of RRPPs and RRPMs, on the other, is best described as a relationship between movements and counter-movements. Equally important are other political opportunity structures emphasised by movement scholars but neglected by party specialists. These notably include the role of repression. Action carried out by RRPMs and parties is often illegal. For instance, a frequent form of action taken by RRPMs is harassment of minorities. A couple of examples from the Italian Northern League should suffice to demonstrate this. These include the forceful destruction of Roma camps or the intentional humiliation of Muslim minorities by spreading pig excrement on sites where the building of mosques is planned (Il Corriere della Sera 2007b). These illegal acts can be repressed in different ways. To the extent that the state does not engage in forceful repression of these activities, RRPPs will engage in media-relevant activities such as these. However, the willingness of states to repress them is influenced, on the one hand, by the degree of institutionalisation of these formations, their coalition-building strategies and their salience in party systems. On the other hand, repression will be influenced by relatively stable features such as states' effectiveness in controlling their territory, their propensity to use repression and the effectiveness of the penal system.

One has to add variables related to the positions of states in the system of international governance to state-level variables. Thus, with reference to the previously mentioned attacks against Roma camps, Italy, as a member of the EU, has been investigated for condoning xenophobia by European and international organisations (OSCE 2009). For these reasons, the quality and quantity of repression is a key variable that mediates the visibility of radical-right populist formations, which in turn is related to their chances of success. In addition, theatrical forms of action like the one mentioned are key to the success of these formations, not only in terms of media impact but also as means of rooting RRPPs in their cultural *milieu*.

In a period in which political discourse is dominated by the fears of the 'losers of globalisation', states are increasingly less willing to engage in repression. The populist political discourse of the 'losers of globalisation' is, in many contexts, vehemently nationalist and protectionist to such an extent that it threatens key assumptions of constitutional democracies and their upholding of human rights. However, the populist political discourse is now so central to important sectors of the media, so naturalised in wide strata of public opinion that a repressive stance would punish incumbents. Harsh repression of the acts of protest by populist formations might produce negative consequences for ruling coalitions. In this context, the advantages of engaging in action that is visible and helps movement parties to establish roots in civil society often outweigh the risks connected to repression. By engaging in action that relies on using a repertoire of 'politics of the enemy' to create solidarity, RRPPs are able to confront their counter-movements, and the re-establishment of civil society roots is crucial for all political formations in the present period. Of course, attempts to establish and retain roots in civil society are not only made through disruptive forms of action. They also often take place through the creation of associative networks (Ruzza 2009). For instance, in addition to the previously mentioned networks of associations, they also include neighbourhood watch groups, which have been accused of harassing minorities. Thus, identity-building activities, service delivery activities and media-relevant activities are often integrated into complex action repertoires that cement loyalty to the party. They serve the purpose of anchoring political formations to a community, providing the latter with a sense of identity, agency and legitimacy. They are then means with which to rebuild processes of intermediation and to counter the disintermediating impact of recent economic changes and their impact on forms of social intermediation.

This process of community building is essential to ensure the success of issue definition and issue positioning by RRPPs, but it is typically opposed by other movement parties that pursue opposite strategies. Thus, there are frequent protests in favour of victimised minorities, in support of racialised groups and to voice values opposed to the nativism of RRP movement parties. A contest often emerges around the interpretation of conflicting forms of action. It is played out in the media and in a set of other intermediary institutions, such as workplace-related institutions, voluntary groups and religious institutions. Yet this dynamic between movement and counter-movement has been neglected by the literature on RRPPs because of the under-thematisation of the relationship between them and social movements. Nevertheless, this relationship is key to the literature on social movements (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996). The literature on the relationship between movements and counter-movements has pointed out how they interact and the complex ways in which their struggles continue in electoral arenas, in media arenas and in intermediary institutions. They make rival claims in politics and in policy, often recruiting competing experts to support their views. The outcome of RRPPs is therefore strongly shaped by the presence, effectiveness and framing strategies of their counter-movements, which, as mentioned, often have a base in labour parties and other mainstream political actors that may well channel resources and legitimacy, and support their campaign initiatives.

In times of the mediatisation of policy crises, the media themselves create counter-movements by seeking an alternative view and by personalising proposed policy solutions. Thus, typically, purportedly charismatic leadership is created by the media, which need to identify credible, outspoken and reliable spokespeople. The success of RRPPs is then often mediated by their political personnel and their ability to compete in a mediatised arena (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996, 1642). However, this competition also takes place in elected institutions. For instance, at the EU level, anti-racist organisations and human rights groups, relevant members of the civil liberty committee of the European Parliament and sympathetic Commission officials collaborate in forming a nexus to provide legitimacy and research funds for activities that limit and marginalise any advancement of RRPPs in the Parliament. This contributes to creating a climate in which RRPPs remain isolated and ineffective at the EU level. They also provide information and foster relations among member state-based movements that oppose RRPPs. The likelihood of success of RRPPs is significantly shaped by these dynamics. For instance, the European Network Against Racism (ENAR), which describes itself as 'the voice of the anti-racist movement in Europe', is a well-funded, broadly accepted and influential organisation, which regularly advances policy proposals, conducts social and political research and advocacy, utilises strategic litigation and supports protest events in member states. It interprets and reinterprets media and political events in an ongoing competition with RRPPs, their connected associations and their related movements. Without understanding this competition, one cannot make sense of the successes and defeats of RRPPs. This is because, at least to some extent, social and political elites have an impact on the formation of the prevalent political culture and thus on the coalition behaviour of parties and the related electoral outcomes. This is so even if, as widely acknowledged, the populist vote is often an expression of anti-elite sentiments.

In the competition between RRPMs and their opponents, a process of venue shopping takes place, whereby each movement seeks allies, often at different levels of government, which then constitute different political opportunities. For instance, the success of a centre-right coalition at national level may relocate opposition to RRPMs to the supranational level. Evidence of this emerged during the Berlusconi centre-right governments in Italy, when pro-migrant associations were often closed and their advocacy moved to the EU level or even the city level. Thus, additional levels of government provide RRPPs with different venues in which to advance their claims (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996, 1637). Clearly, a special role is played in this competition by what comes to be perceived as a policy crisis, such as an unexpected event that can be more easily exploited by one of the competing actors. This has typically been the case with events exploited by RRPPs, such as security concerns around issues of migration.

Conclusions and Further Steps in the Research Agenda

This chapter has argued that a dual process of disintermediation and of new and different re-intermediation is taking place, and that social movements are key actors in this process. Political socialisation experts have shown that, for several decades, institutions mediating the formation and transmission of political orientations, such as the family but also community institutions, have lost much of their effectiveness as the electorate has grown more fragmented and less anchored to positions and values emerging from the workplace. This process, and the related decline of traditional political subcultures, implies that parties find it much more difficult to ensure continuity, to establish grassroots allegiances and to staff the network of events, festivals and political rituals that anchored parties to social communities in the past. In this context, social movements and movement parties emerge as functional replacements for some of the functions previously performed by parties. This role can be usefully framed by utilising some of the most prominent social movement theories and applying them to the relationship between RRPPs and RRPMs. Social movements' approaches, and particularly 'New Social Movement' theories, have explained the role of social movements well in providing anchors for personal identities (Polletta and Jasper 2001). As the literature on this subject shows, social movements can act as alternative channels of the formation and maintenance of political identities and can then integrate or substitute identity provision by parties. This applies to several political identities, but also, and distinctly, to the ethnic and national identities promoted by RRPPs and RRPMs. Participation in forms of movement action is then used to create cohesion and to support devotion of the time and energy needed by political formations of this kind (Johnston 1994).

This role of creating and maintaining identity can also be usefully combined with the organisation-building capacity that social movements allow and that resource mobilisation theory has emphasised (Klandermans 1986). A strong identity is an organisational resource that movement organisations foster and strategically mobilise. In addition, the success of RRPPs and movements is often explained by their anti-system ethos, which translates into strong emotions by activists and voters and which, in turn, is utilised to create a climate of moral indignation, which RRPPs and movements use in their political communication. In this context, it is useful to consider the recent emphasis that social movement theory accords to emotions, their use by political organisations and their definition and redefinition during protest events (Goodwin and Jasper 2004; Flam 2005). More generally, it would be difficult to frame the success of RRPPs properly without reference to their distinctive culture of xenophobic nationalism, which survey analyses have often demonstrated, as in the case of UKIP in Great Britain in the run-up to the referendum on its EU membership (Inglehart and Norris 2016). Social movement theories have often reflected on the importance of culture in political decisions, and from different perspectives they have interconnected the cultural and structural aspects of political action (McAdam 1994; Jasper 2007). Thus, this chapter has argued that a movement-centred approach is useful in several ways. By utilising key insights from social movement theory, the chapter has explained the recent successes of many RRPPs as the outcome of articulated collaboration/competition between parties and movements of the radical-right. This fruitful application of social movement theories could be extended to other areas of party-movement relations on the populist right in the future.

We will conclude with some examples of how to move the research agenda forward. At a general level, it is necessary to establish the level of network overlaps between movements and parties of the radical-right. It would be important to document the electoral choices of movement activists and their changes over time as political opportunities evolve. In addition, institutional constraints play a different role in different types of interactions between parties and movements, which need to be classified and compared in terms of key variables, such as electoral laws, institutional arrangements and states' support of democratic procedures. With reference to the typology of 'interpenetration' presented above, 'conflict-cooperation' and 'distant support', it is necessary to focus on framing strategies and the extent to which they are coordinated. The large literature on social movement framing can be employed usefully to study convergence or divergence between parties and movements and to relate these to media dynamics (Johnston and Noakes 2005). One can assume that framing convergence is taken for granted in cases of consensual interpenetration, or in cases in which an associational network is manufactured by a movement party, as argued in the case of the Northern League. However, even in this case, one needs to be cautious in assuming that parties, as more institutionalised and resourced structures, have greater power to shape agendas than social movements or, more generally, civil society associations. The organisational environment of parties includes interest groups and other organisations, which may also be related to social movements, such as promotional, campaigning and public interest groups. They may not have the same access to state resources as parties, but they may well have the power to shape agendas due to their relations with the media, alternative sources of funding, etc.

Traditionally, relations between parties and intermediary bodies have varied from a situation in which mass parties belong to civil society and share ideologies and personnel with intermediary institutions, to a situation in which parties act as brokers between civil society and the state (Katz and Mair 1995). However, this brokering role is changing in a situation of a widespread anti-system, and specifically anti-party, ethos. This new situation can provide movements with legitimacy, and the direction of the brokering role may then be reversed. This is particularly the case with anti-system RRPPs, whose voters are particularly disenchanted with their party system of reference, as research on several EU countries has shown (Ruzza 2009). These considerations suggest a research agenda which needs to focus on the relative power of different institutional structures in different arenas; a research agenda which has yet to be pursued.

Uneasy arrangements of mutual influence, competition for framing and issue ownership are likely to develop in cases of conflict and cooperation between parties and movements. In such cases, the transnational and supranational dimension becomes important and needs to be examined. To return to the previously cited example of the relations between the EDL and UKIP, one notes that the Islamophobic discourse of the former may well have embarrassed the latter, but it has a substantial impact on public opinion in the UK, giving the EDL essential framing autonomy and influencing power over UKIP. In addition, one might argue that the power of the EDL to shape agendas is fashioned and empowered by a pan-European network of like-minded organisations, which are actively communicating online and in person, and which, in several respects, are better connected among themselves than UKIP is with parties of the same family (Caiani and Parenti 2013). A study should therefore be carried out on the modes of communication and mutual influence of parties and movements across different levels of governance. It is also necessary to examine the presence and role of potential overlapping networks and potential strategies of infiltration between different radical-right organisations.

The relationship between movements and parties that are organisationally unconnected but belong to the same radical-right populist family is also complex and still under-thematised. The absence of interpersonal connections does not limit the overall impact of the global radical-right bloc on the public sphere. Different organisations may unwittingly be perceived as part of a congruent ideological package and, with their presence, contribute to legitimising and incrementing the salience of radical-right grievances and prospective solutions. For this reason, political communication approaches, which have been successfully employed in the study of social movements, need to be employed in studying the combined impact of different radical-right populist movements and parties (Gamson 1992). In addition, it is necessary to consider relations between the political discourse of the left-liberal nexus of movements and parties and the populist radical-right. An important and still under-studied area of research would arise from a broader conceptualisation of relations between an RRPP bloc and a counter-movement bloc currently formed by a left-liberal ‘social movement industry’ as a whole (a key Resource Mobilisation concept), which is still important in several countries. Relations between the two have been studied in terms of mutual influences. For instance, a key area of interaction is the ideology of ethno-pluralism or ethno-differentialism, whereby the left-liberal discourse of defending the rights to one’s cultural differences is applied by the right to constructs such as ‘European civilisations’ and comes to be reinterpreted as a right to marginalise other cultures. A few decades ago, prominent right-wing intellectuals such as Alain de Benoist adopted typical left-wing constructs, such as the Gramscian concept of struggling for cultural hegemony, and reinterpreted them as key components of the programme of the radical-right (Spektorowski 2003; de Benoist 2011). This adoption is now widespread in the political programmes of many formations of this party family.

Studying the interaction between contrasting ideologies is important for several reasons. One of them is that it yields better understanding of new formations that adopt a combination of RRPP and leftist frames. Such formations are becoming important actors in European politics. They include, for instance, the Italian Five Star Movement (Movimento 5 Stelle, M5S) and the Spanish Citizens (Ciudadanos) (Mosca 2014; Rodriguez Teruel and Barrio 2015). They are becoming powerful competitors in the protest market, that is, the entire domain of social protest as conceptualised by RM theory (McCarthy and Zald 1977). This has been noted by both academics and activists. For instance, Beppe Grillo, the leader of the Italian M5S, has frequently pointed out that the prominence of his movement party has stopped the growth of the populist radical-right, thus acknowledging their interconnections. Like similar formations, this movement party utilises a repertoire of typical social movement action, but in expressing anti-migration stances, significant aspects of its ideological package are closer to the right, whilst its emphasis on deliberative democracy is typically borrowed from the repertoire of new social movements. These formations then compete with both the liberal left and the RRPM markets, often shifting their alliances over time for strategic reasons. For instance, in recent years, the Five Star Movement has formed a group in the EU parliament with UKIP; but in early 2017, for tactical reasons, it attempted to leave the group to join the Alliance for Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE). Its application for membership was rejected by ALDE, however, and the M5S abandoned its plans to move to what is, in effect, a completely different political formation. Thus, in order to understand the strategies and outcomes of the populist radical-right, it is essential to understand its roots in the global social movement sector of a society and the complex nature of its competition, which can easily justify purely tactical stances and abrupt reorientation. This is facilitated by the strong control on parties' programmes by the charismatic leadership frequently found in movements of this kind. This research programme is still in its beginnings, however.

Finally, it should be noted that in several political systems, the social movements of the 1980s have institutionalised and come to confront the radical-right as ideological and policy allies of the neo-liberal pro-market consensus. For instance, the prominent feminist Nancy Fraser notes that 'progressive neo-liberalism is an alliance of mainstream currents of new social movements (feminism, anti-racism, multiculturalism and LGBTQ rights), on the one hand, and high-end 'symbolic' and service-based business sectors (Wall Street, Silicon Valley and Hollywood), on the other. In this alliance, progressive forces are effectively joined with the forces of cognitive capitalism, especially financialisation' (Fraser 2017). Ideologically, Fraser points out that 'progressive neo-liberalism' as a form of integration of the values of emancipation and of societal financialisation leaves radical-right populism as the only remaining political and ideological opponent, and she explains its success in these terms.

This analysis, and similar ones, highlight that, in order to explain the success of RRPPs and RRPMs, analysts should focus on broader processes of the institutionalisation of earlier social movements and their relation to the 'losers of globalisation', who are no longer willing to embrace their ideologies, but whose quality of life has deteriorated to the point that they are seeking an anti-system answer – a radical-right solution, which might be perceived as the only one currently available. Their acceptance of protectionist and xenophobic values and policies can therefore be interpreted as the last resort of a protest stance in the absence of rival ideologies. Accounting for the success of the radical-right therefore requires consideration of the protest sector in its entirety and comparative analysis of both the processes whereby social movements and parties become institutionalised and their impact on the populist radical-right.

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CHAPTER 5:
FIXING THE TAXONOMY IN POPULISM RESEARCH: BRINGING FRAME, ACTOR AND CONTEXT BACK IN

Reinhard Heinisch and Oscar Mazzoleni

Introduction

The academic debate about populism seems to be unable to resolve some persistent conceptual and taxonomic issues. While disagreements have continued over whether populism is a style, mode of expression, political strategy, discourse, ideology, *Zeitgeist*, political logic or related construct (Roberts 2006; Stanley 2008; Barr 2009; Gidron and Bonikowski 2013), controversies still persist about the criteria that should be used to identify some current parties, movements or leaders as 'populist' and to gauge the extent of the phenomenon. One of the crucial obstacles is that the label populist is above all a creation of observers and political competitors, which has tended to infuse the term with a normative, polemic and/or pejorative connotation. Populists also often refuse to identify themselves as populist because the attribution is seen as coming entirely from outside. In fact, it is much less controversial to argue socialist parties belong to the socialist family and communist parties to the communist family. The same is equally true for liberal, confessional and fascist parties.

The historical antecedents from which the name was largely derived, the so-called Russian and American populists, belong to a completely different time and political modus operandi, especially when viewed from the vantage point of contemporary European party politics. When this term was first attributed to some parties and regimes in South America, post-colonial Asia and Africa – where masses were being mobilised as a political resource –, the concept was fairly residual and vague (Ionescu and Gellner 1969; Canovan 1981). Classifying Peronism, Nasserism, Nakrumah's regime in Ghana and that of Sukarno in Indonesia was extremely difficult by Western standards. These were neither socialist nor fascist but nonetheless egalitarian and anti-imperialist, so observers chose to categorise them as populist. The classification of some 'outsider parties' emerging in Europe in the 1970s, especially the anti-tax parties in Scandinavia, followed a similar pattern. A particular problem in developing conceptual and taxonomic categories has been the ideological and strategic heterogeneity of political actors.

Populism is always linked to ideological frameworks beyond populism itself. Thus, populist actors always embrace additional ideological positions, right-wing, centrist, or left-wing ideas, or combinations thereof. Despite belonging to the same ideological family and regardless of the stigma they carry in their own respective political systems, populists often share the same prejudices about each other and refuse to be seen as cooperating with each other. For instance,

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populist parties have found it difficult to form coherent institutional expression in the EU Parliament. In fact, they prefer to 'marry up' if given a chance, as McDonnell and Werner (2018; 2020) have concluded. Importantly, populists refuse to be assigned to or belong to any known political family.

'Populist' has often been a label applied to 'homeless' actors, which probably also explains why the academic debate on the definition of populism and its classification has become so assiduous (Hubé and Truan 2017). Apart from scholars who do not consider populism a useful term, two main tendencies arose in recent years: a first and dominant tendency persists in the form of a somewhat philosophical or 'essayist' view. It suggests that democratic regimes, especially in Europe and the US are facing a sudden and unexpected proliferation of what observers and the media have labelled 'global populism'. Thus, almost every form of 'anti-establishment' or protest resentment tends to be subsumed under the label 'populism' (see Müller 2016, 1–3). This has contributed to the term populism becoming ubiquitous in its presence and allusive in its meaning, which has often resulted in normative and polemic uses of the label. The second trend, represented by scholars in political sociology, in political science, and recently in political communication, is to try to develop new analytical tools in order to understand populism as an empirical phenomenon.

Agreeing with this second approach, we argue in favour of the development of a more comprehensive framework of analysis for comparative research, which seeks to address several unresolved conceptual, taxonomic and methodical issues. First of all, we want to develop a conceptualisation that captures the intrinsically ambivalent nature of the populist claim, thus pushing beyond the constraints of the essentialist and normative approaches. Second, we suggest that the concept of ambivalence lends itself to a more gradational approach and frame-based analysis. Third, we want to draw attention to the underlying conditions, as they relate both to actor and context, so as to be able to explain the rise and diffusion of the populist frame and its employment by political actors in current democratic regimes.

From Ideological Dichotomy to Ambivalence

One of the most frequent laments in political science and political sociology regarding populism is that scholars continue to struggle to define this concept (for an overview, see Gidron and Bonikowski 2013). In response, there have been numerous attempts to render populism as a simpler and empirically oriented concept related to 'people' and the 'elite'. Broad common conceptualisations that define populism as a set of ideas that encompass anti-elitism, the belief in a general will of the people and a Manichean outlook (Hawkins 2009; Rovira Kaltwasser 2012; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2013; Rooduijn 2014) arguably incorporate important aspects of populism and provide definitions on which most scholars agree (Rooduijn 2014). However, these categories are still rather broad and allow us mainly to distinguish clear-cut populist actors from non-populists but are less well-suited to comparing different manifestations of populism with each other. They are also often ill-equipped to assess many of the borderline cases outside Western Europe and Latin America. Although, as van Kessel (2015, 8) has argued, different interpretations of populism are not problematic from an empirical perspective 'as long as there is a consensus about the concept's attributes', we are not sure that this is necessarily the case.

In this regard, the emergence of the idea that populism is a thin-centred ideology, as proposed especially by Cas Mudde (2007), has represented something of a breakthrough because of its simplicity. Whether based on actual conviction, mere pragmatism or simply exhaustion from the interminable debates about the nature of populism, a sizeable share of the populism research community, particularly in the UK, the Netherlands and Scandinavia, has adopted this framework since the 2000s, for it provides a means of identifying populism and populist manifestation more unambiguously. In doing so, scholars have appropriated Michael Freeden's (1996) idea of ideologies with a thin centre and applied it to understanding populism. Nonetheless, Freeden (2016) himself has remained sceptical that populism would indeed fit the definition of a thin-centred ideology any more than, for example, 'nativism' and remarked about this publicly in his keynote address at the 2016 Prague conference on *Current Populism in Europe*.

The growing tendency to conceive populism as a thin-centred ideology stands in some contrast to the also widespread understanding of populism as a form of discourse drawing on Laclau (2005; see also Panizza 2005; Filc 2010). The latter has come in for increased criticism for its normative roots, its high degree of theoretical abstraction and its lack of empirical applicability, as well as its failure to link the political discourse convincingly to political practice (for example, Moffitt 2016). Nevertheless, as populist claims continue to proliferate and morph after appearing in new contexts and as they attach themselves to different parties and host ideologies in ever more settings, populism's hybridity and diversity continues to pose significant empirical challenges. Thus, the Muddean perspective, which arguably minimises populism to a parsimonious classificatory pattern, seems to show distinct disadvantages both from a theoretical and empirical perspective. Not only did Michael Freeden view populism as 'too thin' an ideology to be meaningful, but there is also new dissent from other scholars, who raise important objections.

First of all, it is worth noting that once we apply the label populism as a(n) ('thin') ideology to a political actor or group of actors, we engage in an essentialist enterprise and run the risk of treating populist parties/leaders in a derogatory and thus normative manner (Aslanidis 2016, 7). Although the intention is always to avoid normative appraisal, populism and its protagonists are often assumed to be forms of pathology to be studied in order to be eliminated rather than understood. Second, it is rather difficult to distinguish 'thin' and 'not thin' in ideological terms. Even though it may be argued that populism does not exist in a pure form as a 'full' or 'thick' ideology (like socialism or liberalism), this view still runs the risk of rendering populism as a catch-all concept (Moffitt 2016, 19), thus reducing the chances of us differentiating between a generic populist claim and those traits more or less rooted in other ideological legacies. Third, without additional criteria (often added tacitly in empirical studies, see again Moffit 2016, 19), the Muddean conception limits the opportunity to analyse the extent to which a discourse or a party is or are populist on the basis of theory. This is because a dichotomous approach avoids 'grey zones' and, more generally, refuses to recognise the possibility of a continuum between populists and non-populists.

For the reasons discussed above, mainstream quantitative research in the ideational tradition has seemingly long abandoned the binary conceptualization in favour or empirical degree-ism in the sense of employing question batteries and indicators to assess the extent to which attitudes and party manifestos or speeches conform to populist characteristics. Only recently, measuring populism on the demand side has made the development to being accessible via a set of survey questions measuring populist attitudes (Akkerman, Mudde and Zaslove, 2014; Van Hauwaert and van Kessel, 2018). In fact, the number of expert surveys including measures of supply-side populism still increases and also the survey items measuring populist attitudes has grown in numbers and are already included in many national election studies as well as in Europe-wide surveys (for an overview see Dolezal and Fölsch in this Handbook). It is also clear that populist attitudes do not exist in a vacuum but have be empirical distinguished from closely related expression and voter characteristics (Hawkins, Read and Pauwels 2017). Bakker, Rooduijn, and Schumacher (2016) and Fatke (2019) show also the existing connection to psychological traits. For example, low levels of agreeableness are associated with distrust in individuals, intolerance and unwillingness to cooperate with others (Bakker, Rooduijn and Schumacher 2016). Fatke (2019) found the effects of personality traits on vote choice to differ between countries and the strengths of the associations varies. Others have identified the interrelationship between populist and emotional predispositions (Rico, Guinjoan and Anduiza, 2017) and their connection with specific (nativist) policy preferences (Ivarsflaten 2008; Rooduijn, Bonikowski and Parlevliet, 2021), sociodemographic characteristics (Rovira Kaltwasser and Van Hauwaert, 2020), and conceptions of democracy (Heinisch and Wegscheider 2020). In short, the empirical research ‘on the ground’ became more nuanced, complex, and ‘degree-ist’, the big picture conceptualization has remained largely bifurcated in the sense of a populist versus non-populist dichotomy.

Until the beginning of the 2000s the dichotomy of populist versus non-populist political actors has been less of a problem in Western European party systems, where there have been clearly identifiable populist formations (typically only one) that stand apart from the other mainstream parties. However, as some right-wing populist parties are moving into the mainstream and mainstream parties have begun to integrate some of the former’s issues and orientations, the borderlines are becoming less impermeable (Bale et al. 2010; De Lange 2012; Akkerman et al. 2016). Especially in Eastern and South-eastern Europe, where mainstream parties have embraced nativist, illiberal, and even populist messages, and where leftist and conservative parties have turned to a discourse on immigration, ethnicity, and the EU that largely resembles that of populist parties in Western Europe, a reductive or dichotomous conception of populism is ill-suited for global comparisons.

Moreover, treating populism as an ideology in the context of a binary classificatory scheme also ignores one of its more crucial features, namely the intrinsically *variable and ambivalent* character of populist claims. Scholars such as Paul Taggart have pointed out that populism lacks ‘universal key values, taking on attributes of its environment’ and instead creates ‘an episodic, anti-political, empty-hearted, chameleonic celebration of heartland in the face of crisis’ (Taggart 2000, 5; see also Taggart 2002, 68). At its heart is a series of ambivalent claims about the people, the elites/outgroups, democracy, the state, society, the economy and so on. For example, the ‘people’ may refer to ‘us in general’, to ‘natives’ but not all nationals or citizens, to ‘the people of the heartland’ but not of the metropolis, to so-called ‘genuine citizens’, or to the ‘common folk’, to ‘hard-working taxpayers’ or to certain kinds of voters alluded to in political campaigns (Ivaldi and Mazzoleni 2019; Biancalana and Mazzoleni 2020). Generally, the terms employed by populists remain purposefully vague and flexible. Although the term ‘people’ often does denote *ethnos* in the sense of ‘natives’, it does not always apply. For example, in the Balkans, religious affiliation matters more than language or national heritage.

Moreover, especially in left-wing populism, the ‘people’ include lower-class and poor people, but there is less concern about citizenship.

The ambivalence serves to divide a population in an effort to reconstitute a popular majority with which to gain political control. Thus, the kind of exclusionary rhetoric applied by populists depends on the ideological background of those making the claims and the existing opportunity structures. For example, the former Freedom Party (Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs, FPÖ) governor of the Austrian province of Carinthia, Jörg Haider, called upon ‘real’ Carinthians to vote for him. This implied that the members of the Slovenian-speaking minority of that partially bilingual Austrian province were somehow less genuinely real citizens of Carinthia than the German-speaking majority, although both groups have been living there since the early Middle Ages and have long since intermingled. Moreover, the ubiquitous presence of Slavic family names in that state suggests that a large share of the so-called German-speaking population who voted for Haider were themselves of Slovenian ancestry but had become assimilated over the centuries. Thus, neither *ethnos* nor *demos* really mattered.

Perhaps even more ambivalent than ‘the people’ is the term populism uses for its enemies, who are often broadly labelled ‘the elites’ or the ‘others’. Even people of the same ethnic ancestry may be perceived as outsiders and aliens. For example, the former Bolivian populist leader Evo Morales and his MAS party (Movement for Socialism, Movimiento al Socialismo) referred to their main electorate as the *originarios*, meaning the original inhabitants as opposed to the European colonisers and their descendants. However, the Bolivian population is nearly 70 per cent mixed (*mestizo*) and 20 per cent indigenous based on reported census figures (CIA’s World Factbook 2021 data). The number of whites is quite small, amounting to only five per cent. Yet, the claims made by Morales and his party and the rhetoric employed conjure up a fictitious population of original inhabitants who speak indigenous languages, dress in traditional clothes, engage in pre-modern practices and live outside the central cities. In reality, there are few countries in Latin America in which *ethnos* and *demos* overlap as much as in Bolivia. The people in the cities may be culturally different, more likely urban, prefer Spanish to Quechua or Aymara, wear Western clothes more often and attend better schools, but ethnically speaking, they are often no less *originarios* than their fellow *mestizos* in the countryside are, even if the latter feel closer to their indigenous heritage.

Although the current literature tends to perceive the alleged opposition between the people and the elites as clear-cut, the relationship between these two categories is rather complex because of the difficulty of defining who the targeted elites actually are. Depending on the populist party and its leader, and also contingent upon the specific situation, populist claims may defend or condemn specific people, groups, institutions and arrangements. The often denounced so-called ‘political class’ may include (members of) the government, mainstream parties, businessmen, intellectuals, journalists, bureaucrats, judges, corporations, the EU and its officials, interest groups, international societies and so on. What is more, the populist universe includes additional ‘enemies of the people’, such as immigrants, minorities, refugees, ‘welfare cheats’, criminals of various types and others. As one of the oldest and most successful populist formations, the Austrian Freedom Party has often adapted their messages to shifting circumstances. Despite appearing outwardly consistent, it has morphed from a pro-European, German nationalist, anticlerical, pro-business party into an anti-European, welfare chauvinist, Austro-patriotic party that presents itself as the defender of Christendom and draws most of its support from blue-collar workers. Every time the party changed, so did the subtext of what the party meant through it juxtaposing 'the people' and 'the elites'.

While scholars do not always recognise it, populists are not only opponents of the existing political reality but also present themselves as agents of change. Although this may not necessarily mean revolutionary change, the promise of a more or less radical transformation of the (economic or political) situation to restore power to the people is the central appeal of populists. In some cases, change might be a systematic goal embodied in a clear strategy, while in other cases it is rather vague. According to Mény and Surel (2000, 181; see also Canovan 2005, 81–82), populism promises change in order to provide power to the people betrayed by the elite. 'Change' may express a demand for the dismissal of a government, policy change, but also the whole transformation of a polity. Populism has an inherent plasticity and is thus politically highly malleable. Nonetheless, it entails a profound tension underlying its core promise in that it claims to deliver people from the present and lead them to a future in the name of the past. The promise of restoring popular sovereignty by acting in the present to return to a *status quo ante* in the future, that is, to a time and place before the elites allegedly usurped power, is populism's core appeal and a prerequisite for the emotional connection between populists and many of their supporters. People are not necessarily emotionally invested in populist politicians but in the vision of a time and place they cherish and seem to have lost (see Betz and Johnson 2004). It is not surprising that, according to a 2016 Pew Research Center survey, many Trump voters 'wished they had lived in the 1950s', a period which Trump singled out as a time when things were great.

Populism's fundamental promise is the salvation of ordinary people from current conditions (Canovan 2005, 89). In fact, populism's appeal for change occurs precisely in a changing context: When political trust is low and the role of the media (including the new media) as critics of the dissatisfactory *status quo* is extraordinarily strong, ambivalent populist claims about unspecific but sweeping change seem to be particularly favoured. Despite promises about sweeping change, populists know how to tailor their claims in such a way that they may achieve their intended strategic ends. Depending on the extent of change demanded, they are able to position themselves as radical anti-regime opposition far outside acceptable political norms, or they can open up the possibility of cooperating with mainstream parties and perhaps even be included in government. In the former case, a populist party may end up politically ostracised, as was, for instance, the case with Flemish Block (Vlaams Blok, VB) and Flemish Interest (Vlaams Belang) in Belgium.

The linkage between government and populism also highlights the inherently ambivalent nature of that relationship in terms of both discourse and practice. Populists often use representative institutions to change policies and engage in office-seeking strategies even though they push for plebiscitary measures and routinely denounce aspects of representative democracy. Likewise, their top-down organisational models and authoritarian tendencies contradict their claims about the importance of the sovereignty of 'the people'. Given the complexity of populism, it seems overly reductionist to employ a minimal definition of the phenomenon. Instead, we suggest populism should be understood as making inherently ambivalent claims diffused by individual and collective actors designed to challenge the *status quo* in favour of people's empowerment and of elite change. It would be heuristically and empirically useful to analyse populist claims and their variation across time and space to see how they are adapted under given circumstances.

Ambivalence is a multidimensional phenomenon: It may occur *vis-à-vis* 'the people', whom populists define in various ways (see above) or may not define at all (for instance, all non-outsiders); and it applies to 'the others', an equally nebulous category in populist rhetoric. Ambivalence is also attached to other concepts populists often invoke, such as democracy: there, populists may argue in favour of certain liberal rules such as freedom of speech but oppose others such as the power of judges and the freedom of the media. Populism's relationship to established ideologies is equally flexible. In terms of economic policy, the ambivalence expressed in populist discourse varies between deregulatory demands and criticism of capitalism and free trade. Likewise, populists claim to want to increase or restore the power of the people, while also calling for more state control, expanded police power, better security and more law and order. Moreover, while populists talk about expanding democracy, the organisational model of populist parties is often rather undemocratic, with power highly centralised in the top leadership (Heinisch and Mazzoleni 2016). Given that populism depends on such ambivalent claims, which form part of a carefully constructed narrative that is made to fit a specific political context, in the subsequent segment we propose that populism should be best understood as a *frame* and less as an ideology (see, for instance, Aslanidis 2016).

Gradation and Frame

Scholarship has considered populism an ideology, a discourse, a strategy, a form of political logic or a style (Laclau 2005; Moffitt and Tormey 2013; Moffitt 2016). Despite this range of approaches, only some of this research has tried to develop rigorous empirical frameworks (Pauwels 2011). Nevertheless, the aforementioned dichotomous conceptualisation has emerged as something of a standard in the field. Yet, in recent years there has been a growing interest in treating populism empirically as a gradational phenomenon (Hawkins 2009; Akkerman et al. 2014; see also Pauwels in this volume; Jagers and Walgrave 2007). Scholars working with different conceptualisations of populism seemed to converge on similar ways of analysing speeches, texts and citizens' attitudes by using content analysis and surveys to measure the extent to which populist claims are made. Despite the diversity of underlying theoretical assumptions about the nature of populism, the main unifying feature of this empirical work is that parties, leaders and activists can be more or less populist at different points in time and in comparison with other parties, leaders and activists. This means that the 'degree' of populism (whether seen as an ideology, discourse or style) depends on some quantifiable presence of certain themes, words, tones, metaphors and images (Reese et al. 2001).

Usually, the gradational approach has been justified by the necessity to understand both how the mainstreaming of populist actors occurs and how it is that mainstream politics adopts populist claims all too readily (Deegan-Krause and Haughton 2009; Pauwels 2011; Mudde 2016, 15). However, one might argue that the gradational approach also corresponds very well to understanding populism as being 'chameleonic' and ambivalent by nature. By focusing on how different tactics and messages occur in different fields and at different times, the gradational approach permits us to show empirically how ambivalence is expressed. This observation leads us to our next key point: If ambivalent claims are central to this phenomenon, this would additionally support the idea that populism or populist claim-making can be conceived as a frame. Frame analysis offers a powerful tool, as an increasing number of scholars have pointed out (Jagers and Walgrave 2007; Caiani and Della Porta 2011; Ruzza and Fella 2011; Aslanidis 2016; Aalberg et al. 2017). Despite internal differences and controversies associated with this type of analysis (Benford and Snow 2000; Scheufele 1999), frames are generally seen as providing authoritative interpretation of particular social phenomena by activating larger discourses or highlighting certain properties that place the phenomenon in a particular light. Thus, 'framing becomes a strategic attempt to guide the activation of particular narratives and repertoires of understanding with the purpose of mobilising consensus' (Lindekilde 2014, 201). An extreme example would be the suggestion that immigration as the target phenomenon to be interpreted is mainly a tool used by elites to replace one people with another that is more pliant. The idea of population transfers or *Umvolkung* has been a recurring staple in FPÖ campaigns since the 1990s.

Like ideologies, frames try to explain what is wrong, whose fault it is and what has to be done (Albertazzi and McDonnell 2008, 3). As such, frame analysis is compatible with most of the concepts related to populism and lends itself to both qualitative and quantitative methods. The core of the analysis is to empirically examine texts, oral speeches and images to determine to what extent a populist frame occurs. The *master populist frame* is generally expressed a) by claiming that the 'people' – typically conceived as a single homogeneous entity – are in need of defending, b) by identifying the sources of the threat and subsequently by directing criticism at the elites (and outsiders), and c) by promising deliverance from the *status quo* through radical change (Mény and Surel 2000; Canovan 2005). Given that the presence and the relevance of each of these three components vary among and within actors, we should be able to map actors, parties, movements and other populism-related attributes along a continuum in terms of the direction, salience, ideological connotation and extent of the claims employed. The same applies to sub-frames on issues such as democracy, European integration, immigration, Islam and more recently COVID-19.[1] For instance, the anti-establishment sub-frame adopted by candidates and party leaders during an electoral campaign is presumably not the same in terms of position and intensity as the one adopted by that party's representatives in government, which is likely to be closer to mainstream sub-frames. Ambivalence may thus occur within discourse and between discourse and practice. For instance, a frame analysis focusing on the relevance of anti-establishment criticisms in official party speeches may not necessarily correspond to the legislative behaviour of that party. The Trump White House provided many examples of this seeming disconnect, especially since the president continued his campaign rhetoric in office, drawing on anti-establishment sub-frames while his surrogates were simultaneously trying to assuage the fears of international allies and members of Congress by sounding more mainstream. The tension between different sub-frames – one more mainstream, the other based on the narrative of the popular insurgent outsider – were quite clearly visible as different staff, some drawn from the populist campaign, others from circles of experts and career civil servants, were intermixed when having to craft policy proposals and make public statements. At the same time, the Trump Administration also showed that discourses do have an effect on political practice itself in that populist politicians who were elected based on their outsider credentials feel the need to act as disrupters and launch a variety of initiatives designed to shake up the political *status quo*. In fact, the probably most momentous event during the Trump presidency, the storming of the US Capitol buildings in January 2021 by a Trump-friendly mob, stands in direct connection with president's campaign-style rhetoric during a visit with these groups immediately prior.

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[1] Despite our heuristic interest in their approach, we question whether Jagers and Walgrave's (2007) focus on three distinct types of populism – 'empty populism', 'anti-elitist populism' and 'complete' populism – is able to overcome the shortcomings of reductionism.

In frame analysis, it is important not to conceive populist claims as mainly a discursive phenomenon but to assess their impact on political practice. For example, when populists employ a frame depicting 'the people' with certain attributes – for instance, defined neither in terms of ethnos nor class but as a hybrid category representing an idealised community of imagined authentic people –, then this follows a strategy of dividing and reconstituting groups of voters with the purpose of creating electoral majority populations. Research has shown that the use of 'people' varies across contexts and cases. A comparative analysis of party manifestos of six Western European parties yielded the following four types of appeals concerning 'the people': ethnic-nationalist, civic, collectivist and particularistic (de Raadt et al. 2004). Thus, it is generally important to ascertain the variability of the boundaries and definition of a concept such as 'the people' and to understand why a certain meaning was employed in a particular context or in connection with other sub-frames (Betz 1994, 69–106; Kuisma 2013; Marzouki et al. 2016). In frame analysis, it is important to distinguish between supply-side and demand-side dimensions because the populist frame expresses ambivalence both with respect to the 'sender' and the 'audience' of claims. Thus, populist framing and practices have to be considered both dependent and independent variables. These mutually reinforcing linkages between party manifestos and leaders' speeches, on the one hand, and the attitudes of their various constituencies, on the other, have not yet been sufficiently explored by the scholarship on populism and represent fruitful new research avenues on populism.

Explaining the Rise and the Spread of Populism across Contemporary Democracies

In many democratic systems where actors expressing populist frames were successful in the electoral arena, societies were undergoing crises and experiencing grave uncertainties. The common linkage that has emerged is the one between populism and societal, economic and cultural change. Addressing the question of the extent to which the populism frame occurs and matters is crucial; but it is equally important to understand why populist sub-frames arise and how they spread. To answer this question, one must look at the actors engaging in a populist discourse and the context: What matters here is first of all what we may call the *endogenous condition of possibility*.

Endogenous Conditions

These conditions refer to the innate abilities, resources and structural assets available to and shaped by populist actors. These include the origin and formation of the political actors themselves, including their personality and wealth as well as the pattern of the organisation of the party or movement in which they operate. For example, populist leaders like Jörg Haider, Andrej Babiš, Christoph Blocher (although he was never actually the party leader) and Jean-Marie Le Pen each enjoyed the advantage of considerable personal wealth, which gave them a measure of autonomy both from internal party factions and external interests. Moreover, it allowed them to shape aspects of their party to suit their preferences. However, access to a financial fortune is only one aspect: They need certain abilities and resources inherent in themselves and in their organisation to communicate their messages effectively. If they lack communicative abilities, they will not be listened to. If they lack fame or the ability to muster promotional resources, the media and public will ignore them. If they lack organisational strength, they will not be able to concentrate power in the leadership or project their claims with sufficient intensity. We need to distinguish those conditions which are under the control of actors or which may be shaped by them from those which may not be altered and to which populist actors must adapt if they want to be politically successful.

Exogenous Conditions

Exogenous conditions of possibility refer to the given context in which actors opt to express their populist claims, but which is beyond the control of the actors themselves. The experience of COVID-19 with so many restrictions and mandates placed on so many people has created numerous examples of this. These conditions are defined by a complex configuration of structural dimensions, popular predispositions and communication patterns, to which populist actors must react. In a society with an ethnic minority population, populist actors may opt to build their claims around ethnic divisions, whereas in systems with a centre-periphery cleavage, populists will likely invoke heartland mythologies. In the latter, existing local predispositions against the capital city and the national media located in the metropolises may be readily exploited. Exogenous conditions vary not only across space but also over time. As already mentioned, such conditions entail various crises and uncertainties as a result of societal, economic and cultural change. They also include the revolution in information technology, increasing economic interdependence and a changing relationship between the economy, the state, society and the individual. These are well-known factors, which drive different forms of socio-economic polarisation and growing mediatisation, both of which have an impact on everyday politics and life in general (Castells 2009).

Nonetheless, individual electoral races occur within national borders and thus in a given institutional context with defined constituencies. In order to explain how and why actors expressing populist frames emerge and succeed in electoral arenas, we have to consider more deeply how macro-level changes, such as those attributed to different forms of globalisation, become translated and framed in regional and national contexts. Although several scholars are strongly fascinated by the idea of 'global populism' or of the general *Zeitgeist* (Mudde 2004; but also see Müller 2016), comparative research on populism clearly shows that regional, systemic and epistemic differences produce different populist outcomes (for Europe, see Ignazi 1992; Betz 1994; Kitschelt and McGann 1995; Koopmans 1996; Betz and Immerfall 1998; Norris 2005; Carter 2005; Mudde 2007; Ivarsflaten 2008; Art 2011; for Latin America, see Weyland 2001; Madrid 2008; Hawkins 2009; Levitsky and Roberts 2011). One such crucial element are the political rules of the game that exist in a particular context. The election rules, government legacies and other political institutional arrangements may explain the variation in how populists frame their discursive strategy. For instance, as Katz and Mair (1995; 2009) have argued, party cartelisation, a collusion system of mainstream parties within government, may represent an important window of opportunity for anti-establishment opponents. In other cases, the changes occurring at the macro-level are only indirectly connected with globalization and modernization but be in fact the aftermath of a transition from authoritarianism such as was the case in Eastern Europe. There in populist discourse, the contemporary elites may be the group of former dissents and anti-Communist intellectuals having brought about the changes whereas the populist leaders are oligarchy and business tycoon promising technocratic and non-ideological solutions to the nation's problems. Thus, scholars (e.g., Buštíková and Guasti, 2019) have labelled the Czech government party Action of Dissatisfied Citizens (ANO) 'technocratic populist' because of its apolitical nature (see also Engler, Pytlas and Deegan-Krause (2019, 1325). Other have pointed out the entrepreneurial dimension of ANO's populism (Maškarinec and Bláha 2014, see also the chapter by Heinisch and Saxonberg in this book).

As a result, socio-economic and cultural changes may not explain widespread populist claim-making by themselves. But if we connect these underlying factors with the erosion of old political cleavages and with associated changes in political institutional arrangements, we may develop a plausible argument for how democratic politics in consolidated political systems has been undermined and how this subsequently contributed to the creation of widespread insecurity. Such sentiments are exploited not only by protest parties but mainstream political actors as well. They too, may engage in making populist claims, to some extent using populist sub-frames to distinguish themselves in a highly competitive and strongly media-influenced political campaign environment. Candidate-centred electoral campaigns, dramatisation and sensationalism in media coverage, as well as the spread of social media may strongly enhance the rise of populist sub-frames (Mazzoleni et al. 2003; Moffitt 2016). One can also assume that the more public opinion embraces the frame of a distance between 'ordinary people' and the political elite expressed in opinion polls through waning trust in politicians and their low approval ratings, the more the populist claim is perceived by elites themselves as a tool for their competition in a communication environment shaped by media logic. Thus, populism is not necessarily a pathological symptom of societal crisis, but the most effective response by (including mainstream) actors when pursuing political power under changing – political and media-based – rules of the game.

The Role of Endogenous and Exogenous Conditions in Populist Claim-Making

Most scholars would agree that discrete contexts shape not only the perception of populism as a construct but also the perception of populist protagonists themselves in the sense that the phenomenon becomes attached to certain leaders, political parties, movements and even forms of communication (Subramanian 2007; Madrid 2008; Hawkins 2010; Jansen 2011). This means that the endogenous conditions related to actors' traits and the factors under their control are the more crucial dimensions in spreading populism. Whereas exogenous dimensions are necessary conditions, they are not enough to explain the rise, spread and the ambivalence of populist claims. The decision on whether to convincingly claim that women's liberation is under assault from Islam or to equally persuasively denounce it as undermining a community's social fabric depends on a populist protagonist's ability to read a given context and to use their available assets as effectively as possible. Overall, the claims about women remain ambivalent but different versions will be deployed to maximum effect in different contexts.

Populist frames need political entrepreneurs capable of developing and disseminating them. A crucial condition for the success of the populist discourse is the credibility of the claims maker as a challenger or change agent. The key is the populist actor's 'transformational' leadership (Burns 1978), although populist scholarship prefers to adopt the controversial term of 'charisma' (see, for instance, Barr 2009). In doing so, the claims maker can draw on the aforementioned objective resources, such as wealth, networks, celebrity status, media access and the like, to appear credible in effecting change. Depending on the actor and the context, individual and collective dimensions are relevant. The individual dimension, especially once populist leaders present themselves as outsiders, is linked to their capacity to convert non-political (economic, cultural and so on) capital into political capital (for example, public reputation), and, more generally, to mobilise all resources available to oppose (political) elites and call into question the formal/informal political rules governing the political system. The collective dimension can also play a crucial role in increasing a leader's or a party's ability to spread populist claims. The organisation of the movement or party, which varies between more or less highly centralised and cohesive models, with differing financial and/or activist resources for mobilisation (Heinisch and Mazzoleni 2016), and its capacity to link with more or less relevant interest groups in society and the economy all matter in this respect. Again, we notice how the endogenous condition reflected in the populists' ability to shape their party organisation intersects with the exogenous dimension of institutional rules and established practices.

In a presidential political system like the US, in which political parties are mainly fundraising vehicles but which are otherwise focused on a 'horse race' between two major party candidates, fame and financial resources are key to overcoming the threshold of public awareness. Donald Trump's fame as a media show host and celebrity, his experience in handling himself in front of an audience and his ability to communicate effectively were his assets in the endogenous condition of possibility. It was also an asset that he was able to finance his campaign independently of his party and their major donors. Moreover, Trump was able to mount a successful insurgency campaign more or less against the party that eventually nominated him without shattering the party, as would undoubtedly have been the case elsewhere. Thus, he also benefitted from the fact that the US party system is structured loosely enough to allow for considerable internal division and dissent without splitting a party altogether. In other words, the political entrepreneur Trump was able to make claims against a party whose leadership he sought, and to act on a scale that conditions elsewhere would prohibit. Subsequently, he dominated his party, especially the grassroots, like few sitting presidents and especially like no past president before him so that the loyalty to Trump continues to be an ideological litmus test for people seeking office on a Republican ticket even after 2020. Yet, the Trump's party did not undergo any formal structural changes but power is exercised by Trump's direct appeal to voters, especially his base, via social media and public statements.

By comparison, in a West European party system, populist political entrepreneurs might first try to bring the respective parties under their control by challenging the old leadership or mobilising the base, as Jörg Haider did in 1986, when he took control of the FPÖ. In that context, leader then effected formal changes to the party's organization to concentrate power and centralise decision-making in order to project polarising messages without fear of internal dissent (Heinisch 2016). In other cases of populism, economic entrepreneurs become political entrepreneurs and form their own parties which they then completely control such the Czech billionaire Andrej Babiš and his party ANO 2011 (see the chapter by Heinisch and Saxonberg in this book).

What matters is how populist actors shape the intersection of endogenous and exogenous conditions. This also extends to the populist party's position in the political system. Whether a party's place is more 'peripheral' or 'central', such as by participating in government, shaping public policy and/or using public administration for party goals, matters as it implies easy access to public resources. It also enhances a party's capacity to be recognised by allies and opponents in the political system as well as by the media and journalists (Aalberg et al. 2016; Akkerman et al. 2016). Since one crucial strategy against populist opposition parties is the *cordon sanitaire*[2], the ability of populists to ensure their centrality in the political and media system is the most effective strategy with which to protect their reputation and credibility. Nonetheless, the populists' claim of being a central player includes an important contradiction because seeking office and entering government while simultaneously advocating revolutionary change creates a tension between the constraints of public office and the populist party's operational logic (for example, Heinisch 2003). The populist frame of being a political outsider seeking power to become an insider in order to change the system on behalf of the people represents numerous challenges. The populists have to convince voters that they, as outsiders, have enough inside wherewithal to effect change without becoming system insiders themselves. Populist actors often fail in this task and pay the price for what is perceived as mainstreaming (Akkerman et al. 2016). Yet under certain circumstances, political success may occur. This happens in strongly polarised and mediatised systems, once the transformational leadership becomes strong enough to shape the rules of the institutional game in either emerging or consolidated democratic regimes.

Application and Summary

In this chapter, we argued that scholars of populism, especially those working in political science and political sociology, should overcome certain limitations of current literature by moving on to a more comprehensive framework of analysis. The growing challenges in scholarship are related to its capacity to grasp the complexity, the variety and the fluid character of populism. In contrast to proposing reductive, essentialist and normative approaches, we argued in favour of a relational structure-agency approach by asking how populist claims arise and how they may be studied empirically. In keeping with our understanding of populism as a frame, we are most interested in understanding how the populist frame varies across different arenas and constituencies.

Inspired by Taggart (2000, 5), who argued that scholars should consider populism an 'anti-political, empty-hearted, chameleonic celebration of the heartland in the face of crisis', we argued that populism can be heuristically defined as an intrinsically ambivalent claim. It is diffused by individual and collective actors to challenge the *status quo* in favour of people's empowerment and elite change. We take the ambivalence expressed in populist claims to be a dynamic and plastic multidimensional phenomenon: concepts such as people, elites, (liberal) democracy, constitutional rights, rule of law or the economic system, among others, are all subject to highly ambivalent expression by populists, and so their content and meaning remain purposefully vague and vary depending on circumstances and context. This makes also the relationship between populism and democracy complex and full of ambivalence (Ferrín and Kriesi 2016; Kriesi 2018; Van Hauwaert and van Kessel 2018; Norris and Inglehart 2019; Leininger and Meijers 2021). The same goes for the traditional ideologies to which populism has developed a connection full of ambiguity and flexibility. The ambivalence expressed in populist claims is not only a question of discourse but also one of political practice. This means the ambivalence reflected in populist claims finds an expression both in policymaking and political culture.

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[2] In a *cordon sanitaire* other political actors completely refuse to cooperate with and politically isolate the populists so that the latter become politically ineffective.

Figure 5.1: Overview of the Principal Definitions and Conceptualisation

Definition

Populism can be defined as a frame containing intrinsically ambivalent claim(s) diffused by individual and collective actors in order to challenge the status-quo in favor of people's empowerment and elite change.

Frames are sets of concepts used to organize, perceive, and communicate about reality. Frames and underlying claims are often connected to host ideologies.

The *goal of frame analysis* is to understand the relationship between frame, actor, and context.

In order to analyse the ambivalence of populist claims, we proposed proceeding with a frame analysis (Aslanidis 2016). It begins with the assumption that the *populist master frame* is restored (Mény and Surel 2000; Canovan 2005). The research would then trace, for example, through content analysis, the variation of these concepts in populist claims: the portrayal of the 'people', the nature of the 'elites' and the extent of the 'change'. Claims can be measured at the very least in terms of their direction, extremeness, prominence and frequency. We then suggested adopting a gradational approach, which allows for the study of parties, leaders and citizens with the objective of uncovering the extent of populist sub-frames used within themes, words, tones, metaphors and images in relation to their background ideology (left-wing, centrists, right-wing), channels of communication, intended constituencies and arenas of competition.

If populism, as expressed by ambivalent claims, is the dependent construct, we suggested that a set of contextual variables can explain the emergence of such populist frames In particular, these include exogenous conditions of possibility such as social and cultural change, frames embedded in public opinion (disenchantment with politics, dwindling trust in politicians, etc.), institutional conditions, the configuration of the party system pattern (relations between governing and opposition parties, strength of cleavage politics) and the structure of the media (e.g., the increasing relevance of media logic in modern democracies). Within each respective context, it is the actor(s) that plays (play) the key role in spreading populist claims. Thus, any analysis of populism has to focus on the means of individual and collective actors and their innate abilities and acquired resources, their credibility as change agents and their capacity to shape strategies and affect political rules.

It is important to note once again that discourse and practice are linked to each other. In this sense, populism is not only a discourse but also connected to measurable political realities in terms of conditions of possibility, choices of strategy and selection of policies. In our approach, we intended to suggest a way forward designed to bridge the chasm between those who have adopted the Muddean framework because they prefer its ideational aspects and empirical operationalisability, and those who see the discursive and multifaceted dimensions of populism but struggle to both link discourse and practice and measure populism's causes and effects.

Figure 5.2: Overview of the Application of Frame Analysis to Empirical Research (Example)

Hypothesis: *The rise and spread of populist claims depend on social, economic, institutional, cultural conditions of possibilities.*

Dependent Variable

***Master frame*: "*Defense of the (virtuous) 'people' against the machination of elites and the promise of political change to restore the power of the people.*"**

Ambivalent claims in the discursive frame:
- *People*: 'Heartlanders'/demos/ethnos/Christians/whites/working people/taxpayers
- *Elites*: The political class/politicians/bureaucrats/ financial/economic elites/media/judges
- *Democracy*: Plebiscitary decision-making/unrestraint majoritarianism/curbs on media and judiciary

***Subframe 1*: "*Mainstream parties/Leftist parties have ab andoned the working men and women because politicians are self-serving and corrupt.*"**

Ambivalent claims in the discursive subframe:
- *Parties*: Praise for old left/criticism of the (new) Left or the Left in general/'parties are all the same'
- *Economy*: Critique of capitalism and free trade/favor economic protectionism/favor deregulation and lower taxes/criticize trade unionism

Empirical Measurement: Claims can be empirically analyzed by the range of meanings assigned to its component concepts, internal consistency, radicalness, ideological connection, frequency and prominence (salience).

Sources: Manifestos, speeches, interviews, public debates, posters, billboards, political ads and commercials, and so on.

Independent Variable

Exogenous conditions of possibility

Rise and diffusion populism claims is causally linked to a) societal and cultural change; b) institutional conditions; c) party system patterns d) the main trends in public opinion and e) the (changing) pattern in media structure…

Endogenous conditions of possibility

1) Individual (actor-related) dimension
- Innate characteristics of the populist actor(s) (charisma, rhetorical ability, leadership ability)
- Economic, cultural, social capital (that can be converted to political capital)
- Credibility of the claims maker as a change agent in the given context.

2) Collective dimension
- Organizational-networking basis
- Level of centralization/control over the organization/formation supporting the populist actor
- Cohesiveness of the formation supporting the populist actor
- Financial-activist and other resources of the formation supporting the populist actor

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CHAPTER 6:

POPULISM AND DEMOCRACY: THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Robert A. Huber and Christian H. Schimpf

Introduction

Populist actors[1] are seemingly an omnipresent phenomenon in today's global political landscape (see de la Torre 2015). For examples of this phenomenon, we can look to the Americas (Gratius 2007; Rovira Kaltwasser 2015; Oliver and Rahn 2016), Europe (Mudde 2007; van Kessel 2015), Africa (Resnick 2015) and the Asia-Pacific region (Snow and Moffitt 2012; Moffitt 2015). In addition to the various topics discussed throughout this volume, scholars have also debated the impact that the presence of populist actors has had on other mainstream parties (Bale 2003; Bale 2010; van Spanje 2010; Bale et al. 2014) in terms of both democracy in general and democratic quality in particular. In this chapter, we introduce and examine the different perspectives in this debate. These range from portraying populist actors as either good or bad for democracy (Tannsjö 1992; Urbinati 1998) to ascribing a dual role to them in the sense of their functioning as both a threat and a corrective (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2012). We also consider how actor-inherent features (political role and host ideology) and contextual factors (democratic consolidation of a country) influence the particular relationship between a populist actor and the quality of democracy. Finally, we discuss how the two concepts of populism and democracy can be measured to establish valid empirical evidence.

'Populism' and 'Democracy': An Ambivalent Relationship?

In this volume, Heinisch and Mazzoleni already elaborated on the different ways in which populism has been defined. For this chapter, we rely on a general concept that is suitable for application to most of the standard definitions used in contemporary populism research. We understand populism as a set of ideas that encompasses anti-elitism, the belief in a general will of the people (*volonté générale*) and a Manichean outlook (Hawkins 2009; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2013; Rovira Kaltwasser 2014; Rooduijn 2014). While this view of populism remains broad, it does capture the essential ingredients of populism that various scholars agree upon in their definitions and concepts (Rooduijn 2014). As van Kessel (2015, 8) points out, the different interpretations are not problematic from an empirical perspective 'as long as there

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[1] Throughout this chapter, we use 'populist actors' to refer to both populist parties (for example, in Europe) and populist politicians (for example, in Latin America).

is a consensus about the concept's attributes'. Thus, whether populism is conceived as a thin-centred ideology (Mudde 2004) or a frame (see Heinisch and Muzzolini in this volume), it is essential to understand that the underlying ideas form the reference points for any action taken by populist actors.

When surveying the literature on populism, we observe that scholars focus on the relationship between two specific understandings of democracy and populism the most: representative democracy (for example, Taggart 2002; 2004; Caramani 2017) and liberal democracy (for example, Plattner 2010; Pappas 2016; Havlík 2019). We discuss both strands in tandem with each other in our review and, suffice it to say, populism is at odds with both these forms of democracy for similar reasons: Populist actors reject the representative character of democracy because, in their view, non-majoritarian representation prevents clean implementation of the general will of the people. For the same reason, these actors are also at odds with liberal democracy because within it power can never be absolute. Moreover, liberal democracy requires pluralism, which rejects the very idea of a homogeneous people with unified interests and, thus, the notion of a general will (*volonté générale*). Due to the fact that for populist actors there is only one particular will, any institutions/rules (for example, a system of checks and balances) designed to limit power and balance against the majority are anathema to populist actors and their central ideas.[2] For these reasons, we review and discuss these two concepts of democracy together.

Before reviewing the literature on populism in greater detail, it is necessary to emphasise that while populist parties can be radical (Mudde 2007), they are, when viewed from a theoretical perspective, not considered to be extreme. Extreme parties differ from (radical) populist parties in that the former are anti-constitutional (anti-democratic), whereas populist parties are not (Betz 1994; Pappas 2016). Instead, populist actors are strong critics of the democratic system but, as such, attempt to obey the rules of democratic contestation (Griffin 1999; Rensmann 2006). Rensman (2003; 2006) also highlights differences between the political goals of these two types of parties. Extreme parties strive to establish an autocratic regime in which the people are part of the whole. Populist parties glorify the will of the people, which they consider to be the 'ultimate source of legitimacy' (van Kessel 2015, 15). A grey area between radicalism and extremism certainly exists, which makes it hard to place each and every populist actor in one of the two categories. Yet, this distinction helps us to understand why populist actors are not considered anti-democratic in the following analysis. Instead, they can present both a challenge to and opportunity for certain aspects of democracy, such as minority rights and mutual constraints, but also accountability.

Democracy, in its most basic meaning, refers to the rule or power of the people. In today's societies, this is often understood as the rule of the majority expressed through fair and free elections (Plattner 2010). In a representative democracy, voters elect individuals and parties to represent the interests of the people (Urbinati 2011). However, it is almost equally recognised that majoritarianism by itself does not constitute what we visualise as a democracy. Rather, a political regime, in order to be considered democratic, must also 'guarantee the freedom or liberty of its citizens' (Plattner 2010, 84). If democracy is enshrined in a (written) constitution, in combination with limitations imposed on the government by the rule of law, we then talk of a constitutional or liberal democracy. In this way, a liberal democracy always implies an internal struggle for balancing popular rule, on the one hand, with anti-majoritarian constraints, on the other. The United States' idea of checks and balances is perhaps the best-known example of this internal tension within liberal democracy. It is also evident that representative democracy and liberal democracy are not distinctive but, rather, complementary ideas.

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[2] In fact, Pappas (2016) suggests that we should define populist parties based on the criterion of anti-liberalism. That is, all parties that are democratic (for example, not extreme) and anti-liberal in their tactics are populist parties. All other parties are not.

The question that arises is how populist actors relate to this view of democracy since liberal democracy is the one form with which populism is most at odds (Plattner 2010). Populist actors criticise the representative character of democracy (Taggart 2002). In their minds, there should be no intermediary who converts the people's will. Rather, democracy ought to be a process through which the general will is often directly implemented through plebiscitary measures (Abts and Rummens 2007; Barr 2009; Canovan 2002; van Kessel 2015; Meny and Surel 2002; Ruth-Lovell and Welp 2019).[3] In a similar manner, populist actors advocate positions that are at odds with liberal democracy. Sharing the conviction that the *volonté générale* should be the point of reference for all decisions taken in a polity, populist actors consider any anti-majoritarian elements to be unnecessary. This is not to say that populists are anti-democratic per se as they are perfectly accepting of democratic outcomes under majoritarianism (Tännsjö 1992).[4] Populist actors rather perceive the general will to be the majority, which serves to finalise political decisions and mandates their implementation without any further questions. For these reasons, populist actors 'have little patience with liberalism's emphasis on procedural niceties and protections for individual rights' (Plattner 2010, 88).[5]

Urbinati (1998) also stresses the critical role of pluralism in democracy, and in liberal democracy in particular. Based on her theoretical framework, she portrays populism as the opposite rather than the prototype of democracy. She considers it a more moderate form of fascism, and concludes that populism is in conflict with any form of plurality. According to Urbinati, these roots in fascism lead to the transformation of society into an entity 'where class and ideological differences are denied and mastered in the attempt to fulfill the myth of a comprehensive totality of state and society' (Urbinati 1998, 110). In essence, she criticises the populists' division of society into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups. Already, Tännsjö, Plattner and Urbinati reflect how a central idea of populism, the *volonté générale*, shapes its relationship with democracy, especially liberal democracy. However, as liberal democracy rests on two pillars, subsequent works have begun to consider the idea that populist actors may play a dual role in democracy by redeeming or strengthening the majoritarian side while working against anti-majoritarian elements.

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[3] For a different view, see Müller (2016), who argues that populist actors do not reject representative democracy per se. Rather, these actors claim to be the only legitimate representatives because only they can represent the true will of the people. In turn, they do not argue against representative democracy but rather those parties and politicians that are frequently elected into office. Plebiscitary measures then do not become an instrument with which to derive (and implement) the general will. Instead, they function as means to confirm what the respective populist actors consider to be the only correct policy going forward.

[4] Populism, although conceptualised slightly differently, was criticised precisely on these grounds by Riker (1982). The scholar argues and shows, based on social-choice theory, that the general will can never be implemented through elections and, thus, the view would have to be rejected.

[5] Some scholars argue that because the balance between 'liberal logic' (protecting minorities, preventing absolute power) and 'democratic logic' (majoritarian focus) has suffered at the expense of the latter, populist parties have been able to rise as a result (Mouffe 2000). As representatives of democratic logic, they represent a counterweight, which can achieve balance between the two antagonistic forms of logic (see also Meny and Surel 2002).

Beyond a One-Dimensional Relationship

Canovan (1999) builds on the idea that democracy is characterised by two traits: the pragmatic style of politics (where institutions mediate conflict) and the redemptive vision ('government of the people, by the people, for the people': ibid., 10). One of Canovan's (1999) central points is that populist actors oppose institutions and, thus, representation as these hinder the implementation of the *volonté générale*. Therefore, populist actors work against the pragmatic style of democracy. Yet, populists agree with the redemptive face of democracy because it focuses on the *vox populi vox dei* (the voice of the people is the voice of God). Ultimately, populists act in the nexus between these two faces of democracy and try to replace its two pillars with a version of democracy in which the redemptive vision is positioned at the core. By considering the possibility that populist actors may have different and even contradictory consequences for democracy, Canovan (1999) has paved the way for many works that followed her initial publication.[6] In their book, Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser (2012), for instance, contend that the role (whether in government or opposition) that populist actors take on determines what potential effects populist actors can have on (liberal) democracy (be they positive or negative).

On the one hand, populist parties have strong incentives to increase mobilisation and participation (see e.g. Huber and Ruth 2017; Leiniger and Meijers 2020), thereby potentially strengthening the quality of democracy (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2012). These mobilisation efforts, for example, can result in the inclusion of disenfranchised parts of society, such as ethnic minorities (for example, indigenous groups in Latin America) and other groups (such as individuals who hold extreme political views), in the political realm (Gratius 2007). Similarly, their criticism of the political establishment can lead to higher levels of accountability and responsiveness among elites to diverse views within the electorate (Müller 2002; Heinisch 2003). Populist actors also challenge prevailing views on how democracy works (for example, by demanding the implementation of instruments of direct democracy) and, as a result, foster a discourse that forces constant review of the political mechanisms in place (Barr 2009).[7]

On the other hand, however, populist actors in government can undermine mutual constraints and exclude minorities (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2012). Due to their strong focus on the *volonté générale*, populists shift their focus exclusively to the redemptive side of democracy (Canovan 1999). As a result, populist actors can undercut political institutions, which, in their view, hinder the proper implementation of the general will. This is also reflected in the 'anything goes' attitude that populist actors embrace and which manifests itself in a strong Manichean discourse (Hawkins 2003, 1156). To achieve their goal of more direct implementation of the general will, populist actors have also extensively used plebiscitary measures to legitimise their efforts (Roberts 2012, 154; Walker 2008). Furthermore, while populist actors tend to include certain segments of society who have previously received less representation to increase their vote share in opposition, populists exclude other actors to secure the former's newly gained power. These excluded groups comprise the former elite, while they claim that the groups who are included comprise the people (see Ruth and Hawkins in this volume). To summarise, theoretical arguments suggest that populist actors play a dual role in democracy. However, in most instances, the effects listed above are moderated by a variety of different factors, such as the level of democratic consolidation.

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[6] For an extensive response to Canovan (1999), see Arditi (2004).

[7] Due to their strong belief in a general will of the people, populist parties propose, for instance, expanding the use of direct democratic mechanisms. Walker (2008) and Roberts (2012), for example, mention that Chávez in Venezuela actively tried to bypass political institutions in Latin America by using plebiscitary measures. Eventually, he exploited these options to change the constitution.

Moderating Factors

Although scholars argue that the relationship between populist actors and democracy plays out irrespective of time and place, the presence of these actors does not lead to equal levels of erosion or improvement in all countries. Instead, a series of moderating factors constrain the possible effects. These include, for example, the level of democratic consolidation in a given state or the type of government of which populist actors are a part. In their model, Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser (2012) propose that the level of democratic consolidation moderates the extent to which the potential effects of populist actors on the quality of democracy play out.[8] The more consolidated democracies are, that is, the more developed political institutions are, the smaller the expected impact of populist actors on the quality of democracy (regardless of their role). For instance, in countries where a system of checks and balances is well established, populist actors in government will find it harder to reduce the strength of such a system. Empirically, comparative studies find support for this argument in Latin America (for example, Huber and Schimpf 2016b) but not in Europe (Huber and Schimpf 2016a). The latter may be due to populist actors activating latent populist sentiments (Hawkins et al. 2020), which, in turn, reduce support for different forms of democratic decision-making among the public (Heinisch and Wegscheider 2020), possibly eroding one of the advantages built into established democracies.

Researchers who focus on populist actors in government also suggest that the extent to which populist actors influence the level of democracy in a given country depends on the type of government which they are a part of (Albertazzi 2008; Huber and Schimpf 2016a).[9] They argue that the relative strength that populist actors have within the cabinet limits their overall power. In a government in which more than the minimum number of parties necessary for a majority are in the cabinet, populist parties are assumed to exert less influence because their veto power is small (as opposed to, for instance, minority governments, where each cabinet member holds considerably more power). Empirical analyses in the European context support this argument (Huber and Schimpf 2016a).[10] Similarly, the overall power (for example, the share of seats in government, number of cabinet posts) of a populist actor may be significant for the degree to which such an actor influences the quality of (liberal) democracy.[11] Although this point has yet to be studied in greater depth, studies of presidential power (Metcalf 2000) and the power of parties in parliaments (Tsebelis 1995) highlight that, in a simple form, power leads to opportunities and influence. Initial work supports this idea and finds that more public support tends to increase opportunities for populist presidents in Latin America to erode systems of checks and balances (Ruth 2018). Given that most countries in Latin America have presidential systems in which office holders are granted extensive powers by virtue of the law, high public support and low levels of consolidation have created fertile ground for populists like Hugo Chávez to erode the system of checks and balances. In contrast, in (Western) Europe, where parliamentary systems are coupled with higher levels of democratic consolidation, populist actors have had far fewer opportunities to implement similar wide-ranging changes.

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[8] Because populist actors do not oppose democracy per se, from here we shall on talk about their effect on the quality of democracy, which refers to the implementation of standards in accordance with the concept of (liberal) democracy (Beetham 2004). A high-quality democracy guarantees its citizens 'a high degree of freedom, political equality, and popular control over public policies and policymakers through the legitimate and lawful functioning of stable institutions' (Diamond and Morlino 2005, xi).

[9] This argument is not applicable to presidential systems (for example, in most Latin American states) in which power resides with a president rather than with a government carried by a majority in parliament.

[10] For populist actors in government, Allred et al. (2015) also argue that, while not necessarily constrained or moderated in their effect, they need time in order to have their full effect on democracy. Consecutive terms in government, therefore, increase the extent of the negative effects on four different aspects of democracy: executive constraints, electoral quality, civil liberties and press freedom. The empirical results by Allred et al. (2015) indeed indicate that potentially erosive effects only play out after populists have been reconfirmed in office in a second election. Ruth and Hawkins (in this volume) support these findings and find similar effects for contestation and participation.

Finally, we want to highlight the role of what is referred to as host ideologies (Huber and Schimpf 2017) in the context of populism. A host ideology is a set of ideas and orientations rooted in different belief systems that accompanies the populist ideational dimension and is an inherent feature of populism. Whether populist actors are left wing or right wing, their world view, and ultimately their policy proposals, may be restricted by ideas stemming from the host ideology (see, for example, Converse 1964). In turn, this can lead to large differences in how populists relate to dimensions of the quality of democracy. This, perhaps, becomes clearest when we consider minority rights, in which case right-wing populist parties propose solutions that involve exclusion, whereas left-wing populist parties promote inclusion (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2013). These opposing views result in different ways of handling this issue (also see Juon and Bochsler 2020 for strong empirical evidence). This further begs the question of to what extent we can treat populist actors as a homogenous set of actors, given the different effects populist parties across the ideological spectrum exert on different dimensions of democracy. On the one hand, empirical studies to this date find that different populist parties have no impact on mutual constraints (Huber and Schimpf 2017; Juon and Bochsler 2020). On the other hand, Juon and Bochsler (2020, 403) find a consistent negative effect of all types of populist parties on the rule of law, while the effects on other dimensions differ widely, depending on the populist actors' host ideologies. As such, it may be too early to draw definite conclusions, and future research will tell whether the thin ideology of populism exerts effects on democracy that are independent from its host ideology.

We may conclude that the discussion of how populist actors relate to democracy has shown that while there remain contradictory views about their positive and/or negative effects, there has been a shift in the understanding of this connection. Scholars have gradually established that the relationship may be more complex than merely assuming that populist actors are either good or bad. Rather, they may have dual effects depending on their role. Additional factors, such as democratic consolidation, moderate these effects. Table 6.1 provides an overview of the different effects populist actors are seen to have on democracy. However, this review has also shown that scholars use numerous concepts not only for the independent variable of 'populism' but also for democracy. From an empirical standpoint, this raises the question of how to best measure these concepts to test arguments empirically. Therefore, we discuss some of the different forms of measurement that are available in the subsequent section. In an effort to provide a meaningful assessment, we compare these measurements based on empirical applications to a set of cases in which populist actors have been part of the government or held the presidency.

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[11] In particular, the share of seats held by a populist party in parliament, for instance, may be significant given that, all things being equal, a larger seat share increases the power of a party to decisively influence coalition formation and power allocation (see, for example, Austin-Smith and Banks 1988; Folke 2014).

Table 6.1: Summary of Effects

Effect	**Time**	**Potential moderators**	**Dimension**	**Mechanism**	**Source**
Positive	Mostly when in opposition		Increase in responsiveness, accountability	a) Putting forward important yet neglected issues b) Holding government to account	van Cott 1994; Müller 2002; Hawkins 2003, 1142; Heinisch 2008; de Lange and Akkerman 2012; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2012, 21; Huber and Schimpf 2017
Positive	Mostly when in opposition	Part of society may depend on host ideology	Inclusion of excluded segments of society	Representing their interest in order to maximize vote share	van Cott 1994; Gratius 2007; Webber 2011; Hanley 2012; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2012, 21; Huber and Schimpf 2017; Splitter 2018; Leininger and Meijers 2020
Positive	In government	Consecutive terms	Representation through policies	Implementing policies that were promised to achieve office	Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2012, 21; Allred et al. 2015; Splitter 2018; Ruth and Hawkins in this volume
Positive			Building bridges beyond class barriers	Combining interests and representing several classes	Bruhn 2012, 90; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2012, 21; Betz 2015
Positive			Fostering discourse on how democracy should work	Calling for stronger direct democratic measures to implement their majoritarian worldview	Papadopoulos 2002; Taggart 2002; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2012, 21

Effect	Time	Potential moderators	Dimension	Mechanism	Source
Negative		Host ideology	Individual liberties	Depending on the host ideology, populist parties might be at odds with economic rights, religious freedoms, and individual liberties, such as the rights of LGBT people or women	Huber and Schimpf 2017
Negative	In government	Consolidation, cabinet type, and consecutive terms	Mutual constraints	Eroding mutual constraints because they hinder the implementation of the *volonté générale*. Plebiscitary instruments are often used to implement or accelerate this development	Hawkins 2003; Albertazzi and McDonnell 2008; Walker 2008; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2012, 21; Roberts 2012; Allred et al. 2015; Huber and Schimpf 2016a; Spittler 2018; Juon and Bochsler 2020
Negative	In government	Consolidation, host ideology, cabinet type, and consecutive terms	Minority rights	Minority rights are undermined by applying majoritarian instruments	Rydgren 2008; Emerson 2011; Akkerman 2012; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2012, 21; Allred et al. 2015; Huber and Schimpf 2016b; Lugosi 2018
Negative			Create new cleavages (populists against non-populists)	Due to their strong anti-establishment character, they thereby make the formation of stable coalitions harder	Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2012, 21
Negative			Moralization of politics	Because they use a Manichean discourse to distinguish between good people and the bad elite, they make compromises and consensus extremely difficult	Weyland 2009; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2012, 21

Effect	Time	Potential moderators	Dimension	Mechanism	Source
Negative		Consolidation	Delegitimization of politics	Fostering plebiscitary politics undermines the legitimacy of political institutions	Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2012, 21–22

Note: Empty time fields suggest that these effects can occur regardless of role or other constellations.

Empirical Strategies: Measurement and Research Designs

In this section, we want to illustrate the different kinds of empirical measures and strategies that have been used to examine how populist actors relate to democracy and the quality of democracy in particular.

Measuring populism

Measuring populism is gaining importance, as illustrated by the increasing number of studies that seek to determine how populist particular politicians are (Jagers and Walgrave 2007; Hawkins 2009; Pauwels 2014; Rooduijn and Akkerman 2015; Hawkins and Castanho Silva 2018; Meijers and Zaslove 2021; Dolezal and Fölsch in this volume). This, of course, also has implications for the study of populism and democracy. Arguably, most would agree that any actor to which the central ideas of populism are crucial would fit well into the discussion thus far.[12] Yet, to some populist actors, these ideas may be more central than to others. Some actors may apply populist frames more than others, which could then be measured as such (Heinisch und Mazzoleni in this volume). While both would probably fit the definition of a populist party, even along a continuous scale, actors embracing populist ideas are most likely to have a different effect on democracy than actors to whom populism is less central. The extent to which democracy is affected would arguably change, whereas the directions the effect takes would not. The challenge then lies with scholars to expand and improve on existing gradual measurements of populism to facilitate these types of analyses (for example, Hawkins and Castanho Silva 2018; Dolezal and Fölsch in this volume; Ruth and Hawkins in this volume).

Measuring the Quality of Democracy

In this final section, we touch on existing measures for democracy and the quality of democracy respectively. We focus our discussion on four measures in particular: the Liberal Democracy Index (from here on: LDI) from the Varieties of Democracy Project (Coppedge et al. 2016); the Polity IV Index (Marshall et al. 2016); the Unified Democracy Index (UDS) (Pemstein et al. 2010); and the Democracy Barometer (from here on DB; Merkel et al. 2016). We wish to highlight that this research field is characterised by the variety of methods and approaches that scholars have taken.[13] To this extent, our discussions are more immediately relevant to quantitative studies. Nonetheless, the principles of measurement apply to any other approach in similar ways (Mahoney and Goertz 2006), and incorporating some of the measures below into qualitative analyses (for example, for purposes of illustration) may also strengthen authors' arguments.

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[12] This applies to those who conceive of populism as a thin-centred ideology where views guide actions, as well as to those who define populism as a frame that functions as a guideline for actions.

As highlighted earlier, populism is theorised as being more at odds with liberal democracy than is the case for any other type of democracy. Thus, the question that arises is how we can assess liberal democracy and, more particularly, its quality. The LDI stands out as perhaps the clearest measurement because its underlying conception is tailored to capture solely the essential elements of liberal democracy. In contrast, the Polity IV measurement seeks to measure institutional changes. To this extent, it is, for instance, well suited to capturing changes in systems of checks and balances. This is helpful in evaluating if and how populist actors might erode the institutions they oppose. Because Polity IV focuses on mostly institutional aspects, it is unlikely to measure nuanced changes in more established democracies, such as those in Western Europe.

Compared to the other two indices, the UDS and the DB are broader with regard to what they measure. The UDS essentially combines a series of existing indices into one measure. Thus, the UDS, while not aiming to capture the specifics of liberal democracy, can function as an additional source for examining the relationship between populism and democracy in slightly broader terms. The DB measurement is not as broad as the UDS, but it is considerably more detailed than other measures, such as Polity IV (Bühlmann et al. 2012). It is based on liberal and participatory aspects of democracy (Merkel et al. 2016) and thus offers an interesting alternative to the LDI.

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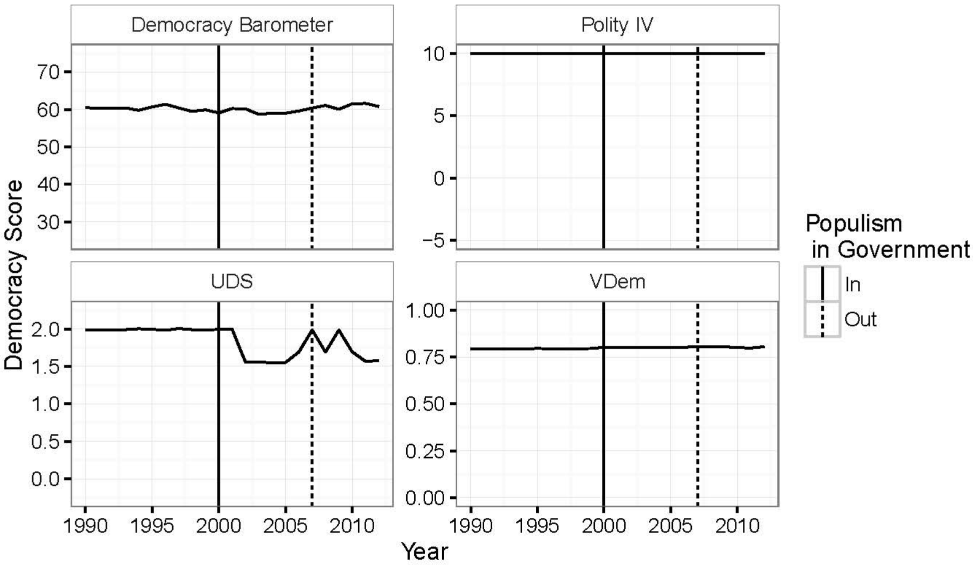
[13] These include qualitative case studies (see, for example, Hawkins 2003, 2009; Heinisch 2003; de Lange and Akkerman 2012; Fallend 2012; Roberts 2012; Fallend and Heinisch 2016), comparative studies (see, for example, Akkerman and de Lange 2012; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2012; Albertazzi and Mueller 2013; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2013; Moffitt 2015) and quantitative works (Allred et al. 2016; Houle and Kenny 2016; Ruth 2018; Hawkins and Ruth in this volume).

Figure 6.1: Democracy Scores Compared: Austria (1990-2012)



To show the difference between these four measurements descriptively, we chose four countries that were all governed by populists for some period during the last two decades: Austria (the Freedom Party of Austria, Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs, FPÖ), Hungary (Hungarian Civic Alliance, Fidesz), Slovakia (Direction – Slovak Social Democracy, SMER – Slovenská sociálna demokracia) and Venezuela (Hugo Chávez, Fifth Republic Movement, Movimiento Quinta República). In Figures 6.1 through to 6.4, we illustrate the differences by comparing the timeline of the measurements within the same country. By looking at Figure 6.1, in which we compare democracy scores for Austria, where the right-wing populist Freedom Party entered the government in a coalition with the Christian Democrats in 2000, we can already observe some notable differences between the scores. Polity IV displays a straight line and, thus, reinforces our point that this particular measurement may be less suited to capturing nuances in consolidated democracies. For the other three measurements, we can see that while UDS measures a decrease in the quality of democracy, the LDI remains flat, while the DB records a short increase and then a decrease. For the other countries, we note similar patterns (except for Venezuela in Figure 6.4).

As is the case for Austria, Polity IV also does not show any change in the quality of democratic institutions over time for Hungary (Figure 6.2). For the first period of populist government (1998–2002), we see that the UDS and DB show similar trends (a short period of improvement followed by a period of decline), whereas the LDI shows a declining trend. However, all three measurements share the fact that, after Fidesz returned to government in 2010, all three indices measure a similar declining trend in the quality of democracy. For Slovakia (Figure 6.3), the differences during the Smer cabinet range from decline (DB) and improvement (LDI) to an up-and-down pattern (UDS). While once again showing significant improvement early on in the timeline, Polity IV remains flat (at its maximum) during the populist government period. Finally, we take a look at Venezuela (Figure 6.4). All four indices measure a strong decline in their respective measurements of the quality of democracy after Hugo Chávez began his presidency in 1999. The Polity IV trend strengthens our point that this particular measure may be well suited to capturing institutional changes.

Figure 6.2: Democracy Scores Compared: Hungary (1990-2012)

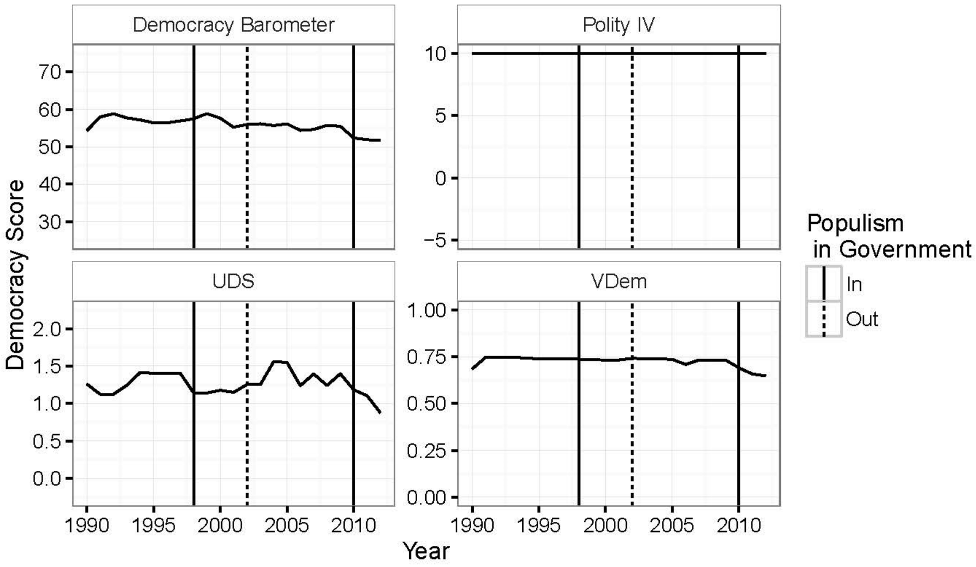


Figure 6.3: Democracy Scores Compared: Slovakia (1990-2012)

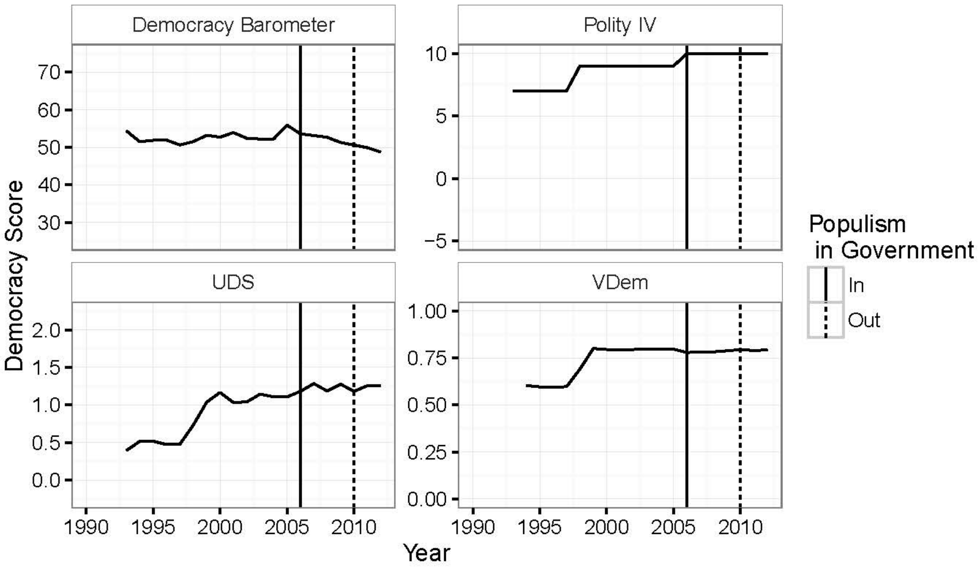
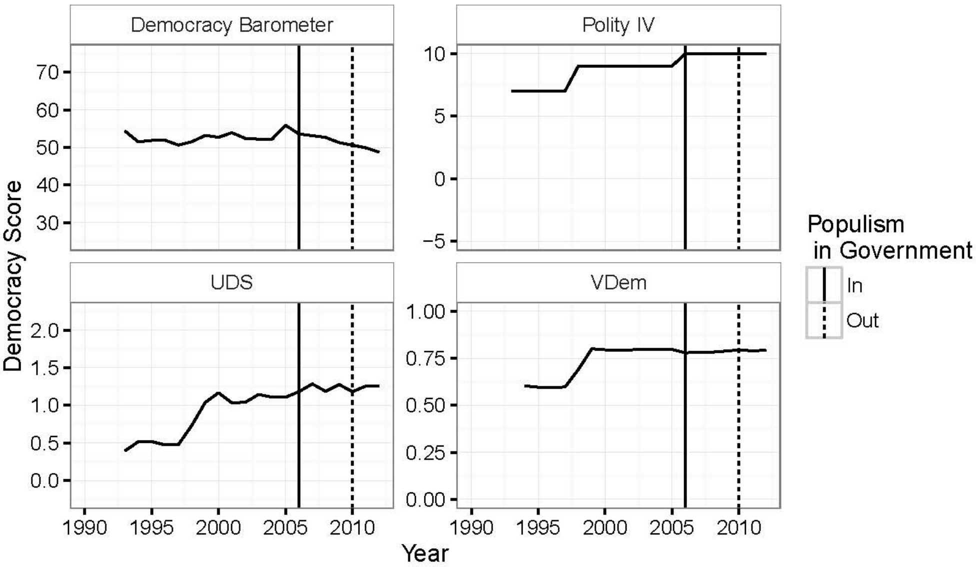


Figure 6.4: Democracy Scores Compared: Venezuela (1990-2012)



Overall, this comparison illustrates that when one is measuring the quality of democracy empirically to examine how populism relates to it, it is essential to understand the underlying concepts that different indices capture. The DB and LID exemplify that even if two measurements build on the same concept, they may still deviate in the results they show. Thus, any analysis should treat measurements with care and precision so that the applied concept of democracy aligns with the empirical measurements. Furthermore, scholars should include different indices where possible to establish an empirical line of evidence that is robust against various theoretical, conceptual and empirical (for example, measurement error[14]) differences and issues.

Another possibility when examining how populist actors relate to democracy and the quality of democracy respectively is to consider democracy's various dimensions and sub-dimensions. After all, some scholars of democracy contend that the overall health of democracy depends on the well-being of its underlying sub-dimensions.[15] This trend is also reflected in a growing number of papers. In several studies, scholars show, for instance, how populist actors influence levels of participation (for example, Immerzeel and Pickup 2015; Houle and Kenny 2016) and institutions of horizontal accountability (for example, Allred et al. 2015). These works have used sub-dimensions of the indices to create a measure tailored to specific needs.[16] Considering these aspects, rather than a large concept such as the quality of liberal democracy, opens up two possibilities that are worth pointing out. First, analyses of sub-dimensions can help us understand further nuanced differences between, for instance, different types of populist parties. By looking at the aspect of minority rights in isolation, one may wish to study how left-wing and right-wing populist parties differ in the way they can affect the quality of democracy given that both propose different visions for society (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2013; Huber and Schimpf 2017). Second, these types of analyses can foster the tracing of causal paths in greater detail and increase the application of research designs specifically tailored towards the issue of identifying causality. Houle and Kenny (2016) examine, for instance, how populist presidents in Latin America affect the rule of law, participation in elections and redistribution. The focus on these three sub-dimensions of democracy enables the authors to apply instrumental variable estimations which, present an interesting step in the direction of causal theory testing.

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[14] On this point, it is well worth pointing out that measurements, such as the UDS or the LDI, provide their users with confidence intervals that allow measurement errors to be directly taken into account.

[15] For an example, see Merkel's (2004) work on embedded democracy.

[16] Huber and Schimpf (2016a) have also explored the possibility of extracting sub-dimensions from the DB to create a more specific measurement of the quality of liberal democracy.

Concluding Remarks and Outlook

In this chapter, we have presented and discussed academic research that deals with the question of how populist actors relate to democracy in general and liberal democracy (quality of democracy) in particular. Furthermore, we raised issues pertaining to the measurement of both key variables. Overall, our review and discussions led us to the following conclusions: First, the relationship between populist actors and democracy is considerably more nuanced, other than in cases in which populists do not oppose democracy per se. Hence, their presence may not lead to a complete breakdown or the erosion of democracy as we know it. Rather, there are numerous factors (for example, the exact role within a political system) that can influence whether populist actors erode or even enhance the quality of democracy. Second, measuring both populism but also the quality of democracy remains challenging. While researchers continue to work towards creating a reliable continuous measurement of populism, we can already choose from various options in order to measure the quality of democracy. The key is to not only choose between them, based on theoretical and conceptual grounds, but also to compare the outcomes against different measurements of the quality of democracy to validate the findings from central analyses.

With the results of both these theoretical and empirical studies in mind, the question is: Where do we go from here? We propose that future research should consider three points in particular: First, as has been the case for various questions related to populism, empirical studies are still limited in their scope of application, with their enduring focus on Latin America and Europe in particular. These two regions are among the most interesting given their long history of populism and, by now (in some countries), fairly established populist forces. Yet, other countries, such as Australia (Moffitt 2015), Japan (Mizuno and Phongpaichit 2009) or Zambia (Resnick 2015), have seen populist actors come and go as well. This raises the question of to what extent existing theories and arguments are applicable to these cases and, if they are not, what we can learn from them. Second, our discussion of measurements implies that not only can different indices lead to slightly different results, but also that there is much to explore in terms of the sub-dimensions of these contexts. For good reasons, initial studies have focused on democracy in general; however, we still know very little about how (different) populist parties relate to specific sub-dimensions of democracy. Exploring these mechanisms can further strengthen our theoretical understanding and empirical knowledge about the ambivalent relationship between populism and democracy. Third, we do not know to what extent we can transfer these party-level arguments to an individual level. Heinisch and Wegscheider (2020) suggest that populist attitudes (as an individual-level manifestation of populism) can explain citizens' attitudes to representative democracy. However, they also show that ideology (and not populism) explains attitudes to other conceptions of democratic decision-making (for contradictory empirical evidence, see Zaslove et al. 2021). In line with their findings, Mohrenberg et al. (2021) and Jacobs et al. (2018) demonstrate that populist citizens are substantially more supportive of direct democracy. Yet, all in all, this branch of the literature is in its infancy, and future research should invest more to better understand how citizens' levels of populist attitudes matter for their views on democracy.

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CHAPTER 7:

THE GENERATIVE CONTEXTS OF POPULIST REGIMES

Carlos H. Waisman

Introduction

In the last decade, the statement that, almost a generation after the collapse of communism in Europe, a new spectre, the spectre of populism, is haunting Europe – as well as the Americas, a continent Marx and Engels had excluded from their dictum (Marx and Engels 1977, 35) – has become commonplace. Populism is already the main alternative to open market economies and republican democracies. In this chapter, I intend to discuss the generative contexts and prospects of institutionalisation of populist regimes, with a focus on the comparison between north and south. I will present two propositions: first, that the configuration of factors conducive to the emergence of populist regimes is likely to be permanent in the north (industrial countries, especially Western Europe and the US) and recurrent in the south (basically Latin America, the birthplace of modern populism) and, second, that the likelihood of more or less permanent institutionalisation is higher in the south than in the north, due to the differential strength of republican democratic institutions in the two regions.

Defining Populism

Populism is one of the most diffuse concepts in contemporary social science and political analysis.[1] In current usage, the concept may have three meanings: a set of economic policies, an ideology or political discourse, and a political regime. As for economic policies, the term 'populism' has been used in a derogatory fashion, to characterise demagogic policies or promises ('abolishing poverty') or even distributive policies in general, such as those of the welfare state. There is also a more specific sense, which I consider more useful, that has been proposed by Rudiger Dornbusch and Sebastian Edwards (Dornbusch and Edwards 1991; Edwards 2010): a distributive policy that benefits its intended target population in the short run, but that hurts them in the long term. In the social sciences other than economics, there is considerable agreement on the second of the meanings presented above, populism as an ideology or discourse utilised by certain politicians and their parties or movements: Its main components are an organic conception of 'the people' (i.e. defined as an organic totality, rather than as an aggregate of citizens and groups or organisations of citizens, who autonomously articulate their political preferences), the designation of 'enemies of the people', usually internal and external (domestic elites or segments thereof, foreign powers or organisations), and the nomination of a charismatic politician as the privileged interpreter of the interests of 'the people', so defined, and its

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[1] For a quick introduction to the recent literature on populism, see de la Torre and Arnson 2013; Gidron and Bonikowski 2013; Bonikowski and DiMaggio 2016; Moffit 2016; Müller 2016; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2017; Rovira Kaltwasser and Ochoa Espejo 2017; Eichengreen 2018; de la Torre 2019.

leader in the fight against its alleged enemies. The concept of ‘people’, as used in populist discourse, does not include all the citizens of a nation. ‘People’ never encompasses the elites specified as its enemies and, in the most elaborate versions, the term refers, especially or exclusively, to its purportedly genuine core (the dominant ethnic group, the traditional religion) in right-wing populism, and the really or allegedly excluded and marginalised, in the left-wing variety: In both cases, primarily the segments of the population whom the populist leader appeals to, or who support the leader or party.

The designation of the alleged enemies of ‘the people’, so defined, is crucial for the constitution of the populist movement or a populist party, its political base and its objectives, for it is opponents that determine the configuration of social forces and coalitions. These enemies, typically both domestic and external, are sometimes specific (such as immigrants, for the right; finance capital, or the multinationals, for the left), and other times diffusely defined (e.g. the ‘deep state’ for the right; ‘capitalism’ for the left). Populist discourse shares a strong conspiratorial bent with those of 20th century totalitarian ideologies: Internal enemies, sometimes aggregates of individuals who share ascriptive traits such as ethnicity or national origin, other times class or occupation (ethnic or religious minorities, ‘the 1 per cent, ‘finance capital’) appear, in populist discourse, as unified, organised and mobilised forces, whose central purpose is to use their power and influence to harm the people (and even, in the most extreme formulations, to decimate it). External enemies are usually foreign governments or international organisations, and sometimes institutions or cultures (China, the European Union, Islam, imperialism or finance capitalism), or immigrants who originate in nations or civilisations defined as enemies. Like in fascist and communist ideologies, populist discourse offers elaborate causal arguments purporting to explain how these enemy groups, countries or organisations carry out their nefarious goals and hurt the people’s central interests. These arguments range in accuracy from the perhaps partial but still empirically valid (e.g. some Islamic immigrants have participated in terrorist activities, multinationals’ ‘de-localisation’ strategies do increase local unemployment) to the utterly fantastic (the ‘deep state’ governing in the shadows, the ‘global financial elite’ conspiring to destroy national sovereignties).

The leader’s stated goals are to restore the people’s rule and govern in its authentic interest, which includes the improvement of the people’s standard of living, the establishment of a more genuine democracy and, in right-wing populism, also the protection of the ‘true’ people’s dominance in society and culture (Eichengreen 2018; Inglehart and Norris 2019). The enhancement of the country’s autonomy and power in the international system is an essential objective as well (Ivaldi and Mazzoleni 2020). The attainment of these purposes, in populist discourse, involves the implementation of policies that would transform the existing economic and political institutions of the country, a process that leads us into the third denotation of populism in social science: populism as a regime. If and when the populist programme has been fulfilled, the outcome would be the establishment of a political regime such as those that have existed in several Latin American countries since World War II,[2] like Peronism and Cristina Kirchner’s government in Argentina, those of Getulio Vargas (in his populist phase) and Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, and of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela. Other cases are the contemporary regimes of Viktor Orbán in Hungary and Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Turkey. The programmatic agendas of the

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[2] For a general discussion of the context and dynamics of the classical populist regimes, the ones that existed in several Latin American countries after World War II, see Di Tella 2001. For later instances of populism of different kinds in this region, see Ellner 2008, Weyland 2010 and Roberts 2014.

Front National (now Rassemblement National) in France, the Lega and Movimento Cinque Stelle in Italy, and Podemos in Spain correspond to this sense of the term in different degrees, as do Donald Trump's policies.

I think the most productive conceptualisation of populism, for the purposes of comparative analysis, is to denote through it a package involving both discourse and institutions; i.e. populism not only as a discourse, but also as an institutional framework, in politics and the economy, i.e. a specific political regime or a programme for the constitution of such a regime (Waisman 2018). The reason is that, empirically, populist ideology has an elective affinity with certain institutional preferences. To a lesser extent, populism, when in power, also has a propensity for populist economic policies in Dornbusch's sense of the term, but this would be a product of populist ideology and institutions at work rather than a definitional trait. The institutional framework in question has two basic components: a plebiscitarian conception of democracy and strong economic nationalism. The resulting institutional combination differs radically from the liberal democratic package, a republican democracy based on limited government and a strong separation of powers; and, in many essential ways, also from classical authoritarianism (e.g. a military dictatorship) and totalitarian regimes.

This 'substantive' conception of populism, which would encompass both its right-wing and left-wing variants, diverges from the most common idea of populism in research literature, which focuses on a political discourse or ideology. The problem with the discursive definition is that it does not discriminate among ideological orientations and political regimes: The ideology I have described above could characterise a spectrum of politicians ranging from Franklin Roosevelt to Benito Mussolini, from Fidel Castro to Marine Le Pen. In the political culture of certain regions, Latin America in particular, this discourse is common in parties and movements that encompass the whole range of politics and as the predominant or official ideology of democratic, authoritarian and even totalitarian regimes or parties. For this reason, I don't consider a definition of populism that is limited to discourse the most useful for the purposes of social science, that is, for the generation and testing of falsifiable propositions; instead, I prefer the more inclusive one I am presenting, which includes ideology as a correlate of existing or intended regimes, empirically a necessary but not a sufficient component of populism. This approach meets the criteria of commonality and distinctiveness, which is central for the evaluation of the usefulness of scientific concepts, to a much larger extent: the degree to which the objects designated by the concept share common properties and the extent to which all these objects are different from others not contained in the concept. Ideology and institutional preferences are common to both right-wing and left-wing populism, and what I have called the package is empirically different from other institutional and ideological frameworks, such as liberal democracy, social-democracy, authoritarianism and left-wing and right-wing totalitarianism. To a substantial degree, the concept of populism, so defined, bears some similarities with that of totalitarianism: Both involve, in their left-wing and right-wing forms, radically different ideologies and quite divergent economic and political institutions, but nevertheless these ideologies and institutions share, on a very general level, some fundamental structural characteristics. For this reason, both concepts may be useful for the analysis of the genesis, stability and demise of the regimes in question.

Let us now return to plebiscitarian democracy and economic nationalism. The first and essential component, plebiscitarian democracy, presupposes the centralisation of governmental power in the executive: the subordination of the congress, the judiciary, the central bank and autonomous government agencies or control bodies to the president or prime minister, who would primarily or exclusively embody 'the will of the people'. The function of these entities would be to endorse or legitimate executive decisions. Opposition to the executive, within or outside the government, including interest groups in civil society and opposition media, would be tantamount to defiance of the people's sovereignty, to alignment with the people's enemies; hence, the orientation inherent in populist regimes to control independent media and interest groups. The regime in question could still be a democracy, if it meets the Dahlian coordinates: competitive elections, tolerance of opposition and the prevalence of basic civil and political rights, for supporters and opponents alike (Dahl 1971). However, it would obviously be a very low-quality democracy, bordering on competitive authoritarianism.

Economic nationalism can take many forms, but it usually implies the substantial closure and *étatisation* of important sectors of the country's economy through a variety of policies that are relevant in different contexts: high import tariffs, non-tariff restrictions to commerce, neo-mercantilist management of international trade by the government or, in countries that participate in economic integration regimes such as the European Union, a rejection of external constraints on their economic sovereignty. In its most radical modalities, economic nationalism involves the objective of an autarkic development, and the *étatisation* of central sectors of the economy. Characteristically, populists consider the world economy to be a danger from which the country should protect itself, rather than as an opportunity for the expansion of production, employment and incomes through trade and investment. Import-substituting industrialisation, as took place in several Latin American countries after World War II, i.e. protective tariffs that were high, indiscriminate, unlimited in time and not contingent on eventual competitiveness, was a typical example; instances in the north are, in Europe, rejection of the common currency or of European Union parameters for domestic fiscal policy; in the US, opposition to international free-trade agreements.

Populist regimes, especially the left-wing variety, pursue, or aspire to pursue, redistributive policies and the expansion of the welfare state in order to benefit their central political base. However, these policies are very different from the ones that are characteristic of social democratic regimes, especially in the north, for two reasons. First, the broader policy context: Social democracy's programmatic orientation, both classical and 'third way', pursues republican democracy in the polity and inclusion in the world economy, rather than plebiscitarian democracy and strong economic nationalism. Second, the welfare states envisioned by the two regimes, at least at the level of ideal types, are very different: In the case of social democracy, the selection of beneficiaries is universalistic, the criteria for the allocation of benefits statutory and allocation unconditional. In the actual practice of Latin American populist welfare states, selection tends to be particularistic and allocation clientelistic, i.e. selective, discretionary and contingent on support.

Generative Contexts

What Steve Bannon has characterised as the cleavage between nationalists and globalists[3] (for Marine Le Pen, it is between patriots and globalists),[4] for many decades the central one in the politics of most Latin American countries, is becoming the main divide in the most developed nations, what I am calling the north; but this schism is also evident in the new capitalist democracies of Central Europe and in other nations, such as Turkey. As for central political cleavages, it is possible to identify three distinct periods in 'northern' countries since the beginning of large-scale industrialisation to the present. The first, approximately until the 1950s, was the cleavage between capitalists and workers, which was truly a 'Marxist' world, and this is a major reason for the fact that Marxism, in its different variants, offered the common-sense approach for so many western intellectuals in that period. The second, from the formation of the modern welfare states to the 1990s, was the cleavage between taxpayers and beneficiaries of government spending, and secondarily the rift between organised and disorganised groups for the allocation of this spending. This constituted a Hayekian and Olsonian world (Hayek 1976; Olson 1982), in which conflicts focused on the size of the welfare state and the allocation of its benefits, as Ralf Dahrendorf has pointed out (Dahrendorf 1988). Finally, the current main cleavage, which has been fundamental in Latin America and other peripheral regions since the nineteenth century, but until the current one has not been central in the north, is the clash between sectors that seek maximum integration into the world system through free trade and capital flows, and in many cases liberal political institutions, and those who endeavour to limit or minimise such integration.

Forms of populism, north and south, right and left, build their support bases in the anti-globalisation pole of society: They represent the backlash to the opening of markets and the technological revolution and, in the right-wing variety, also to mass immigration and secularisation and external cultural influences (Inglehart and Norris 2019). Populism, of course, does not constitute the only possible nationalist coalition: The re-emergence of a classical hard left is another possibility. Marxist parties still have secondary importance in several European countries, in general with less support than the populist ones, but it is populism that seems to be in the *Zeitgeist* of contemporary politics, to the extent that populist parties' main electoral bases in France, Germany and other countries are located in former communist strongholds, a matter to which I will return. There is a basic difference between right-wing and left-wing populism: their strategic orientations. Forms of right-wing populism, such as those in Europe and the US, are movements of social defence. The strategic objective or theme in their ideology is to safeguard the ethnic composition or the dominant culture or religion of the country against external influences, and to prevent the downward mobility of working classes allegedly threatened by globalisation. It is for this reason that they are strongly opposed to immigration, especially from regions whose culture and religion are very different from the local ones (Muslims or Africans in Europe, Mexicans and Central Americans in the US). On the other hand, forms of left-wing populism, which are more likely to be found in Southern Europe and Latin

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[3] See, for instance, 'Steve Bannon and the Making of an Economic Nationalist', *Wall Street Journal* (March 4th, 2017); Ralph Benko, 'On Steve Bannon', *Forbes* (August 19th, 2017); 'The Future of Bannonism: Populism in America', *The Economist* (August 25th, 2017); 'Steve Bannon Defends Trump's Foreign Policy', *New York Times* (December 29th, 2017); J. J. Mc Cullough, 'The Globalization of the Anti-Globalists', *National Review* (March 15th, 2018).

[4] Tweet from Marine Le Pen, April 8th, 2018.

America, are movements of incorporation: Their stated objective is to seek the upward mobility of marginal or excluded sectors of the population (the urban poor, those in the informal economy, the young seeking to enter the labour force, etc.).

The generative context of northern populism, in industrial societies undergoing restructuration as a consequence of globalisation and the technological revolution, consists of two factors common to the right-wing and left-wing varieties. The first are the economic and political threats attributed, in populist discourse, to economic globalisation. The second is the political elite's apparent lack of effectiveness in confronting these threats. In populist discourse, international trade, economic integration and international treaties which restrict national sovereignty represent a danger to domestic manufacturing. In fact, the fall in manufacturing employment and the deterioration of industrial salaries and working conditions in these societies is due more to the technological revolution than to globalisation, but imports and, in right-wing populism, large-scale immigration appear, to sectors that feel threatened or are afraid of being threatened in the future, as causes that are both obvious of and susceptible to control through political action.

Right-wing populism differs from the left-wing variety by adding the identitarian component and its focus on the rejection of immigration and foreign or new cultural influences (Inglehart and Norris 2019). This includes secularisation, usually an endogenous process resulting from social and domestic cultural change, but in many countries labelled by populists as encroachment by foreign ideas. A country opening itself to external cultural influences and immigration would weaken the dominant ethnic component of the nation and its culture and religion. In its most extreme form, this variety of populism warns of the danger of national 'replacement' through the radical transformation of the 'racial' and religious make-up of society (Camus 2008; 2011). Further, large-scale immigration would bring about competition with the local labour force and contribute to the stagnation of and a reduction in their salaries, and to unemployment. The second factor consists of the perception among sectors that feel vulnerable to the negative effects of globalisation and the technological revolution that conventional politicians and parties do not constitute effective instruments for facing these challenges. Hence, these groups' susceptibility to populist discourse, which defines established elites as incompetent or, in its most radical version, direct agents of these pernicious processes. In principle, the tendency is to question the effectiveness of leaders, officials and parties rather than that of the institutions as such: Northern populist movements and leaders do not proclaim the transformation of the existing institutional system as an objective even though, as I pointed out, the establishment of a plebiscitarian democracy would imply substantial weakening of the quality of liberal political institutions.

Southern populism, on the other hand, arises in strongly dualised societies, with export economies anchored in commodities. Its generative context consists of three factors, two constant and one recurrent. First, the political opportunity given by the existence of large populations, the urban poor and in some societies peasants as well, who are marginal to or excluded from the formal economy and/or the regular exercise of citizenship in the polity. Second, the low legitimacy of republican political institutions. Finally, there is a variable element: the economic opportunity provided by windfall earnings during the ascending cycle of the price of commodities, whose prices tend to fluctuate cyclically, which are appropriable by the government through taxation or direct exports. In dualised societies, the excluded or marginal sector, which involves a large proportion of the population, consists of people with low-wage regular employment or those who are intermittently employed in the formal sector, wholly employed in the informal one, or who are totally unemployed. These situations generate de-facto exclusion from the political system: The poor enjoy formal citizenship in general, but their capacity for autonomous and continuous organisation through community or labour organisations is weak and, in any case, of limited efficacy, for these groups' economic marginality implies scant material resources for interest articulation and lack of leverage for the exercise of political action. Lacking effective political representation, they are available as the central base of a populist coalition.

The second permanent factor, which is very frequent but not universal in these societies, is the low legitimacy of political institutions, which appear to all social forces and the government as contingent arrangements, to which they abide when their provisions are functional for the protection or advancement of their interests. For this reason, support for the institutions in question is pragmatic and conditional rather than taken for granted and unqualified, as in the ideal type of high legitimacy. In these cases, the institutions as such, i.e. the rules of the game in the political sphere rather than the incumbents, the political class, or the parties, have low support, as is usually the prevailing case in northern populist discourse. These two permanent factors are conducive to the emergence of populism, within governments in place or among opposition parties or movements, and the context is especially propitious, whenever windfall revenue accrues as a consequence of an upswing in the price of the commodities that are the country's main exports. Given the periodic cycles characteristic of commodity prices, the populist temptation, or at least the possibility of populist policies via the capture of export gains via taxation or confiscation, appears in these societies periodically.

Even though right-wing populism is more frequent in Europe and the left-wing variety is more common in Latin America, there is a very important right-wing regime in this latter region, that of President Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, and there are large left-wing populist parties or coalitions in Spain (Podemos), France (La France Insoumise) and Italy (Movimento Cinque Stelle). The marginal sectors championed by these left-wing populist parties are the unskilled workers and the working-class and middle-class youth, whose integration into regular or highly paid employment is hampered by labour market legislation and, in the Spanish and Italian cases, the stagnating tendencies in their economies.

Populism and the Crisis of Representation

It is quite clear that the emergence of populism as a major political force in the contemporary world reflects a crisis of representation, a point commonly made in the literature on this subject. However, this matter involves two separate issues: whether the groups in the social bases of populism were already constituted as distinctive political forces or were organised and mobilised from the outside by the agency of populist leaders and parties, and why pre-existing political parties failed to represent these groups' interests. The answers to these questions vary from country to country, of course, depending on their different social structures, political cultures and party systems, but it is possible to advance some generalisations.

In relation to the first issue, it is useful to distinguish between three main social bases of populist movements and parties, based on class, culture, and age cohorts. Class- and culture-anchored constituencies are the central bases of support for social defence or right-wing populism, i.e. the variety that predominates in the north; class is the largest foundation for southern populism, the populism of incorporation. Segments of the age cohorts that feel (and to a substantial extent are) excluded are central in the support for northern left-wing populist parties. In relation to the northern generative context, there is no question that the working class, industrial workers in particular, were a pre-existing social force everywhere, with a strong tradition of trade union organisation and political linkages, many of which were formal, to socialist and communist or labour parties. This class was not constituted as a political actor by the populist parties: It switched allegiance to them. Working-class support for the Rassemblement National in France is a paradigmatic case. The big question in relation to this group is why it lost confidence in its previous representatives, a matter to be examined below.

The second pillar for the northern right-wing populist parties, and the most important in some instances, is the political mobilisation of groups that feel threatened in their national, ethnic or religious identities by mass immigration and, in some cases, endogenous secularisation. Populist parties sought these groups' allegiance by providing a coherent argument against these alleged threats, and thus converting a heterogeneous aggregate into a cohesive political actor. Evangelical and anti-immigrant support for Donald Trump is an obvious case. Even though these two groups had strongly voted Republican before, it was Trump, through the provision of a coherent narrative and the delivery of concrete policies on their behalf, who shaped the religious Right and the anti-immigrant movements into a cohesive and highly mobilised bloc. Finally, as for age cohorts, European leftist parties, and especially the populist ones, have been especially popular among students and young professionals. An example is Podemos, which arose from the spontaneous youth mobilisation (the *indignados*) triggered by the great recession and the very high rate of youth unemployment that ensued. The party transformed an inorganic social movement with diffuse demands into a solid political base. As far as the southern generative context is concerned, it is usually the agency of populist leaders and governments (e.g. Chávez and Maduro in Venezuela, the Kirchners in Argentina) that constructed a loyal support base among the poor, especially the urban poor, from above by way of the allocation of benefits, the development of organisational links, and a discourse of inclusion.

The second question is on the supply side: why pre-existing parties have failed to integrate these groups into the coalitions they represented. Among northern countries, the issue refers basically to Europe, for the Republican Party in the United States, as I pointed out, has been incorporating politically available groups for decades, from the working class 'Reagan democrats' in the 1980s to the religious Right in the 1990s and the Trumpian coalition in this century. However, it was Trump who marginalised the hitherto dominant moderate conservative wing. Should this shift endure, the Republicans would become the populist party of the United States. It is still unclear whether this transformation will take place, for Trump's policies (a plebiscitarian understanding of democracy, protectionism, isolationism) are antithetical to the party's traditional preferences. In Europe, the most interesting issue is the traditional Left's failure to keep the support of the segments of the working class that feel threatened by globalisation and the technological revolution. Thomas Piketty has offered a hypothesis in this regard: These old leftist parties, while still appealing to labour, gradually became the political representatives of the educated middle classes, which ended up constituting their central constituency (Piketty 2019). Working-class voters would have felt abandoned by their traditional parties, while populists targeted precisely workers' fears and anxieties, and offered a coherent explanation of their causes and what appeared to be effective solutions to the threat of downward mobility. This reorientation of leftist parties has occurred, but it might have been caused by the logic of democratic politics, as the educated middle class, much of it of working-class origin, became a larger segment of the electorate than manufacturing labour, the symbolic core of the traditional working class, i.e. an available and more attractive constituency. In any case, the disintegration of the social structure that preceded the technological revolution and the contemporary wave of globalisation is producing major changes in the mechanisms of political representation and, hence, in the party systems of democratic societies. The extent to which populist movements and regimes will be lasting agents of the restructuration under way in the party systems is an open question to be considered below.

Prospects for Institutionalisation

As I pointed out, in the current world, the conditions produced by these generative contexts tend to be permanent in the north and recurrent in the south. However, the institutionalisation of populist regimes, in the way in which I have defined them, appears to be more likely in the south, due to the differential strength of political institutions in the two regions. In Western Europe and the US, the threat and the experience of downward mobility produced by the technological revolution and globalisation, combined with the perception among vulnerable sectors that established political elites will not defend their interests, will continue generating political space for populist leaders and movements, most often on the Right, with an agenda with strong identitarian components, but including the protection of the interests of sectors that suffer the consequences of these processes of social differentiation or feel endangered by them. However, as long as the republican institutions in most of these countries remain solid, because of their long-term existence, their stability over several generations, and their strong acceptance as rules of the game by most social forces, it is highly likely that parliaments, judges, control agencies, central banks and other autonomous government agencies, a mobilised civil society and independent media will erect effective barriers to the concentration of political power in the executive and prevent the institutionalisation of plebiscitarian democracies or elective authoritarianism.

A similar dynamic might play out in some Latin American societies with relatively stronger institutions (for example, in Chile, Uruguay or Costa Rica), but this is less likely so in most countries in the region. In Latin America, sectors that are excluded or marginal, or which are at risk of marginalisation, constitute a much larger proportion of the population, the majority in some countries, because dualism in these societies pre-existed the technological revolution and the intensification of globalisation in recent decades. And the legitimacy not only of the established political elites, but in many of these societies also of the republican institutions as such, is weaker: Democratic rules of the game are relatively recent, or have long but unstable trajectories, and in many cases are weakly associated in people's minds with their economic welfare. Hence, the viability of populist policies and projects of institutional transformation, especially in situations in which windfall revenue makes large-scale distributive policies feasible.

The obvious question for the student of comparative political institutions is whether populist regimes, in the cases in which they succeed, have institutionalisation potential as an alternative to liberal democracies with open markets, on the one hand, and forms of authoritarianism with state capitalism or 'crony capitalism', on the other. My hypothesis is negative, for evidence seems to indicate that populism in power, if not inhibited in its concentrating dynamism by institutional barriers, something which is more likely in the south than in the north, would be inherently unstable. In addition to the intrinsic dynamics of populist governments concentrating power in weak institutional contexts, there are two reasons for the transitional nature of southern populism: the political consequences of high levels of protectionism and the economic effects of these regimes' predatory economic policies. Both would accelerate the slide into authoritarianism, probably into competitive authoritarianism in a first stage and elective authoritarianism later on.[5]

First, a high level of protectionism, if generalised to the most important sectors of the economy, would lead, in the long run, to stagnation, or at least to strong stagnating tendencies. Depending on the configuration of political forces and the strength of the state, this situation may trigger either a reversal and re-engagement with the world economy, and thus the abandonment of a central component of the populist programme, or persistence on the protectionist path. Both outcomes would have major political consequences: A switch to an open economy would hurt the interests of capitalists and workers in the protected sectors, and persistence on the high protectionist track would set off a major collective action problem, a society blocked by its dysfunctional economic institutions. The outcome in both cases would be large-scale discontent, to which a populist government, operating in a context of weak resistance to its orientation towards power concentration, is likely to respond with outright repression, thus shifting the political regime towards authoritarianism.

The persistence and blockage scenario is especially pertinent to this discussion, because the political situation in several Latin American countries since World War II, such as Argentina, Brazil until the end of the 20th century and Chile up to the 1970s, has approached this model. Radical import substitution policies have led to stagnation and large-scale polarisation, and eventually to the establishment of authoritarian regimes. The effects of very high import duties and non-duty barriers, which were indiscriminate in terms of the prospects they offered for eventual competitiveness, unconditional, and unlimited in time, were curvilinear. In the short run, the benefits were obvious and the costs opaque: Output, employment and incomes increased sharply. In the long term, the formation of captive markets and the lack of incentives for innovation and expansion into international markets generated massive transfers of capital and labour to the non-competitive sectors of the economy, and a collective action trap with politically insurmountable barriers: The opening of the economy would be crippling for most capitalists and workers, both sectors with high capacities for political organisation and mobilisation.[6] The benefits of economic conversion would be medium or long-term and uncertain; its costs, immediate and certain in most cases. Dysfunctional economic institutions, via the incentives they generated, produced the kind of political environment in which a republican democracy was unlikely to thrive.

Secondly, in countries with weak rule of law, and therefore fragile property rights, populist policies have the potential to radicalise and lead to the explicit or implicit expropriation of competitive firms (via confiscatory taxes or forms of outright nationalisation), and thus to the curtailment or paralysis of investment, both local and foreign, and large-scale capital flight. The political consequences of the ensuing economic malaise would accelerate the transition into some form of authoritarianism. In any case, with or without confiscatory policies, high levels of protectionism generate weak and dependent capitalist classes, whose survival is contingent on the continuity of the economic policies that isolate local markets from the international economy and, in the most extreme cases, on their contracts and political ties with the government. Such a capitalist class would be a willing partner in state capitalism, whose potential for the mercantilist direction of the economy renders it especially attractive to populist rulers.

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[5] For the distinction between competitive authoritarianism and other forms of authoritarianism, and for the conditions of its genesis, see Levitsky and Way 2010.

[6] There is a huge selection of literature on this topic. I have discussed the Argentine case with emphasis on the long-term social and political consequences of autarkic policies, in Waisman 1987; 2014.

For all these reasons, a populist regime not facing effective barriers for the establishment of a plebiscitarian democracy would tend, as a consequence of its inherent concentrating drift, towards authoritarianism. Paraphrasing Vladimir Lenin, who stated that what he called 'leftism' was the infantile disease of communism, one could argue that populism is the infantile disease of authoritarianism. The orientation towards the concentration of power in the executive, subordinating the parliament, the judiciary and autonomous government agencies, civil society and the media, is inherent in populist regimes. Only robust institutional barriers could block this process, as happened to a substantial extent with the Trump administration. Where these impediments are weak, as is the case in many countries in Latin America (and in some in Central Europe, such as Hungary and perhaps Poland, and also in Turkey), the low-quality democracy I am calling plebiscitarian would gradually slide into competitive authoritarianism (Levitsky and Way 2010). It would seem, then, that populist regimes are, therefore, transitional with a low capacity for institutionalisation. If such regimes were defeated, the polity would revert to republican democracy. If successful, they would become authoritarian regimes in the long run.

Conclusion

As in the 18th and 19th centuries in the west, the technological and economic revolution is generating large-scale dislocation of pre-existing forms of social organisation and leading to the constitution of new ones. We are still in the beginnings of this transformation: It is enough to imagine the social and political impact, in the coming decades, of the growth of digitalisation and the proliferation of robots and other devices in new manufacturing to understand that capitalism and political institutions will experience major transformations. It is very likely that, alongside new forms of the open market economy and republican democracy, varieties of state capitalism and elective authoritarianism will become institutionalised in many societies. Regimes approaching or fully embodying the populist types I have discussed may emerge in several countries, but, if my hypothesis is correct, they will only be transitional.

In my view, two issues emerge as especially important, for both theoretical and practical reasons, in the research agenda on populism. First, there is the study of the factors that facilitate or hinder populist leaders' progression, once in power in republican democracies, towards the institutionalisation of populist regimes, as I have defined them (Levitsky and Ziblatt 2018). Understanding this is particularly important in countries with supposedly strong institutions, like most in the north and a few in Latin America: The question refers to the organisational and cultural determinants of resistance or submissiveness by parliaments, judiciary bodies, autonomous agencies in the state apparatus, and by the media and strategic groups in civil society.

A second matter has to do with the surprising long-term stability of competitive or elective authoritarian regimes, from Syria and Belarus to Venezuela. If the proposition presented above is right, the constitution of such regimes would represent a rather stable outcome of populist leaders' successful dismantling of the barriers to the expansion of their power. The objective here is to analyse, once rule has been firmly centralised in the executive and party systems and civil society have been co-opted or subdued, whether countervailing forces (segments of a fractionalised elite or an activated civil society) could materialise, and under which conditions, internal and external, they would be likely to do so. The proliferation of populist regimes and parties in societies at different levels of development, and with distinct institutional structures and cultures provides a variety of configurations of crucial variables for the analysis of these questions and, more generally, for the testing of the two propositions presented above.

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CHAPTER 8:

MEASURING POPULISM: A REVIEW OF CURRENT APPROACHES

Teun Pauwels

Introduction

Despite the increased interest in populism, it has taken a long time for systematic measurements of populism to be conducted. This can probably be largely explained by the fact that there has been little agreement on the definition of populism, which seems a prerequisite for such measurement. Furthermore, systematic measurement of populism for a wide range of actors is a labour-intensive task. However, in recent years there has been more agreement on the core elements of populism – mostly conceptualised as a 'thin-centred ideology' or discourse drawing on the alleged opposition between the 'pure' people and the 'corrupt' elite – which has facilitated attempts at measuring it. This has resulted in some large-scale attempts to measure populism across time and space. The results of these attempts are interesting in themselves and will be briefly reviewed in this chapter. Moreover, these measurements are now also resulting in practical applications. After all, the simple question of whether a party can be labelled as populist is ultimately not the most interesting one, but it seems a necessary starting point from which to address several other, more relevant research questions concerning populism.

Challenges and Methods

Definitions, Data, Dimensions

Before exploring different methods of measuring populism, we need to discuss some challenges that are relevant for any researcher who undertakes this task. These include a definition, sources and operationalisation. First, it is clear that how populism is defined has an impact on how it can be measured. When populism is defined as an ideology or discourse, an analyst will traditionally rely on party manifestos or other party documents (speeches, party membership magazines, content on the website) to measure it. If populism is defined as a style, other sources might be preferred. Moffitt and Tormey (2014), for instance, conceive populism as a political style in which aesthetic and performative elements play a prominent role. As non-verbal aspects become important, party literature seems insufficient in measuring populism. Jagers and Walgrave (2007), who also define populism as a political style, draw on party broadcasts to explore how politicians present themselves in the media, although their measurement does not differ fundamentally from other types of content analyses.

I would like to thank Kirk Hawkins for allowing me to use his data on the holistic grading of German parties and for his feedback on an earlier draft of this chapter. Furthermore, I would like to thank Vanessa Marent and Reinhard Heinisch for helping me translate the dictionary terms into German.

Since most definitions of populism agree that a divide between the 'pure people' and the 'corrupt elite' is the most important element of populism, many measurements make use of two separate dimensions: they assess whether the people are seen as a homogeneous and virtuous group, on the one hand, and the elite as a homogeneous and 'corrupt' group, on the other. However, some scholars argue that populists always exclude 'dangerous others', such as intellectuals, immigrants or other groups depending on the context (Albertazzi and McDonnell 2007). In this case, 'exclusionism' might be included as a separate dimension when operationalising populism. This strategy was followed by Jagers and Walgrave (2007), but since they measured exclusionism as a separate dimension, one can still calculate the degree of populism with or without exclusionism.

The definition of populism might impact on the selection of sources, as we have just seen. However, even with a similar definition, different sources may be selected. In general, it seems that although party manifestos are easy to access and represent relatively similar sources across different contexts, they are less suitable for expressing populism. Pauwels (2011) found that party membership magazines contained more manifestations of populism when compared with manifestos. This might be explained by May's (1973) law of curvilinear disparity, which suggests that the rank and file members of a political party tend to be more ideological than both the leadership of that party and its voters. Therefore, membership magazines might reveal 'radical views' or, as Mudde (2000) puts it, the 'true nature' of a party more than other sources. Similarly, Hawkins and Castanho Silva (2016) found that speeches contained, on average, more populism compared to party manifestos and explain this with the fact that formal party documents for elite consumption are soberer in tone.

Classification by Means of Minimal Definition

Researchers using a minimal definition of populism can, quite easily, classify parties or leaders according to the criteria set out in the definition. Mudde's (2004, 543) definition, for instance, provides strict guidelines on classifying a party as populist or not. A party can be labelled populist if 1) the people are depicted as a homogeneous and pure entity, 2) the elite as a homogeneous and corrupt entity, 3) the people and the elite as two antagonistic groups, and 4) measures in favour of returning power to the people are advocated (for example, direct democracy). Mudde (2007) uses this definition to classify a large number of populist parties in both Western and Eastern Europe. He also distinguishes between populist radical right, neo-liberal populist and social populist parties. A minimal definition suits the classical categorisation approach and has at least three advantages. First, minimal definitions enable clear and dichotomous categorisation. Sartori (1970) pointed out how a taxonomical 'either/or' approach has important value and warns us about the dangers of less conceptually grounded 'more-or-less' thinking. Second, this approach leaves a lot of room for the researcher to interpret party literature to come to a conclusion. A complex concept such as populism cannot always be grasped easily by methods of content analysis because of their rigidity. Finally, minimal definitions can be specific enough, though not too contextualised, to classify a large number of parties in cross-national research (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2012). Nonetheless, there are also some drawbacks when using minimal definitions to identify populist parties in practice. A first practical problem is that language restrictions make it difficult for a single researcher to investigate party ideology in many countries. Another problem is related to the frequency and the level of a party's populist expression, which are needed to consider it populist. Is it enough when one finds one interview in which a party leader argues that the political system is corrupt, or do we need multiple examples? Third, the condition that the people and the elite have to be homogeneous groups is rather vague and leaves room for interpretation. Some borderline cases might fall between two categories, and with relatively vague criteria, the classification might be contested. Finally, when applied by a single researcher, minimal definitions do not enable a reliability check.

Content Analysis

A second method with which to measure populism is based on content analysis: the systematic, objective, quantitative analysis of message characteristics (Neuendorf 2002). First, the researcher constructs a codebook in which populism is operationalised according to one or more dimensions. Next, extensively trained coders analyse documents in line with the codebook. Finally, one can calculate the percentage of paragraphs or sentences that are populist in different party documents. A content analysis is different from the Sartorian approach since it sees populism as a matter of degree. One of the first content analyses of populism was conducted by Jagers and Walgrave (2007), who developed a coding scheme to measure 'thin' (referring to the people) and 'thick' (against politics, the state, the media and immigrants) populism among (Flemish) Belgian parties, drawing on political party broadcasts. Their content analysis revealed that the Flemish Block party (Vlaams Blok, VB) was by far the most populist of all the parties examined, thereby confirming earlier qualitative assessments. While this study constituted a breakthrough in measuring populism, it was limited to one country, and issues of reliability and validity were not explicitly dealt with. It is also questionable whether referring to the people is enough to speak of (thin) populism.

Another seminal study was published by Hawkins (2009), in which populism was measured by means of holistic grading of speeches by chief executives. The author devised a rubric that captures the core elements of populist discourse and then recruited and trained native speakers to analyse speeches according to the rubric. The unit of analysis is the entire speech, which were ranked along a two-point scale (non-populist; mixed; populist). This strategy enabled the author to measure the degree of populism among executives in an impressive number of mainly Latin American countries. Cases that have often been labelled populist, such as the Latin American political leaders Hugo Chávez or Evo Morales, were ranked high on Hawkins's measurement scale, and reliability statistics were mostly satisfactory. This approach profits from some of the advantages of the classification approach, such as the scoring of entire documents according to clear and concise operationalisation, while allowing coders ample room for interpretation. The method was later applied to many more countries in Europe and the Americas and drew on election manifestos, in addition to speeches, to create one of the most comprehensive data sets to date (Hawkins and Castanho Silva 2016). Other content analyses include Rooduijn and Pauwels (2011) and Rooduijn et al. (2014), in which the researchers used party manifestos to gauge populism in different European countries. Each paragraph of these party manifestos has been coded along two dimensions (emphasis on the people and anti-elitism). The measurements were typically reliable and their validity also seemed satisfactory since usual suspects, such as the Party for Freedom (Partij voor de Vrijheid, PVV) in the Netherlands or the British National Party (BNP) in the United Kingdom scored among the highest in terms of populism according to the analysis. Lately, these types of content analyses have become increasingly popular (for example, Reungoat 2010; Franzmann 2016; Bernhard and Kriesi 2019).

The main advantage of a content analysis is that the same source – for instance, a party manifesto – is analysed systematically by different coders, which allows for reliability testing. Instead of only analysing 'usual suspects', one can empirically test to what extent all parties display populism in their documents. A content analysis also provides a more detailed score instead of the dichotomous outcome when using a minimal definition. However, content analyses are not without problems either. First, it is very important that coders understand the codebook well and interpret texts correctly. This is not evident given the complex nature of populism. Second, content analyses tend to be more rigid: one can encounter populism in one paragraph, while another paragraph might contain very elitist language. Often, only the percentage of populist paragraphs or sentences is calculated without other elements being taken into account, which might lead to invalid conclusions. However, this should not necessarily be the case. Third, scanning entire manifestos or speeches is a very resource-intensive task, while populism is often relatively scarce in these documents.

Computerised Content Analysis

A computerised content analysis is a variant of the classical content analysis, but the main difference is that texts are no longer interpreted by human coders. Instead, a computer carries out the analysis by means of counting the percentage of words that match an *a priori* or *a posteriori* defined dictionary (Laver and Garry 2000; Pennings 2011). Such a method is less time-consuming and allows for large bodies of text to be analysed. In an era of increasing availability of digital information, this creates fascinating possibilities. The main drawback of a computerised content analysis is that when it is applied strictly, no interpretation is possible because the work is done by a computer, which might undermine validity. In other words, the method might produce too many false results with the result that a researcher is then no longer measuring what he or she intended to measure (for example, the Flemish socialists, as discussed below). This problem is prominent given the complexity of a concept such as populism. Therefore, it is advisable to validate the dictionary manually to remove false positive cases (for example, while a computer detects a term as populist, a manual check reveals that the word is, in fact, not meant in a populist way). Moreover, the construction of a dictionary might be contested. A different dictionary will generate different results, and particularly when documents contain few words, these differences can be substantial.

Pauwels (2011; 2014) measured the degree of populism by means of a computerised content analysis in Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands. Based on theoretical reasoning and using some of the early party literature of the VB as an inspiration, a 'populist dictionary', examining both externally (manifestos) and internally (membership magazines) oriented party literature, was designed in an attempt to identify populist parties. By comparing the results with classical content analyses on the same cases, Pauwels tested the validity of the method. Most of the time, the computerised content analysis produced the highest scores for parties that were also most populist according to human coding. However, the computerised method distinguished much less between populist parties and other parties, while also yielding a false positive result (the Flemish socialist party scored very highly in a particular year although it has never been widely considered populist). Bonikowski and Gidron (2016a) also drew on a dictionary approach to analyse populist claims by politicians and parties in the European Parliament (1999-2004). To tackle validity problems, they gradually adapted the dictionary by iterative rounds of validation in which they manually analysed whether the dictionary words were meant in a populist way. Only words that had an accuracy of more than 50 per cent were retained.

Expert Survey

The use of expert surveys has been well established in political science, mostly to determine the ideological positions of political actors (Benoit and Laver 2006). Expert surveys provide information on some objective or subjective state of the world based on a review by people with comprehensive or authoritative knowledge on the subject (Wiesehomeier 2016). Typically, this is done by asking multiple experts to position parties on dimensions determined *a priori* or *a posteriori*. In general, expert surveys are seen as an economical way to obtain information as they can be set up any time, do not require party manifestos and may cover a large set of parties and countries if experts are available. Particularly in unstable party systems with few party documents available, expert judgements might be useful. At the same time, there are concerns about the validity of such surveys (Steenbergen and Marks 2007).

Owing to the recent interest in populism and its contested nature, populism has long been neglected in existing large-scale expert surveys. However, van Kessel (2015) has relied on experts for the identification of populist parties in Europe, which also enabled him to ask for some other characteristics, such as the credibility of these parties. Experts were asked to what extent parties could be labelled populist according to three criteria (delineate an exclusive community of ‘ordinary people’; appeal to the ‘ordinary people’; fundamental hostility towards the establishment). This shows that an expert judgement is similar to a classification by means of minimal definition, with the advantage that multiple experts are involved, which allows for reliability testing and solves the problem of language restrictions. The 2014 Chapel Hill Expert Survey also measures populism in European parties, although with a rather ‘rough’ measure of ‘salience of anti-establishment and anti-elite rhetoric’ (Meijers and Zaslove 2021). Wiesehomeier (2016) similarly conducted expert surveys, applying two different approaches in order to measure populism in Argentina and Brazil. Both approaches showed considerable overlap in identifying populists. Furthermore, Meijers and Zaslove (2021) measured populism among 250 parties in 28 European countries using a new expert survey. They explicitly try to capture the multidimensionality of populism by asking experts to score parties on five separate items. One weakness of expert surveys is that the number of country experts on populism is relatively limited, and it is not always clear whether they have actually read the party literature of those parties on which one is asked to make a judgement. Therefore, there is a risk that expert surveys reinforce ‘received wisdom’ instead of making judgements based on original empirical research. Table 8.1 provides an overview of the different possible methods of measuring populism. It shows that each of them has both strengths and weaknesses.

Table 8.1: Overview of the Different Methods of Measuring Populism

	Classification through minimal definition	**Content analysis**	**Computerized content analysis**	**Expert survey**
How does it work?	Analysing whether a party matches all minimal criteria to be labelled as populist	Human coders explore for each (subunit in the) party manifesto to what extent it corresponds with the criteria in the codebook	A computer calculates the percentage of words that match the 'populist' dictionary.	Experts are asked to position parties on a scale of populism
Logic	Either populist or not (dichotomy)	More or less populist (degree)	More or less populist (degree)	Could be either a dichotomy or matter of degree
Unit of analysis	Party literature, interviews, etc.	Election manifesto	Election manifesto and other written (digital) sources	Unclear
Unit of measurement	Na	Paragraph (Rooduijn 2009) or entire document (Hawkins 2009)	Word (Pauwels, 2011)	Unclear
Strengths	Leaves room for interpretation to the researcher Enables classification Less time consuming	Interpretation by coders Allows for reliability testing Systematic	Not time consuming Allows for analyzing many texts Systematic and reliable	Not time consuming Allows for reliability testing
Weaknesses	Leaves room for discussion (borderline cases) Less systematic (selective evidence)	Potential subjectivity of coders Potentially unreliable Time consuming	The creation of a dictionary is not straightforward Lack of validity (no interpretation)	Unclear on the basis of what evidence expert judgements are made

Measuring Populism among Parties in Germany

To demonstrate how different measurement techniques work and to evaluate their outcomes in terms of strengths and weaknesses, this section will focus on measuring populism among German parties. I will draw on a qualitative classification, a classical content analysis (holistic grading) and a computerised content analysis with and without a manual check. Except for the qualitative classification, the other methods use party manifestos of the major German parties between 2002 and 2013 as the unit of analysis. For the qualitative classification, I relied on party literature and academic literature on the most important cases to assess whether a party matches the minimal definition of populism as provided by Mudde (2007). The results of the holistic grading have been provided by Kirk Hawkins and his research team. As described above, different coders read the entire documents and ranked them on a two-point scale, after which an average score was produced. The computerised method scanned the proportion of words in each manifesto that matched a populist dictionary including words such as elite*, corrupt*, propaganda* and others. Finally, I manually checked each positive hit and assessed whether the term was actually meant in a populist way by drawing on a short codebook. More details on operationalisation and the dictionary can be found in the appendix.

The results of the different measurements are presented in Table 8.2, with the three highest scores for each method depicted in bold. What appears from this is that mainstream parties such as the Christian Democratic Union of Germany (Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands, CDU), the Free Democratic Party (Freie Demokratische Partei, FDP), and the Social Democratic Party of Germany (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands, SPD) mostly score very low in terms of populism. Interestingly, the Alternative for Germany (Alternative für Deutschland, AfD) also scores zero on each populism measurement, while this party has often been labelled as (right-wing) populist in the press. For the Party of Democratic Socialism, which later transformed into The Left (Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus, Die Linke, PDS-DL), The Greens (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen), the National Democratic Party of Germany (Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands, NPD) and the Pirate Party (Piratenpartei Deutschland) some methods produce high scores for populism while others do not. These cases will be discussed in more detail below as they also show the strengths and weaknesses of each method.

According to the computerised analysis, The Greens score relatively highly on populism (particularly in 2002), yet the other methods do not consider this party to be populist. The reason for this is that two words in the populist dictionary appeared very frequently in the manifestos of The Greens, namely monopoly and corruption. However, the term monopoly related in almost all cases to the energy market and was not meant in a populist way, meaning this is a 'false positive' case of populism. In 2009, the party argued that power should be transferred from corporations to the consumers of energy, which could perhaps be seen as a manifestation of populism, although this is a difficult call. Corruption is another important topic for the Green Party. It calls for a registration system for interest groups, more transparency in party finances and argues that 'corruption distorts the democratic process'. However, The Greens never depict the political elite as a homogeneous group that is corrupt. Hence, we can conclude that the computerised content analysis is susceptible to producing false positive cases if no manual check is included. A similar analysis can be made for the Pirate Party, which also focuses very much on the breakdown of monopolies and thinks corruption is an important issue, but this does not mean that the party is necessarily populist after a manual check.

Table 8.2: Four Measurements of Populism among German Parties (2002-2013)

Party	**Year**	**Qualitative classification**	**Holistic grading**	**Computerized CA**	**Computerized CA with manual check**
CDU	2002	0	0.3	0.00014	0.00000
	2005	0	0.1	0.00017	0.00000
	2009	0	0	0.00004	0.00000
	2013	0	0	0.00005	0.00000
FDP	2002	0	0.3	0.00025	0.00000
	2005	0	0.2	0.00013	0.00000
	2009	0	0.2	0.00031	0.00000
	2013	0	0	0.00021	0.00000
SPD	2002	0	0.2	0.00046	0.00000
	2005	0	0.2	0.00000	0.00000
	2009	0	0.1	0.00022	0.00000
	2013	0	0	0.00009	0.00000
The Left	2002	0	0.3	0.00036	0.00007
	2005	0	0.3	0.00027	0.00027
	2009	1	0.4	0.00036	0.00026
	2013	1	1.3	0.00022	0.00008
The Greens	2002	0	NA	0.00081	0.00000
	2005	0	NA	0.00047	0.00000
	2009	0	NA	0.00034	0.00002
	2013	0	0.2	0.00025	0.00000
NPD	2009	0	1.4	0.00087	0.00000
	2013	0	1.4	0.00029	0.00010
AfD	2013	0	0	0.00000	0.00000
Pirate Party	2013	0	NA	0.00094	0.00000

The NPD is an interesting case in that it is considered populist according to holistic grading and the computerised content analysis but not by the others. After a manual check of the words that appeared in the dictionary, it appeared that they were not used in a populist way, with one exception in the 2013 manifesto. However, this does not mean that the manifesto does not contain populism. A further manual analysis shows that some elements can be considered populist, yet the words that are used were not in the dictionary. One could call this a type II error or false negative. However, experts on populism in Germany usually do not consider the NPD a populist party. The reason for this is that they consider the NPD to be an extremist neo-Nazi party that rejects parliamentary democracy (Mudde 2000; Carter 2005). This would make the party non-populist as populist parties are formally democratic. Nonetheless, as explained above, party manifestos do not always reveal a party's 'true nature' because they are addressed to the public at large. Since extremist viewpoints are generally seen as harmful to the electoral potential of a party, they might not make it into the official manifesto. This problem might be even more relevant in Germany, where the German Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution closely monitors whether parties espouse extremist views, which might result in a party ban.

The party that is most consistently considered populist is the PDS-DL. While it is very difficult to judge a very diverse party that also went through an important transformation, different experts have labelled the party as populist, particularly since 2009 when it campaigned under the name The Left. Hough and Koss (2009, 78) claim that '[t]he LP [Left Party] is, in this sense, populist par excellence – it regularly talks in the language of elites betraying the population at large, and it is frequently disdainful of the wider political process'. Holistic grading also gives the DL scores above 0.2, with an exceptionally high score for 2013. The computerised analysis does not provide similarly high scores for the DL, but after a manual check, it appears that the words flagged as populist by the dictionary were also meant in a populist sense. The party refers, for instance, to referendums as a means of showing the gap between ruling politicians on the one hand and citizens on the other. Similarly to The Greens, the DL wants to break up commercial monopolies and to place energy resources in the hands of the people. Finally, as mentioned, the AfD does not appear to be a populist party. An in-depth study by Arzheimer (2015) exploring the manifesto and web content of the AfD comes to a similar conclusion. On the other hand, we must acknowledge that content analyses are static assessments of one moment in time which might lag behind reality. In 2015, Frauke Petry took over the leadership of the AfD and pushed the party in a more openly right-wing populist direction (Arzheimer and Berning, 2019). Furthermore, it might also have been a deliberate strategy to hide the populist discourse in the AfD's official party documents, as was suggested by Franzmann (2016).

Lessons from Studies Measuring Populism

Measuring populism has recently become increasingly popular. In this section, I will review what can be learned from these large-scale analyses.

Populism is More Prevalent in Latin America Compared to Western Europe

One of the few measurements of populism across different regions revealed that populist discourse can be found more in Latin America than in Europe (Hawkins and Castanho Silva 2016). Analysing speeches and the party manifestos of 136 parties in 26 countries, Hawkins and Castanho Silva (2016) found that particularly in Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador populism was found frequently while also resonating among the electorates (aggregate country populism scores were constructed by multiplying each party's populism score and its vote share). Within Western Europe, Hawkins and Castanho Silva (2016) found high populism scores for Switzerland, Italy and Spain. Bonikowski and Gidron (2016a) found high scores for populism in Greece, France and Denmark within Europe.

Populism can be Found More at the Fringes of the Party System

Given the systematic nature of content analyses, these studies can sometimes reveal findings that go against common wisdom. While in Western Europe populism has been traditionally associated with (radical) right-wing parties, Rooduijn and Akkerman (2015) show that radical parties on *both* the left and the right are inclined to employ a populist discourse by drawing on an analysis of 32 parties in five Western European countries (Rooduijn and Akkerman 2015). The study suggests that the contemporary radical left in Western Europe is generally populist. Bonikowski and Gidron (2016a) come to a similar conclusion while studying populism in the European Parliament. They find that populism is most prevalent on the radical left and right of the ideological spectrum. Of the five parties that most frequently make use of populism, two are radical-left (the Communist Party of Greece, Kommounistikó Kómma Elládas, KKE and the French Workers' Struggle, Lutte Ouvrière, LO) and three are paradigmatic examples of radical right-wing parties (the French National Front, Front National, FN, the UK Independence Party, UKIP, and the Belgian Flemish Block, Vlaams Blok, VB). (ibid., 16–17). While the study by Meijers and Zaslove (2021) confirms the findings of previous studies, they also find centrist parties with high levels of populism such as the Romanian Social Democratic Party (Partidul Social Democrat, PSD) or the Italian Five Star Movement (Movimento 5 Stelle, M5S).

Populism Over Time: The Impact of Issues, Government or Opposition and Campaigning

Bernhard, Kriesi and Weber (2015) content-analysed the discourse of the Swiss People's Party (Schweizerische Volkspartei, SVP) from 2003 to 2013, drawing on a range of different party documents. This analysis revealed that the level of populism depends on different contextual variables. First, populism appears more in texts dealing with cultural issues, such as European integration, immigration and related institutional issues. This finding seems to be context dependent, however, since the SVP is a populist radical right party. In contrast, Bonikowski and Gidron (2016b) found that when the US Democrats made populist claims, this was mostly related to economic issues, targeting business elites. Second, Bernhard et al. (2015) found that the SVP was more populist when in opposition compared with their time in office. Bonikowski and Gidron (ibid.) also found that incumbent parties at the national level made less use of populist claims in the EP. There are exceptions, however, such as the Lega Nord, which did not turn less populist once in government (see also Bobba and McDonnell 2016). In general, it seems that the probability of a candidate's reliance on populism is proportional to his or her distance from power, which suggests that populism is an important strategic tool for political challengers (Bonikowski and Gidron 2016b). Finally, Bernhard et al. (2015) found that the SVP made more populist claims during election campaigns than when there was no campaigning. An even higher level of populism was found when the SVP launched referendums or initiatives on its own or when it deposited signatures for such measures. Bonikowski and Gidron (2016b) found that in US presidential elections, populism was highest in the three months before the elections and then decreased when election day was approaching. A potential explanation for this is that parties first target the more ideological party base and then the more moderate general public.

Conclusion and Discussion

This chapter began by highlighting the importance of the definition, sources and operationalisation of populism as these all have an important impact on how it can be measured. In a second step, it discussed the main methods of measuring populism. Each of these techniques have their strengths and weaknesses, although it seems that some of them produce more valid results than others. While expert surveys and qualitative classifications certainly have their merits, they risk reinforcing existing knowledge (for example, identifying usual suspects) without empirical verification. It is questionable whether experts will actually read the party literature of all parties in a given party system and verify whether populism is present or not. In theory, a qualitative classification could be based on thoughtful reading of party literature, but here too we should be sceptical about how feasible it is for a single researcher to do this for many parties across different countries. When it comes to computerised content analysis without human interpretation, it seems that it produces too many random errors (false positives or false negatives) to be considered a reliable and valid method of measuring populism. Therefore, a content analysis, if designed and carried out well, seems to be the most appropriate way to measure populism systematically across time and space. The downside of a content analysis is that it is very resource hungry, and therefore a computerised content analysis complemented with human interpretation might also be an interesting way to explore populism in large bodies of texts.

However, large-scale content analyses of manifestos are not without their problems either. To mention only one, we can challenge the choice of party manifestos as the unit of analysis. In general, they lend themselves less to populism given their rather technocratic nature. As we have seen in the German case (NPD, AfD), it might also be possible that some parties shun extremism or populism in manifestos for strategic reasons. Therefore, it is necessary to complement large-scale content analyses with qualitative research (for example, Vossen 2011). Drawing on multiple sources and studying them in depth can reveal interesting details about the nature and extent of populism, thereby possibly nuancing findings from more rigid content analyses. Recent efforts to draw on linguistic methods in order to explore the complexity and other aspects of populist language in more detail are particularly interesting (McDonnell and Ondelli 2020). In general, it is of added value to complement different methods and sources to increase the validity of measurements of populism. As consistent measurements of populism are becoming increasingly available, researchers can now start to tackle several more substantive questions. For instance, what factors explain high levels of populism (both in terms of discourse and electoral strength) in different regions? And what are the consequences of a populist upsurge for the quality of democracy? These and important related questions can be answered in more detail once a solid and reliable data set on the degree of populism is established and maintained.

Appendix

Holistic Grading

The full description of the holistic grading method can be found elsewhere (Hawkins 2009). It essentially boils down to coders being trained to grade an entire document (in this case, manifestos) based on the elements of the concept of populism and a set of anchor texts defined as examples of the lowest, intermediate and highest boundaries. These three categories (lowest, intermediate and highest) are defined as followed:

- 0: A document in this category uses few if any populist elements. Note that even if a manifesto expresses a Manichaean world view, it is not considered populist if it lacks some notion of a popular will.
- 1: A document in this category includes strong, clearly populist elements but either does not use them consistently or tempers them by including non-populist elements. Thus, the discourse may have a romanticised notion of the people and the idea of a unified popular will (indeed, it must in order to be considered populist), but it avoids bellicose language or references to cosmic proportions or any particular enemy.
- 2: A document in this category is extremely populist and comes very close to the ideal populist discourse. In particular, the speech expresses all or nearly all of the elements of ideal populist discourse and has few elements that would be considered non-populist.

Because graders in earlier studies reported that it was often difficult to choose between the blunt categories, they could also give decimal scores and were told that 0.5 rounds up to a categorical 1, and 1.5 rounds up to a categorical 2, so they should consider the qualitative difference between the categories when assigning decimal points.

Computerised Content Analysis

Computerised content analysis gives the percentage of words in a party manifesto that matches a ‘populist dictionary’, which is a list of words that indicates instances of populism. The dictionary for this chapter is based on that of Pauwels (2011) and Bonikowski and Gidron (2016a). The following terms were included in the dictionary, with those in bold being actually found in the German manifestos:

Gier*; Grosskonzern*; Imperialismus*; **Imperialistisch***; Internationalismus*; Kapitalisten*; Lakai*; **Monopol***; Oligarch*; Oligarchie*; Plutokratie*; abgehoben*; anti-basisdemokratisch*; anti-demokratisch*; antibasisdemokratisch*; **antidemokratisch***; aristokrat*; aufhals*; **aufzwing***; **ausbeuter***; **autokrati***; **elite***; elitär*; eurokraten*; eurokratie*; geldadel*; **herrschend***; internationalistisch*; kooptier*; **korrupt***; kumpanen*; **plünder***; **propaganda***; **technokrat***; ungewählt*; unterjochen*

For the computerised analysis with a manual check, I read each paragraph in which a ‘populist’ term appeared and then coded it as populist if it referred to people centrism or anti-elitism as defined below. Then, I divided the number of populist words (manually validated) by the total number of words.

- People centrism: The people are depicted in a positive manner and/or as a collective entity (the homogeneous people). Just referring to the people is not sufficient to be coded as people centrism.
- Anti-elitism: The elite is depicted in a negative manner and as a collective entity. Criticism of individual politicians or the executive is not sufficient to be coded as anti-elitism Criticism of the political regime and conspiracy theories are also coded as anti-elitism.

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CHAPTER 9:

RESEARCHING POPULISM QUANTITATIVELY: INDICATORS, PROXY MEASURES AND DATA SETS

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Introduction

Contemporary research on populism in the party and electoral arenas has been characterised by two developments: First, most authors now follow the ideational approach and no longer interpret populism as a political strategy or discursive style but as a programmatic orientation (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2017). Second, many authors regard populism as a matter of degree, not as a qualitative or dichotomous attribute of parties, politicians and voters. Such a gradual or quantitative understanding of populism allows for the validation of earlier classifications and facilitates cross-national analyses as well as diachronic comparisons. Moreover, it allows populism to be isolated from 'related concepts such as nationalism, authoritarianism, or protest' (Bergman 2020, 236). Populist thinking, Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser (2017, 9–19) argue, sees society as divided into two groups, the *pure people* and the *corrupt elite*. Both groups are in themselves assumed to be homogeneous, which results in a general will (*volonté générale*) of the people that stands contrary to the malicious will of the elite. Politics is thus not understood as pluralistic conflict between legitimate opinions and interests but rather as an antagonistic divide between right and wrong. This emphasis on only one morally justified solution is often referred to as Manichaean worldview (Hawkins et al. 2012, 24). Based on these considerations, any measurement of populism should cover the specific interaction of people-centrism, anti-elitism and Manichaeanism.

Moreover, researchers who follow the ideational approach typically regard populism as a 'thin' political ideology that is usually attached to a 'thick' host ideology such as socialism or nativism. This specific combination leads to subtypes of populism that are often defined as left-wing and right-wing or inclusionary and exclusionary orientations, respectively (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2013; Mudde 2017; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2017; Hawkins et al. 2019). As regards empirical research on the varieties of populism, it is therefore essential to have independent measures of ideological (left-right) or policy positions. This chapter presents an overview of contemporary, mainly quantitatively oriented research on populism. In section 2, we focus on the study of parties (the supply side) and present data sets, which researchers can use for comparative analyses of European (and Latin American) countries. In section 3, we focus on the study of voters (the demand side). There, we discuss the status and progress of this new research strand along the lines of the measurement of individual-level populism in accordance with the ideational approach as well as the application of available data when

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analysing populist attitudes as dependent and independent variables. In the conclusion, we sum up the developments of populism research, point to some problems and finally outline paths for future research.

Supply Side: From Broad Classifications to Multidimensional Scales

Systematic, quantitatively oriented analyses of populism originally focused on the supply side of party competition. In one of the earliest studies, scholars explored the prevalence of populism in Belgian parties by studying their manifestos and other publications (Pauwels 2011; Rooduijn and Pauwels 2011). Other researchers analysed the populist rhetoric of politicians, especially in Latin America (Hawkins 2009). From a conceptual perspective, recent research on supply-side populism can be interpreted as a development in three steps: First, researchers tried to identify populist parties, often using a dichotomous concept or a limited number of categories to classify subtypes such as left-wing and right-wing populism. Second, they started to interpret populism as a matter of degree and consequently began to quantify it using a one-dimensional scale. Third, they more closely followed the ideational approach and extended the quantitative measurement to capture the theoretically proposed subcategories of populism, namely people-centrism, anti-elitism and anti-pluralism (Manichaeanism).

Classifications

The identification of populist parties among all (relevant) parties in a country at a specific point of time is the most fundamental way to study supply-side populism. Recent efforts to provide such lists of parties include the following three projects and publications: The PopuList by Rooduijn and colleagues (www.popu-list.org) covers most European countries and the period since 1989 (see Table 9.1). It uses four dichotomous categories: populist, far right (defined as nativist and authoritarian), far left (anti-capitalist) and Eurosceptic (including soft and hard types). Within the group of populist parties, 72.7 per cent are additionally classified as Eurosceptic, 50.4 per cent as far right and 15.7 per cent as far left. This highlights the dominance of right-wing populism in Europe, whereas in Latin America left-wing populism is at least equally important. While the PopuList is the product of a joint effort by several academics, the Timbro Authoritarian Populism Index (www.populismindex.com) is published by a Swedish think tank that promotes free market policies. The index contains data stretching back to 1980 and differentiates between left and right as well as between authoritarian and extreme parties. Timbro thus uses the concepts of populism and authoritarianism as synonyms. Each party is assigned to one of the following categories based on the four characteristics: right-wing populism, left-wing populism, left-wing extremism and right-wing extremism. An additional fifth category, national conservatism, deviates from this logic and comprises parties such as Hungarian Civic Alliance (Fidesz) and the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP, UK). The PopuList and Timbro are projects that started in 2019 and 2016, respectively, and present yearly updates. In addition to these efforts, Zulianello (2019) provides a similar list of populist parties throughout Europe. The main subcategories are left-wing and right-wing, but Zulianello also uses a third category called ‘valence’ to account for those parties that do not have a clear position on the left-right axis as they primarily emphasise ‘non-positional issues, such as competence and performance’ (2019, 3–6). For example, the Italian Five Star Movement (Movimento Cinque Stelle, M5S) represents such a ‘“pure” version of populism’ (2019, 6).

These three inventories are especially useful for researchers who need a reliable source when classifying parties in countries where one’s expertise is less developed. In dichotomous classifications, however, the allocation of cases is often difficult to decide. The PopuList therefore provides data on ‘borderline’ cases: 10 out of 121 parties classified as populist belong to this group, for example the Socialist Party (Netherlands, Socialistische Partij, SP). Moreover, such classifications tend to be rather stable over time despite the programmatic developments of parties. All three data sets mention temporary change, but for a (very) small number of cases only. From a theoretical perspective, the PopuList as well as Zulianello closely follow the ideational approach. Timbro, by contrast, refers to various definitions but interprets populism from a programmatic perspective too. A direct comparison of the three data sets is difficult as the criteria for including individual parties differ: The PopuList includes all parties that won at least one seat or two per cent of the votes in any national election since 1989; Timbro uses a minimum of only 0.1 per cent. Zulianello, by contrast, defines winning at least one seat in the most recent national election or in the European elections of 2014 or 2019 as his selection criterion. In addition, there are also some differences regarding the coverage of countries. This results in only 42 comparable cases out of a grand total of 394: The PopuList classifies all of them as ‘populist’; Timbro classifies two as ‘national conservative’ (Anel, Greece; Fidesz, Hungary) and two as ‘right-wing extremist’ (Ataka, Bulgaria; Jobbik, Hungary); whereas Zulianello’s list by definition only includes populist parties. As regards the left-wing and right-wing subtypes, the classifications are rather similar. Any differences are primarily the result of a different logic in their classification, as only Timbro classifies each party as either left or right. The classifications of the three data sets are thus rather congruent, but researchers must be careful when assessing the spread of populism, as the inclusion of parties (of any type) strongly differs between the projects. Timbro especially includes very small and thus hardly relevant parties.

Degrees of Populism: One-Dimensional Approaches

While some authors argue for defining populism as a categorical feature of a party’s programme (e.g. Pappas 2016), many researchers interpret populism rather as a matter of degree. From such a perspective, populism is not a question of either/or but of more or less. Given the enormous workload of content analyses, expert surveys have been the main method used to collect data on the degree of populism when the focus is on cross-country comparisons (Wiesehomeier 2019). However, some researchers also conducted content analyses using both manual and automated methods as well as different types of texts: Bernhard and Kriesi (2019), for example, manually examined the level of populism in parties’ press releases; Manucci and Weber (2017) explored parties’ manifestos as well as the content of newspaper articles; Rooduijn et al. (2014) studied manifestos (see also Rooduijn and Akkerman 2017); and Hawkins and Castanho Silva (2019) graded the amount of populist messages in party manifestos and speeches in 27 European and Latin American countries. A different approach uses the frequency of populism-related words or phrases to derive measures of populism. For example, Pauwels (2011) analysed Belgian parties using different kinds of texts.

Coming back to expert surveys, the 'first generation' used a one-dimensional concept of populism. The Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES), which started in 1999, is the most widely used survey on parties' programmes. In 2014, CHES (Polk et al. 2017) additionally included estimates of populism, more specifically two scales on the 'salience of anti-establishment and anti-elite rhetoric' and the 'salience of reducing political corruption', for the first time. A Flash Survey in 2017 (Polk et al. 2017), covering a limited number of countries, and the most recent regular survey in 2019 (Bakker et al. 2020) additionally contain a positional score for 'anti-establishment and anti-elite rhetoric'. Even before CHES started to include a measure of populism, a Dutch team of researchers (Immerzeel et al. 2010) had conducted a survey. Experts were asked, amongst other things, to rate parties' 'style of discourse' from 'non-populist' to 'very populist' (see Table 9.1).

Neither CHES nor Immerzeel et al. (2010) closely follow the ideational approach as they define populism as a specific kind of rhetoric or discourse. A rather loose concept can result in problematic estimates, especially with respect to extremist parties whose programmes strongly differ from populism understood as a feature of democratic, albeit illiberal parties. The CHES 2014 survey, for example, includes four parties with the maximum score of 10: Podemos (Spain) and M5S (Italy) are certainly populist, while a German animal rights party, which is not represented in parliament, is irrelevant. The fourth top scorer, by contrast, is the Greek Golden Dawn (Chrysí Avgí), which country experts do not regard as populist but as extremist and neo-fascist. The general results of the expert surveys are quite similar: Immerzeel et al. (2010) and CHES (2014) include measures for 172 parties in 28 countries using an identical scale from 0 to 10. The measures' correlation (Pearson) is 0.56 but the Immerzeel et al. scores are on average 1.7 points higher.

Degrees of Populism: Multidimensional Approaches

In line with the ideational approach, researchers have recently begun to differentiate between several sub-dimensions of populism in their gradual approaches. Three such 'second generation' expert surveys are currently available (see Table 9.1): The Populism and Political Parties Expert Survey (POPPA) (Meijers and Zaslove 2020; 2021) includes no fewer than eight variables that measure 'dimensions of populism and political style'. Five of them are interpreted as subcategories of populism: a Manichaean world view, homogeneity of the people, general will, people centrism and anti-elitism. The Political Representation, Executives, and Political Parties Survey (PREPPS) (Wiesehomeier et al. 2019) covers parties (and presidents) throughout Latin America. One section called 'rhetoric and appeals' is dedicated to populism and includes three scales: people-centrism, vilify and anti-elite rhetoric. While the scales thus focus on rhetoric, they nevertheless might be interpreted in terms of the ideational approach, as even the vilify scale, which measures whether parties (or presidents) demonise and vilify opponents or treat them respectfully, might be interpreted as the operationalisation of Manichaeanism. Finally, the 2019 Global Party Survey (Norris 2020) includes various subtypes of populism: Whether parties favour pluralist or populist rhetoric is measured by a positional as well as a saliency scale. In addition, the survey includes four scales on parties' rhetoric regarding, amongst other things, the question of whether 'politicians should follow the will of the people' or 'should lead' and whether the people or leaders should decide on important issues.

In a much smaller project, but using a manual content analysis of party manifestos, Franzmann and Lewandowsky (2020) distinguish between three components of populist thinking: anti-elitism, people-centeredness and anti-pluralism (which is similar to Manichaeanism). Contrary to the expert surveys, this project does not cover all parties in a given country but focuses on the programmes of radical right populist parties in ten West European countries since the turn of the millennium. The POPPA expert survey as well as Franzmann and Lewandowsky (2020) closely follow the ideational approach; the Global Party Survey does so less, whereas PREPPS represents a middle case. As regards the general estimates of populism, the two recent European expert surveys' results are much more similar (Pearson correlation: 0.85) than the two older expert surveys mentioned above. It seems that experts now have a common understanding of party populism, which might be the result of the dominance of the ideational approach. Estimates of party positions on the sub-dimensions, however, seem to differ between the methods applied. Franzmann and Lewandowsky report rather low degrees of congruence between them even though their study only covers radical right populist parties. For example, parties' positions on anti-elitism and people-centrism correlate to a degree of 0.25 only (2020, 34). Expert surveys, by contrast, place parties on these sub-dimensions perhaps too uniformly (POPPA: 0.91).

Table 9.1: Comparative Data Sets on Populism

Name	Region	Countries	Time	Reference	Website	Measurement	Categories / Scales / Sub-Dimensions
Supply Side (Parties)							
The PopuList	Europe	30	1989–2019	Rooduijn et al. (2019)	popu-list.org	Nominal	Populist; Far Right; Far Left; Eurosceptic
Timbro Authoritarian Populism Index	Europe	33	2019	Timbro (2019)	populismindex.com	Nominal	Left-wing populism; right-wing populism; left-wing extremism; right-wing extremism; national conservatism
Zulianello	Europe	33	2019	Zulianello (2019)	—	Nominal	Left-wing populism; right-wing populism; valence populism
Expert Judgement Survey of European Political Parties 2010	Europe	38	2010	Immerzeel et al. (2010)	doi.org/10.17026/dans-zny-parg	Interval	Style of discourse
Populism and Political Parties Expert Survey (POPPA)	Europe	28	2018	Meijers and Zaslove (2020a; 2020b)	poppa-data.eu	Interval	*Manichaean* world view; homogeneity of the people; general will; people-centrism; anti-elitism
Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES)	Europe	31, 14, 32	2014, 2017, 2019	Polk et al. (2017); Bakker et al. (2020)	chesdata.eu	Interval	anti-establishment and anti-elitist rhetoric; salience of reducing political corruption
Political Representation, Executives, and Political Parties Survey (PREPPS)	Latin America	18	2019	Wiesehomeier et al. (2019)	ninaw.webfactional.com/prepps/	Interval	People-centrism; demonisation of/respect for opponents; anti-elitist rhetoric
2019 Global Party Survey	World	152	2019	Norris (2020)	globalpartysurvey.org	Interval	Pluralist vs. populist rhetoric; people-centrism; anti-elitism
Demand Side (voters)							
CSES Module 5	World	20	2015–2019	CSES (2020)	cses.org	Interval	Attitudes to elites: do not care about the people, are not trustworthy, are the main problem, care only about the interests of the rich and powerful; compromise means selling out one's principles; people should make policy decisions

Demand Side

In more recent approaches, populism has also been analysed as an aspect of individual attitudes. To the best of our knowledge, Stanley (2011) was the first researcher to apply variables that tap into individual-level populism in his analysis of voting behaviour in Slovakia. This analysis sparked a debate on how to capture populism adequately as a demand-side and therefore micro-level phenomenon. Subsequently, Hawkins et al. (2012) were the first to develop a comprehensive scale to capture what is referred to as *populist attitudes* and which mirrors the characteristics of the ideational approach. These measures were subsequently applied in similar forms in the United States (ivi.) as well as later on in the Netherlands (Akkerman et al. 2014), in Chile (Meléndez and Rovira Kaltwasser 2019) and Flanders/Belgium (Spruyt et al. 2016). While the core concepts of party populism can be observed via different forms of content analyses or expert surveys, individual-level data on attitudes are commonly collected in mass surveys and, more rarely and especially in the area of populist communication, using experimental approaches (e.g. Bos et al. 2020). As this is such a recent field of research and a theory that is still both limited in scope and applied ambiguously in academic literature, the development of valid survey items can be regarded as an ongoing process. Castanho Silva et al. (2020) present the most comprehensive empirical comparison of scales measuring populist attitudes yet. Parallel to the conceptualisation of the ideational approach of populism on the supply side, the literature on populism as a characteristic of individuals regards it as being a thin ideology that is often combined with components from associated attitudes towards concrete policies such as anti-immigration, nativism and nationalism, Euroscepticism and opposition to globalisation (Neuner and Wratil 2020). In the following, we begin by discussing issues related to measuring populism, before presenting research which applies populism on the demand side as both a dependent and an independent variable.

Measuring Populism on the Individual Level: From Proxy Measures to Ideational Theory

As it is such a recent topic in the realm of electoral behaviour, data on populism as a characteristic of individuals is naturally still limited. In the following, we give a summary of the development of quantitatively oriented research that started with the use of rather vaguely associated proxy measures and has meanwhile reached a state of quantifiable measurement based on the ideational theory of populism. To explain voting for populist parties, researchers initially relied on investigating either attitudes related to populism, such as support for restrictive immigration or Euroscepticism (e.g. Arzheimer 2015), or on proxy measures of populism, such as trust in politicians or institutions (e.g. Hooghe et al. 2011) and forms of external efficacy (e.g. Rooduijn et al. 2016). For example, Inglehart and Norris (2019) apply political mistrust and authoritarian values in their analyses of an authoritarian form of populism. While mistrusting politicians and political institutions as well as low external efficacy can predict voting for populist parties, populism, according to ideational theory, is not captured by this. In fact, Geurkink et al. (2020) find evidence of political trust, external efficacy and populist attitudes to be overlapping but distinct concepts. Both political trust and external efficacy primarily tap into the anti-elitist aspect of populism. This leads to a measurement problem concerning ideational theory, according to which populism is more than anti-elitism and lies at the intersection of all its main sub-dimensions (Wuttke et al. 2020, 370). To overcome this problem and thus approach a measurement that captures individual-level populism independently from related concepts, Hawkins et al. (2012) proposed a set of survey items accounting for anti-elitism, people-centrism and Manichaeanism to match the dimensionality of the theory and the empirical measurement of populism in party positions. Many national surveys, of which some are part of the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems' (CSES) collaborative programme of election studies (see Table 9.1), then started to include these items. International surveys, however, have not yet included them.

As the theoretical argumentation is still in its earlier stages, the wording of the items varies and, thus, researchers end up using several different scales. A scale identifying populism on the individual level must meet two interrelated requirements: First, it has to be ensured that it measures genuine populism and not any of the related concepts discussed above. Second, as the dimensionality of populism is widely accepted, the measurement must keep up with this as well. Accounting for the first requirement, Castanho Silva et al. (2020) provide an overview of the seven most commonly used scales and demonstrate their respective strengths and weaknesses regarding internal and cross-national validity. With regard to the latter requirement, Akkerman et al. (2014), for example, were able to identify the sub-dimensions with factor analyses and thus capture them empirically during the initial application of their scale to a Dutch sample. Put differently, populism has been found to be distinct from other political ideologies and can thus be measured separately from the conceptually more complete host-ideologies, such as nativism and socialism. Nevertheless, no consensus on the most comprehensive way to measure this distinct phenomenon has been reached yet.

Individual-Level Populism as a Dependent Variable: What Affects Being a Populist?

What is it that makes it more likely for someone to develop populist attitudes? Factors affecting this can be deduced from socio-demographic data as well as from political and psychological profiles. Citizens with populist orientations do not form a homogeneous group though, contrary to the beliefs and claims of many populists themselves. Instead, various combinations of individual and contextual features increase the probability of citizens to holding populist attitudes. In general, Rovira Kaltwasser and Van Hauwaert (2020, 15) find that populist attitudes are more commonly found in males than in females, in older than in younger cohorts, and in lesser educated rather than among more educated people. On average, populists were found to be more 'interested in politics and unsympathetic to political parties' (ivi.). Additionally, and importantly, we need to distinguish populist attitudes from extremism because populists generally favour democratic over non-democratic regimes. However, also with regard to attitudes towards democracy, there is not one single conception that populists share. Instead, they look on democracy ambivalently. Populist citizens are not found to be in favour of democracy per se but are dissatisfied with its functioning (ibid., 6). Heinisch and Wegscheider (2020), for example, find that populists in Austria and Germany are likely to disregard representative forms of democracy if they see the implementation of the general will of the people is at risk. This finding illustrates the tendency for populist citizens to perceive representation to be inaccurate, as long as the assumed general will is not reflected by the elected representatives. Populists thus seem to be in favour of democracy per se, but dislike a liberal form of democracy, which could disrupt the homogeneous general will.

Compared to research on the socio-demographic and political profile of individuals holding populist attitudes, the psychological profile is still understudied. A notable exception is the research on the effect of personality on support for populist parties in the USA, the Netherlands and Germany by Bakker et al. (2016). The authors find scoring low on the agreeableness measurement to increase the probability of someone to vote for a populist party, while the effects of the other components of the commonly used Big Five personality traits were ambiguous. The study sheds light on the psychological roots of supporters of specific populist parties but fails to include those individuals who hold populist attitudes but do not vote for a populist party. As Rovira Kaltwasser and Van Hauwaert (2020, 4) explain, this is a crucial factor in individual-level populism research though, as the populist potential in a society was shown to be larger than the populist vote share. In other words, it is theoretically and empirically not sustainable to limit populists on the individual level to those who vote for populist parties. This is the reason for keeping the analyses that take populism as the dependent variable distinct from those who in turn analyse electoral behaviour and thus take voting behaviour or similar concepts as the dependent variable. We discuss the latter strand of research in the following.

Individual-Level Populism as an Independent Variable: The Effect of Populist Attitudes on Voting Behaviour

When populism became more and more salient in the academic and public debate, scholarship turned to investigating the reasons for and root causes of the increasing success of populists in Europe. The development of populist attitudes, even if their measurement is still at the developmental stage, gives researchers the opportunity to employ populism as an independent variable in quantitative research. Here, analogous to our discussion of measuring populism in parties, we proceed by focusing on the research on populist party support and voting behaviour. As we discussed above, earlier studies have shown that factors such as political trust and external efficacy predict whether people will cast a populist vote (e.g. Rooduijn et al. 2016; Rooduijn 2018; Van Hauwaert and van Kessel 2018). Additionally, the preference among some voters for radical policies can explain why they vote for populist parties. However, Loew and Faas (2019) find that this does not explain all voters' voting behaviour. This suggests that populism is indeed a factor in electoral behaviour on the demand side: Populist attitudes and policy voting are found to interact with or substitute each other when people decide whether to vote for a populist party.

This means that if we employ individual-level populism as an independent variable in analysing voting behaviour, we need data on populist attitudes so as to differentiate between those who vote for populism for reasons of policy preferences versus those motivated by ideology. An additional conceptual reason for bringing populist attitudes into the analyses, compared with using simple proxy measures such as trust or external efficacy as independent variables, is the comprehensiveness of populist attitudes that span multiple sub-dimensions according to the ideational approach (Geurkink et al. 2020). Trusting or distrusting politicians or political institutions taps solely into the anti-elitism aspect of populism. External efficacy measures the anticipated impact that individuals think they have in politics. Put differently, low political efficacy means an individual is under the impression he or she does not have a say against the powerful elite. While the two concepts tap only into anti-elitism, populist attitudes account for all the sub-dimensions of the ideational theory we described above. An analysis using one of these proxy measures without populist attitudes runs into the problem that populist voting may be identified, but one cannot tell populist voters apart from those solely opposed to elites. This detail is especially important in settings where populist parties belong to the government and might thus be seen as part of the elite itself.

Following the introduction and development of a valid measurement of populist attitudes, several studies analysed the effect of the newly developed thin populist attitudes on populist voting. Contrary to attitudes towards concrete policies or more general cultural attitudes, the thin populist attitudes are theoretically expected not to differentiate between populism of the left and of the right, as they do not capture political positions but genuine attitudes towards populist sub-dimensions. Akkerman et al. (2014) showed that their scale of populist attitudes is able to predict voting for both the right-wing Party for Freedom (Partij voor de Vrijheid) and the left-wing Socialist Party (Socialistische Partij) in the Netherlands, controlling for host-ideologies. This is an important finding, as it shows that individual-level populism itself might have an effect on voting behaviour, but is mediated by contexts. As already mentioned, research literature suggests that many people who hold populist attitudes do not end up voting for a party considered populist. Hawkins et al. (2020, 285) see the reason for this in the stronger interdependency between traditional attitudes and in the durability of populist attitudes, and suggest that attitudinal salience on the demand side varies according to contextual factors. Once their salience is activated, traditional attitudes moderate the effect of populist attitudes on voting behaviour. For example, the (perceived) widespread failure of democratic governance might be such a contextual factor.

Conclusion and Discussion

The empirical measurement of supply-side and demand-side populism has caught up with the theoretical conceptualisation commonly understood as the ideational approach. Despite this now widely shared foundation of populism research in political science, we still face challenges mapping the theory onto empirical data on parties and voters. Measuring populism as a supply-side phenomenon poses both new and known problems associated with comparative party research. In general, broad classifications as well as one-dimensional quantitative estimates of party populism produced by various authors and projects have led to comparable results. More fine-grained measures of populist thinking, by contrast, seem to suffer from methodological bias as expert surveys, compared to content analyses, provide unrealistically uniform measures that hardly distinguish a party's position on the three sub-dimensions. Being an even newer development, the existing data that capture populism as an attribute of the demand side also still lack consistency. Establishing populism as a set of attitude measures was introduced only recently. Therefore, both the question of what explains populist attitudes as well as what effects populist attitudes have on electoral behaviour is still understudied. To be able to analyse populism as an individual phenomenon comparatively, data covering multiple countries would be needed. Yet, large data sets, such as the World Values Survey (WVS) or the European

Social Survey (ESS), still do not include measures of populist attitudes. Because measurement continues to undergo improvements, the proliferation of scales and items will still make empirical comparisons across time and regions difficult until standards become more all-encompassing.

Consequently, paths towards further research are manifold. The further development and validation of measurement items for individual-level populism towards a rather consensual form would help make populist attitudes more comparable over time and regions. Further expanding research on populism to analyses of regions outside (Western) Europe and Latin America, where data has been scarce until now, is also an important part of the research to be carried out in the future. In a next step, populism as both a supply-side and a demand-side phenomenon, which we have treated mostly separately here, could be analysed in a more interdependent way. In addition, further research is needed with regard to what explains populist attitudes, i.e. treating populism as the dependent variable. Little is known about the determinants of populist attitudes from an individual psychological point of view. Further studying the reasons why people hold populist attitudes will also help us to understand why some of these citizens do not vote for populist parties despite their views – or even why they do not vote at all.

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PART II:

Assessing the Success of Populist Actors in Europe and in the Americas

Europe

CHAPTER 10:
POPULISM AND EUROSCEPTICISM:
TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN?

Fabian Habersack and Carsten Wegscheider

Introduction

At the latest since the European parliamentary elections in 2019, it has become increasingly popular to label political opponents as populist and Eurosceptical. In addition to excessive political media coverage and public interest, however, it is undisputed that populism and Euroscepticism are two political phenomena that have become increasingly important both in political science research and in the reality of electoral politics. Radical left and right populist parties did indeed gain about 29 per cent of the seats in the last European parliamentary elections and benefited greatly from their critical and negative stance towards the European Union (Rankin 2019; Rooduijn et al. 2019; Henley 2020). It is hardly surprising that populism and Euroscepticism often appear in tandem, given that there are considerable conceptual parallels between the two. Furthermore, this overlap exists not only at the party level, but also extends to the public and the relationship between Eurosceptical and populist attitudes.

However, while populism and Euroscepticism are often regarded as two sides of the same coin, we still lack systematic research and cross-national evidence on what drives this strong connection on both the supply and demand sides of electoral politics, taking into account the host ideology to which populism is attached. This chapter is dedicated to these questions and provides an overview of previous research on the relationship between populism and Euroscepticism, as well as an outlook on issues that future research should address. In the following section, we outline conceptual definitions of both populism and Euroscepticism. In the third section, we review the causal mechanisms between populism and Euroscepticism on both the supply and the demand side by considering the role of host ideologies in this relationship. Finally, we empirically analyse the role of the interaction between populism and ideology in explaining Euroscepticism on both the party and the voter level. We conclude by highlighting important gaps in the research literature on this subject area and propose a framework for further research on the topic.

Conceptualising Populism and Euroscepticism

Populist beliefs and Eurosceptical stances overlap conceptually and often appear in tandem (Kneuer 2019). However, the concepts also differ and relate to distinct issues in politics: while populism relates to a more abstract idea of the role of the people in politics and the functioning of democracy, Euroscepticism refers to specific attitudes and positions on the issue of European integration (Rooduijn and van Kessel 2019). This section provides a definition of both concepts, thereby preparing the ground for further conceptual and empirical reflection on the relationship between populism and Euroscepticism.

Euroscepticism

Given that issues related to the process of European integration only started to gain public attention at the end of the 20th century, Euroscepticism is still a fairly recent political phenomenon (Rooduijn and van Kessel 2019). Since then, the relevance of Euroscepticism in the academic, media and public debate as well as in European party competition has increased significantly (Taggart and Szczerbiak 2018). The term Euroscepticism was initially used to describe both 'contingent or qualified opposition, as well as incorporating outright and unqualified opposition to the process of European integration' (Taggart 1998, 366). However, this definition has been criticized for its conceptual fuzziness and vastness, since any form of rejection and criticism of EU policy decisions corresponds to this definition and makes it difficult to determine the relative position of political actors (Kopecký and Mudde 2002). Kopecký and Mudde (ibid.) in turn proposed an alternative definition of Euroscepticism based on Easton's (1975) distinction between diffuse and specific support: 'By *diffuse* support we mean support for the general *ideas* of European integration that underlie the EU. By *specific* support we denote support for the general *practice* of European integration; that is, the EU as it is and as it is developing' (Kopecký and Mudde 2002, 300). This distinction highlights the qualitative difference between a party rejecting the fundamental idea of 'Europe' and one that is sceptical towards specific EU-related policies. Building on this, Szczerbiak and Taggart (2008) distinguish between soft and hard Euroscepticism, a conceptualisation that is still widely used. This typology refers to (party-based) opposition against the transfer of decision-making power to the EU level and to 'attitudes towards further actual or planned extensions of EU competencies' (ibid., 13). While soft Euroscepticism is rather a qualified criticism of the current design of the process of European integration, hard Euroscepticism refers to a fundamental rejection of the idea of supranational cooperation at the European level. This approach thus allows distinguishing between different types of Eurosceptical parties.

In contrast, a gradual approach to measuring party positions towards European integration enables an assessment of party-based Euroscepticism both within and across countries (Mudde 2012). Given the increasing mainstreaming of Eurosceptical positions among political parties, this approach is particularly well-suited for distinguishing between qualified criticism and rhetoric on the one hand, and fundamental ideological rejection of European integration on the other. Because whereas Eurosceptical positions have been primarily held by political parties at the fringes of the political spectrum, they are now widespread even among governing parties and parties in the political centre (Ray 2007; Taggart and Szczerbiak 2013; Leconte 2015; Meijers 2017). Although European issues and policies have a comparatively low salience among parties and voters (Mudde 2012), parties often face severe internal divisions when it comes to their position on European integration (Hooghe and Marks 2006). This already indicates that Eurosceptic actors may pursue different goals and that, on the one hand, ideological beliefs play a crucial role (Hooghe, Marks and Wilson 2002; Marks and Wilson 2000), but Eurosceptic claims may also be born out of strategic considerations (Sitter 2001; McDonnell and Werner 2019; Heinisch, McDonnell and Werner 2020). One of the key challenges for party-based research on Euroscepticism lies in distinguishing between these two functions. Furthermore, we lack research on the effects of Euroscepticism on the political behaviour of parties in order to assess the relevance of this concept, apart from public opinion, media coverage and strategic use by political parties (Szczerbiak and Taggart 2018; Huber, Lehner and Wegscheider 2019).

However, Euroscepticism is not limited to political parties, however, but also appears as attitudes and feelings on the part of citizens. Following on from the discussion at the party level, there are various aspects and dimensions of European integration against which individuals can take a Eurosceptical stance. While Eurosceptical attitudes were initially assessed primarily in terms of a general opposition to or support for European integration (Hooghe and Marks 2005), in recent years scholars have developed a more nuanced perspective on diffuse and specific attitudes towards the EU. In addition to different dimensions and policy areas of EU-related attitudes, such as the rejection of specific economic, social or cultural policies of European integration (Sørensen 2008; Leconte 2010; Hobolt and Vries 2016; Vries 2018), this also includes the distinction between general support for the idea of the EU and the specific assessment of its current functioning (van Elsas, Hakhverdian and van der Brug 2016). In sum, Euroscepticism is a multidimensional concept at both the party and the individual level that encompasses general and specific positions and attitudes towards the process of European integration and the current functioning of the EU.

Populism

Populism, by contrast, is an essentially controversial concept, as some scholars define it as either a political strategy (Weyland 2001; Kenny 2020), style (Moffitt and Tormey 2014; Moffitt 2016), discourse (Laclau 1977; 1980; Hawkins 2009; 2010), form of logic (Laclau 2005a; 2005b; 2006) or frame (Aslanidis 2016; Heinisch and Mazzoleni 2017). However, these definitions have the drawback that, similarly to Euroscepticism, even non-populist actors occasionally use populist rhetoric, strategies or stylistic elements (Rooduijn, Lange and van der Brug 2014). Hence, in order to shape the positions and behaviour of political parties and individuals in the long term, populism needs to be regarded as an ideological characteristic. We therefore consider populism to be a set of ideas and follow the ideational approach (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2013; 2017; Mudde 2017; Hawkins and Rovira Kaltwasser 2018), according to which populism is an 'ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, "the pure people" versus "the corrupt elite", and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people' (Mudde 2004b, 543). Briefly summarised and in reference to the chapter in this Handbook by Heinisch and Mazzoleni: By providing answers to who is responsible for people's grievances (*the elite*) and who should govern and hold political power (*the people*), populism 'makes normative claims about the functioning of democracy' (van Hauwaert and van Kessel 2018, 72). Thus, in contrast to Euroscepticism, populism is rather an abstract and more fundamental idea of the way political decisions should be made.

However, unlike *full* or *thick* ideologies, populism lacks programmatic ideas on a broad range of policy areas and social issues, making it a *thin-centred* ideology, which needs to be combined with a *host ideology* (Freeden 1998; Mudde 2004b; Stanley 2008). In the European context, populism occurs mainly in combination with a radical left or right host ideology, which gives it its *chameleonic* nature (Taggart 2004). While radical right populist parties emphasise cultural issues and combine populism with a nativist and authoritarian agenda (Mudde 2007), radical left populist parties focus on socio-economic issues and combine populism with a left-wing economic ideology (March 2011). Consequently, and as a guideline for the following reflections on the relationship between populism and Euroscepticism, we also need to consider the host ideologies to which populism is connected.

The Interplay Between Populism and Euroscepticism: State of Research and Causal Mechanisms

'Populism and Euroscepticism can easily be seen as two sides of the same coin' (Rooduijn and van Kessel 2019). Indeed, there is evidence to suggest that populist parties tend to adapt easily to and benefit electorally from crises at the European level – be it the financial crisis, the migration crisis or the Brexit vote – given that they feed directly into populist claims and discourses (Pirro, Taggart and van Kessel 2018). Though populist parties differed fundamentally in their responses to these crises, a common theme was that populist parties across countries blamed the EU for its lack of responsiveness to the ordinary people and its poor performance in light of ever more competences ceded to the EU and the loss of national sovereignty.

Despite the conceptual similarities between ideational populism and Euroscepticism, the link and especially the strength of the relationship between the two remains in the dark. On the political *supply side*, populist parties regularly adopt Eurosceptical positions too, although Euroscepticism is not a sufficient condition for populism, and both can occur independently of each other. In addition, empirical indicators of party-based Euroscepticism often remain too vague and unidimensional to account for the various facets of the multidimensional nature of Euroscepticism. Even fine-grained scales of the degree of Euroscepticism lag behind conceptual distinctions in terms of the *diffuse* and *specific* dimensions of positions towards European integration and the EU (Kopecký and Mudde 2002) as well as ideologically informed differences in policy goals that result in different forms of Euroscepticism. When it comes to populist attitudes among the *demand side*, even less is known about the extent to which such attitudes inform Euroscepticism and Eurosceptical voting, independently of voters' self-placement on the left-right axis. Comparing levels of Euroscepticism at the voter and the party level also reveals there are striking differences between Western Europe and Eastern Europe, especially with regard to the salience of positions towards the EU among parties and within the population, and different perspectives on EU membership, for instance between old and new member states as well as EU accession candidates. These differences, also with regard to the different meaning of populism to the party systems of Central and Eastern Europe, are still understudied and existing research is highly centred on Western Europe. Despite this, one can identify various causal mechanisms tying populism or populist attitudes to Euroscepticism, and these links are largely comparable for both the party and the voter level. The following sections aim at delineating these mechanisms and outlining the state of research by considering the effect of host ideologies, from which populism needs to be distinguished, on various aspects of Euroscepticism.

Populism and Euroscepticism on the Supply Side

Explanations of the extent to which political parties adopt Eurosceptical positions abound and tend to draw on one of two approaches. The first is to understand Euroscepticism as an expression of strategic positioning on the part of national parties and less as a genuine and ideologically informed policy preference (Sitter 2001; Heinisch, McDonnell and Werner 2020). Opposition parties do not only find a target in governing parties at the domestic level but also tend to be critical of politics within the European Union, at least to the extent to which they perceive the supranational level as a vehicle for governing parties to push through their political agendas (Taggart 1998; Sitter 2001). In this regard, party positions towards the EU take on a *second order* character (Reif and Schmitt 1980). Albeit often difficult to delineate, a second approach points to policy preferences and ideology as predictors of Euroscepticism. In that respect, it is well established that parties closer to the ideological fringes of their political systems tend to be more critical of the EU (and the EU establishment) than parties closer to the centre (Hooghe, Marks and Wilson 2002), though radical left and radical right parties oppose the EU and Europeanisation for different reasons. What remains unresolved is the question to what extent populism, regardless of its host ideology, contributes to explaining Eurosceptical party positions. Empirically, even though parties that are populist are also often Eurosceptical and vice versa, both can and do appear separate from each other. Moreover, opposition against the EU and European integration, just like populism, appears in tandem with other ideological positions, and Eurosceptical parties therefore vary fundamentally in how they utilise Eurosceptical frames (Taggart 1998). Though Euroscepticism is substantively narrower than populism, the overlap of the two concepts is evident (Harmsen 2010). Yet, what are the mechanisms linking populist to Eurosceptical stances?

For one, a core feature of populist parties is their anti-elitism, although populist parties seldom define who belongs to the malevolent *establishment* and *corrupt elites* they oppose, granting them the ability to adapt their claims flexibly according to context (Taggart 2002). In parallel to Eurosceptical claims, this criticism can thus be employed against *economic* or *cosmopolitan* elites at the EU level or address technocratic and non-transparent decision-making processes in general: ‘Since the process of European integration follows a project devised by supranational elites, it is virtually self-evident why Euroscepticism can be easily expressed through a populist discourse’ (Heinisch, Massetti and Mazzoleni 2018, 931). Populists and Eurosceptics not only converge in their assessment of supranational decision-making but are also united in their view that it is national elites who sold out and sacrificed core policy responsibilities in complete disregard of the sovereignty of *the people* in the first place (Kneuer 2019).

For another, their people-centrism also informs populist parties’ stances that oppose the EU. As populist parties regard the EU as a project of illegitimate and self-serving elites and problematise the EU’s incrementally expanding policymaking power against the general will of *the people*, a core claim of populist campaigns is to *take back the power* for the nation state (Leconte 2015; Voeten 2020). Both populist and Eurosceptical parties are in conflict with the EU over the legitimacy of the EU’s representation of the demos and arrive at similar conclusions, namely that the power to make important political decisions should rest with *the people* or the member states. From a theoretical point of view, the Manichaean dimension of populism reinforces the effect of the first two dimensions on the rejection EU politics, and adds a moral element to the conflict over representation that goes beyond the technical question of which policies can be most efficiently addressed at what level of decision-making (Mohrenberg, Huber and Freyburg 2019). This creates a dichotomy of the *virtuous people* pitted against a *corrupt* and *ill-meaning* establishment consisting of EU politicians that Eurosceptics likewise resort to when criticising Brussels's centralising tendencies. In this vein, Mudde (2004a) has argued that the populist criticism of Europeanisation may even culminate in a centre-periphery divide 'between the national (i.e. anti-EU) people in the periphery and the international (i.e. pro-EU) elites in the center' (Mudde 2004a, 7), a divide that is rooted in cultural views and (national) identity rather than driven by material, economic interests (Kneuer 2019; Wegscheider and Nezi 2021).

Taken together, populism and Euroscepticism share a range of commonalities, and irrespective of how populist parties with different ideological backgrounds or Eurosceptics envision the counterpart to supranational decision-making, they rally behind the idea that political decisions ought to be made at the national level and *the people* need to be empowered *vis-à-vis* the EU. However, research in this vein also stresses that populism may serve as barely more than a catalyst of general ideological orientations: 'Populist radical right parties […] are first and foremost nativist; populist radical left parties favour economic redistribution above all. Although populism plays an important role in the manner in which their worldview and analyses are framed, it is not the main ideological ingredient' (Rooduijn and van Kessel 2019, 23–24).

What is certain, however, is that radical right and radical left parties both tend to be more Eurosceptic in their policy positions and rhetoric than parties at the centre of the ideological spectrum: Euroscepticism takes the form of an inverted U-shape along the left-right dimension (Marks and Wilson 2000; Aspinwall 2002; Vries and Edwards 2009). Although this inverted U-shape is surprisingly uncontested, research also points to important differences between radical left and radical right Euroscepticism in terms of how parties *frame* their anti-EU positions as well as what *motives* inform these policy stances (Höglinger and Wüst 2010; Conti and Memoli 2012; Helbling, Pirro, Taggart and van Kessel 2018). Given that the ideological orientation of parties provides a crucial explanation for Eurosceptic party positions, further research would be well advised to separate these mechanisms from others such as populism. This recommendation to disentangle populism from its host ideologies appears even more important considering that ideological radicalism simultaneously also explains the degree of populism of political parties (Rooduijn and Akkerman 2017; Meijers and Zaslove 2021). Lastly, further research should not only investigate the relationship between populism and parties' positions towards European integration, but also ascertain to what extent populism, on its own, can serve as a predictor of concrete political *actions*, for instance with regard to compliance with EU law (see also: Huber, Lehner and Wegscheider 2019). Given that radical left and right populist parties represent different groups in politics (Huber and Ruth 2017), affect minority rights differently (Huber and Schimpf 2017), and act differently in parliaments (Otjes and Louwerse 2015), it is likely that the consequences of populism depending on a host ideology will also differ with regard to other forms of political behaviour.

Populism and Euroscepticism on the Demand Side

Contrary to the literature which focuses on the *supply side*, research on Eurosceptic attitudes among voters has enabled a much more fine-grained measurement of Euroscepticism which is not just restricted to support for or opposition against European integration (Hooghe and Marks 2005) – the most prominent indicator of Euroscepticism – but also encompasses the extent to which individuals identify with the EU, their general regime support, attitudes about decision-making processes and the way the EU functions in practice, as well as specific views on the question of on which decision-making level (e.g. regional, national, supranational) certain issues should be dealt with (Sørensen 2008; Leconte 2010; van Elsas and van der Brug 2015; Hobolt and Vries 2016; van Elsas, Hakhverdian and van der Brug 2016; Vries 2018). However, even more so than on the party level, we lack empirical evidence of the (strength of the) relationship between voters' populist attitudes and their Euroscepticism. The research on populist attitudes among citizens being in its infancy is doubtlessly part of the reason for this shortfall, though it may also be the conceptual affinity of the two concepts that has led to populist and Eurosceptical attitudes often being mistakenly equated (Rooduijn and van Kessel 2019). Findings are thus limited to correlational evidence, for instance for the Netherlands; and the fact that the relationship is not particularly strong suggests that in spite of that affinity, there are crucial differences between the two.

There are, however, theoretical reasons to assume that both populist and Eurosceptical attitudes go hand in hand. Analogous to the mechanisms that may be at work on the *supply side*, there are two ways by which populist attitudes are linked to Euroscepticism among voters. First, the Eurosceptical positions of voters may be understood as the application of populist elite criticism in the realm of supranational politics: being sceptical of the trustworthiness and intentions of national elites increases the likelihood of voters taking a critical stance *vis-à-vis European elite*, too. Scholarship on the topic of the *democratic deficit* of the EU has indeed focused predominantly on and problematised the bias towards executive power within the EU (Katz 2001; Follesdal and Hix 2006) as well as the 'perceived "distance" between "Brussels" and the ordinary citizen' (Featherstone 1994, 149). Against this backdrop, it is evident that individuals with populist attitudes who are sceptical of national elites will also see a threat in the EU, within which national governments are better represented than the common interest of *the people* and within which the judiciary poses a threat to national autonomy. The fact that voters are fundamentally more critical of political institutions and decisions at political levels they perceive as more *distant* – e.g. *bureaucrats in Brussels* – reinforced the distrust in the EU establishment which populists and Eurosceptics share (Hellstrom 2005). A second linkage between populist attitudes and Euroscepticism is their aversion to modes of decision-making that oppose the majoritarian idea of an unmediated translation of the *will of the people* into written law (e.g. direct democracy). Analogous to the party level, the notion that the people, not the politicians, should make our most important policy decisions (Akkerman, Mudde and Zaslove 2014; Schulz et al. 2018) feeds into the criticism of the elite and the claim for popular sovereignty by populism and Euroscepticism alike. The appeal of populism in that respect lies in the fact that it pretends to provide a solution for (Eurosceptical) voters who deem popular sovereignty to be at stake and understand Europeanisation as a process undermining national autonomy and democracy itself.

As a consequence of both of these explanations, one could expect that populist and Eurosceptical attitudes are mutually contingent on one another: '[…] those who despise the political elite in Brussels will tend to agree with the populist message that *Brussels* does not listen to ordinary people in the member states anymore' and 'Eurosceptics might also vote for populists not because they criticize the European elite, but because they accuse the national political elite of transferring too much power to the EU' (Rooduijn 2018, 356). In terms of empirical evidence, voters of populist parties do tend to be significantly more Eurosceptical in their attitudes compared to voters of other parties on average, yet it would be excessive to assert that Euroscepticism is 'what unites the voter bases of populist parties' (ibid.). This also raises awareness of methodological challenges when it comes to isolating the causal influence of populist attitudes (or populist voter behaviour) on Euroscepticism. Even though the two concepts are interrelated, voters differ critically in their motives for supporting populist parties, and one's position along the left-right axis may ultimately be a far better predictor of choosing to vote in that way. Still, there are good reasons to believe that populist attitudes inform other issue positions and voting behaviour and take on a role that goes beyond them being a mere catalyst for existing ideological leanings (Van Hauwaert and van Kessel 2018). To date, research disentangling the interacting effects of populist attitudes and host ideologies is scarce and, with respect to Euroscepticism, this calls for a more fine-grained assessment of the extent to which populism, on its own, can predict anti-EU positions.

As far as the relationship between ideology and Eurosceptical attitudes at the voter level is concerned, the presence of an inverted U-curve on the voter level is rather contested and surprisingly not as clear as on the party level. On the one hand, some studies do seem to suggest that voters, much like parties, are more Eurosceptical at the fringes of the ideological scale (Lubbers and Scheepers 2010; van Elsas and van der Brug 2015), although other studies interestingly only find evidence of Eurosceptical attitudes among right-wing (McLaren 2007) or left-wing voters (Alvarez 2002), respectively. On the other, research also strongly suggests that completely distinct *motivations* are at the heart of radical left and radical right voters' Euroscepticism (van Elsas, Hakhverdian and van der Brug 2016) and that, furthermore, right-wing citizens are more fundamentally opposed to the fundamental idea of 'Europe', whereas left-wing voters are more critical towards the functioning of the EU and, in light of left-wing concerns for social justice, its *output legitimacy* in economic respects (van Elsas and van der Brug 2015; van Elsas, Hakhverdian and van der Brug 2016; Beaudonnet and Gomez 2017). Further research should therefore focus on disentangling the mechanisms between populism, Euroscepticism and host ideologies (Heinisch and Wegscheider 2020).

Empirical Analysis

In this section, we provide empirical analysis on the relationships between populism and Euroscepticism by considering radical left and right host ideologies to which populism is connected. Starting with an explanation of party-based Euroscepticism, we proceed by analysing the mechanisms discussed at the individual level. For each of these following analyses, we provide a short summary of the data we rely on and indicators used in the analyses.

Explaining Party-Based Euroscepticism

Measures of both populism and Euroscepticism on the party level which are comparative in scope have often relied on case-study based party classifications (Hawkins and Castanho Silva 2018) that are not always comparable given their different conceptualisations. As an alternative, expert data such as the Populism and Political Parties Expert Survey (POPPA) of mid-2018 can provide a more reliable and valid approximation of party-level characteristics, such as the *degree* of populism or Euroscepticism (Meijers and Zaslove 2020; 2021). An additional advantage of these data, which we utilise for our own analysis, is that POPPA treats populism as a *latent construct*, and therefore draws on a range of survey items for its operationalisation instead of relying on a single question (Meijers and Zaslove 2021). For our analysis, we make use of the proposed populism index based on these five items as well as expert opinions on parties' opposition to European integration as an indicator of Euroscepticism. Additionally, we match indicators of Euroscepticism from the 2019 Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES, conducted between February 2020 and May 2020) (Bakker et al. 2020) to the POPPA data. The advantage of these indicators is that they answer a wider range of questions related to both general support for and opposition to European integration, the salience of this topic and positions on various policy issues related to the EU. Like the EU item of POPPA, our measure of opposition to European integration from CHES 2019 ranges from 0 to 10 on an 11-point scale, but it is weighted by the salience parties attach to the same issue. In addition, we draw on a self-constructed policy index comprising parties' positions towards five different policy issues that relate to the EU (this index, again, ranges from 0 to 10 in order to achieve comparability across our models).

To ascertain to what degree party-based populism informs parties' positions towards the EU and European integration, we use several fixed effects regression models for the majority of European countries, the results of which are summarised in Table 10.1. The fact that research points to fundamental differences between countries as regards both the role of populism and the form Euroscepticism takes, especially in CEE, that joining the EU 'late' imposed a conditionality on EU accession which radical right populist parties subsequently exploited and which gradually gave way to Euroscepticism (Heinisch et al. 2021). Divisions along the lines of economic development and wealth, but also the timing of EU accession and other factors are the reason we would suspect the relationship between populism and Euroscepticism to unfold differently in different countries. Although the sample and group sizes do not warrant more complex, multilevel analyses, we also used random effects models as an alternative, yet the results are largely identical to our fixed effects models.

Table 10.1. Populism and Opposition to European Integration at the Party Level

	Model 1 (POPPA)	**Model 2 (POPPA)**	**Model 3 (CHES) E.I. × salience**	**Model 4 (CHES) Negative EU policy index**
(Intercept)	3.04*** (0.80)	2.27 (1.41)	2.28 (1.40)	2.85 (1.47)
Populism	0.67*** (0.05)	0.87*** (0.22)	0.70** (0.22)	0.84*** (0.23)
Left-right	-1.22*** (0.22)	-1.21* (0.53)	-0.75 (0.52)	-0.94 (0.55)
Left-right^2	0.13*** (0.02)	0.15** (0.05)	0.10* (0.05)	0.12* (0.05)
Populism + Left-right		0.00 (0.01)	-0.03 (0.09)	-0.06 (0.09)
Populism + Left-right^2		-0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)
Fixed effects for countries	✓	✓	✓	✓
R^2	0.77	0.78	0.71	0.76
Adj. R^2	0.74	0.75	0.66	0.71
Num. obs.	234	234	203	195

Note: SE in parentheses; ***$p < 0.001$; **$p < 0.01$; *$p < 0.05$
Countries: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom.

The results across our models are strikingly similar: populism does seem to have an independent effect on our measures of Euroscepticism; though with regard to the POPPA models (dependent variable: opposition to European integration), ideology is the component that does the heavy lifting. Albeit still significant at the $p<0.05$, the effect of ideology does seem to become slightly less pronounced in Model 2, where we additionally include both interaction terms. The model fit is generally quite high given the number of predictors in our models, which suggests that ideology in combination with populism serves as a strong predictor of Euroscepticism. Strikingly, ideology is not significant in the models for which we used CHES indicators to operationalise Euroscepticism (Model 3: opposition to European integration weighted by the salience parties attach to that issue; Model 4: index of five items measuring opposition of the party leadership to specific issue areas being dealt with at the EU level), although left-right^2 is.

Figure 10.1. Effects of Ideology and Populism on Euroscepticism, 95 per cent CIs, Model 2

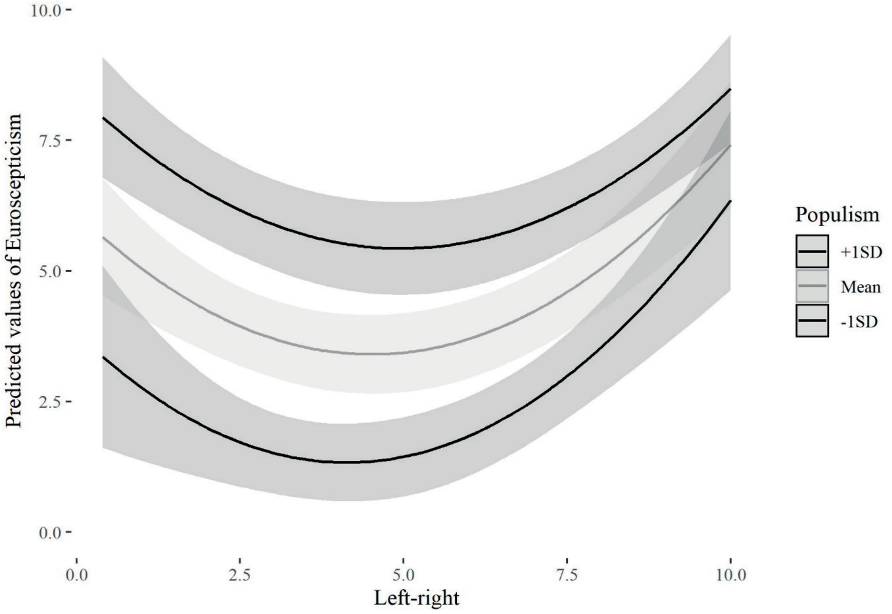


Figure 10.1 displays the effect of ideology (left-right) and populism on the predicted values of Euroscepticism based on our main model, Model 2. As can be seen, the relationship between ideology and Euroscepticism takes on a U-shape, though radical right parties appear to be more cohesively anti-European integration than is the case for radical left parties. Populism additionally pushes parties towards anti-European integration and does so mostly independently of the impact of ideology. This effect is stronger for centre and centre-left parties as they are, by default, more Europhile in their stances towards the EU and European integration, while the additional or marginal effect of populism on the radical right, which is already more Eurosceptical on average, is somewhat lower. Since the effects for the other models are virtually identical in that they also point to a U-shaped relationship between ideology and Euroscepticism, we only display the predicted probabilities based on our main model, which is Model 2. Interestingly, this also holds true for the policy index measure (Model 4), for which we drew on Chapel Hill data: even if we break it down by single policy positions, and even though some policy areas should clearly reveal ideological fault lines, we see the same kind of relationship as in Figure 10.1. Solely for the issue of 'EU cohesion or regional policy' (CHES 2019, *eu_cohesion*), we see that radical left parties tend to be more opposed, while radical right parties are somewhat more likely to oppose measures granting the 'EU authority over asylum policy' (CHES 2019, *eu_asylum*). Even there however, the U-shape remains.

Explaining Individual Euroscepticism

To analyse the relationship between populist attitudes and Euroscepticism at the individual level, we harmonised national election studies from Austria (Aichholzer et al. 2020), Finland (Grönlund and Kestilä-Kekkonen 2018), France, Germany (GLES 2019), Italy, the Netherlands (van der Meer, van der Kolk and Rekker 2018) and the United Kingdom (Fieldhouse et al. 2018), all of which participated in CSES Module 5. Although all national election studies participated in the same CSES Module, not only does the wording and coding of the items differ in measuring populist attitudes but also Euroscepticism. While we can control these differences and the resulting bias to some extent by normalising the variables between a minimum of 0 and a maximum of 1.0, this not only illustrates the great lack of high quality and publicly available data, but also a methodological shortcoming in our analysis. The CSES Module 5 contains a battery of six Likert items with which to measure populist attitudes, focusing on anti-elitism and popular sovereignty as core concepts of populism (Hobolt et al. 2016). Although scholars argue that this scale fails 'to capture more than mere anti-elitism' (Castanho Silva et al. 2019, 10), given the limited data available, it is the only approximation of a scale of populist attitudes that allows cross-country comparisons. We recoded the items so that high values denote higher populist attitudes and created an additive index. To measure individuals' Euroscepticism, we use information on whether European integration has already gone too far or should be pushed further (Austria, France, Germany, the Netherlands), whether a Finland that is less committed to the European Union is good or bad, whether the EU is good, bad or neither for Italy, or whether the United Kingdom should do all it can to protect its independence from the European Union. Not only do these different formulations show the necessity of multidimensional and uniform recording of attitudes towards European integration, but so does the different coding. We recoded the items so that high values indicate a more negative stance towards the process of European integration or the European Union in general. To measure political ideology, we use self-placement on the left-right scale.

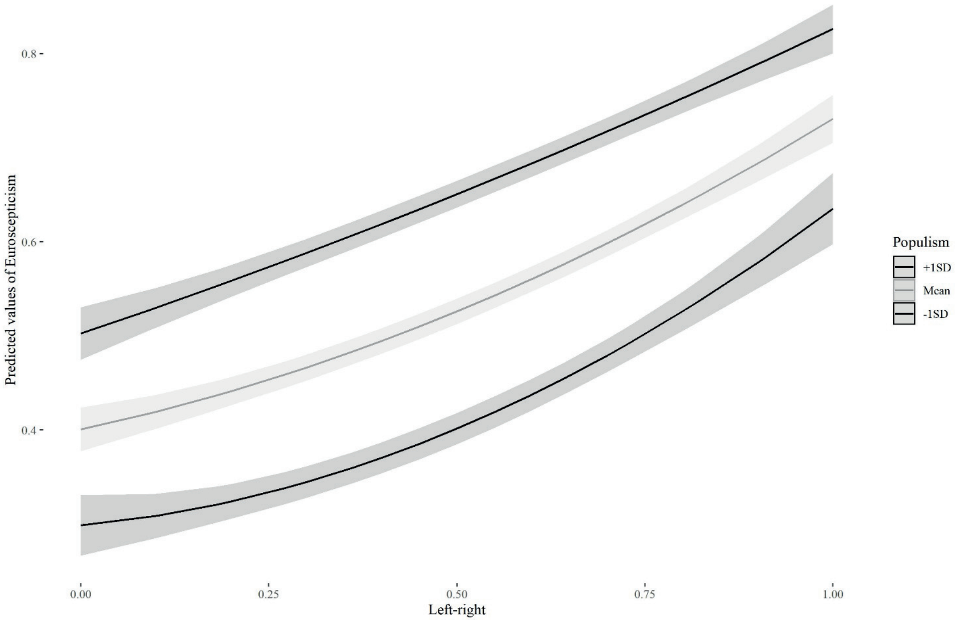
Table 10.2. Populism and Opposition to European Integration at the Voter Level

	Model 5	**Model 6**
(Intercept)	0.11*** (0.01)	0.16*** (0.03)
Populist attitudes	0.52*** (0.01)	0.44*** (0.04)
Left-right	0.21*** (0.04)	-0.06 (0.11)
Left-right^2	0.12** (0.04)	0.41*** (0.11)
Populism + Left-right		0.42* (0.17)
Populism + Left-right^2		-0.45** (0.17)
Fixed effects for countries	✓	✓
R^2	0.27	0.27
Adj. R^2	0.27	0.27
Num. obs.	11,540	11,540

Note: SE in parentheses; ***$p < 0.001$; **$p < 0.01$; *$p < 0.05$
Countries: Austria, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, United Kingdom.

We follow the same approach as in our analysis at the party level and summarise the results of our analysis at the voter level in Table 10.2. Populist attitudes have a strong positive effect on negative attitudes towards European integration. However, political ideology seems to play a different role compared with the supply side: while we find the expected U-shape in the relationship on the party level, we observe a linear effect at the individual level, according to which individuals have stronger Eurosceptical attitudes the more they place themselves ideologically on the right. This again speaks for a rather fundamental rejection of European integration in combination with a right-wing attitude, and more policy-oriented criticism and a rejection of the current functioning of the EU on the left-wing of the political spectrum. As also illustrated in Figure 10.2, the interaction between populism and host ideologies is also significant, according to which individuals with high populist attitudes in combination with a right-wing ideology are more Eurosceptical than people on the left.

Figure 10.2. Effects of Left-Right and Populism on Predicted Values of Euroscepticism, N=11,540



Conclusions

In this chapter, we have focused on the relationship between populism and Euroscepticism. We highlight that while both concepts overlap substantively, they relate to different political issues. While Euroscepticism is a specific type of criticism of the process of European integration, populism is a general belief related to the functioning of politics and democracy (Rooduijn and van Kessel 2019). Previous research has focused extensively on explaining these two political phenomena independently of each other, thereby resulting in more in-depth analyses of the relationship between populism and Euroscepticism.

To begin with the supply side, research on Euroscepticism still faces the challenge of distinguishing between fundamental rejection of European integration and more policy-related criticism and opposition. Particularly in light of the fact that the radical left and radical right differ in their criticism of European integration (Pirro, Taggart and van Kessel 2018), the question arises of to what extent current party-based measurements of Euroscepticism capture these fine-grained differences, and whether the assumption of an inverted U-shape between political ideology and Euroscepticism thus holds true. This also has far-reaching implications for research on the relationship between populism and Euroscepticism, since it raises the question of whether and to what extent populism, regardless of its host ideology, is more likely to be associated with a general rejection of the EU or policy-related criticism.

Similar questions on the relationship between populism and Euroscepticism also apply with regard to the demand side. However, the empirical evidence and available data are even worse. Given the internationalist orientation of radical left parties and their voters, and a more positive assessment of multiculturalist conceptions of society (Wegscheider and Nezi 2021), assuming an inverted U-shape for the relationship between Euroscepticism and ideology does not seems justified. Based on our conceptual considerations, however, it is likely that populism and Euroscepticism are two sides of the same coin (Rooduijn and van Kessel 2019), with Eurosceptic positions appearing as a symptom and specific articulation of populist beliefs in relation to the process of European integration.

Our empirical analysis supports the claim that populism and Euroscepticism go together and the notion that both are conceptually related. The effect of populism is largely isolated from that of ideology on the party side, whereas we see interaction between populism and ideology on the voter side. In both cases though, ideology appears as a much stronger predictor of general positions towards European integration. Generally, however, the challenge is that our measures to date lack precision and therefore do not even nearly reflect the multitude of concepts related to Euroscepticism within research literature. Further research would therefore be well advised to a) isolate the effect of populism from that of other factors such as, most prominently, the host ideology to which it is attached, b) to employ more fine-grained measures that allow us to distinguish between fundamental opposition to the idea of Europeanisation and rejection of specific policies, and c) to harmonise measurements so that they allow cross-country comparisons.

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CHAPTER 11:

THE ELECTORAL BASIS OF POPULIST PARTIES

Gilles Ivaldi

Introduction

The electoral success of populism has been one of the most significant political developments of recent decades, which accelerated dramatically in the 2010s. The relevance of the 'demand side' of populist politics is increasingly recognised in the literature on this subject (Rooduijn et al. 2017; Rooduijn 2018; Van Hauwaert and van Kessel 2018; Rama and Santana 2020; Rovira Kaltwasser and Van Hauwaert 2020; Kriesi and Schulte-Cloos 2020). This article engages in a review of that literature on the basis of electoral support for populist parties, and the motives of voters in supporting those parties. Working from the predominance of populism being defined as a 'thin ideology' (Mudde 2004), it addresses the strand of research which relates to the radical right-wing and left-wing manifestations of populism, to propose a review of current knowledge on the social and attitudinal basis of voting for radical populist parties. The last section identifies future research avenues in the field of populist electoral politics.

Populism Left and Right

The work by Cas Mudde (2004) marked an important turning point in the field of populism. A large swathe of the research on populist parties has endorsed Mudde's idea of populism as a 'thin-centred' ideology which attaches itself to other 'thicker' sets of ideas. From this argument, it follows that populism rarely exists in isolation and that it manifests itself across ideologically diverse political parties with distinct appeals to voters. In the European context, populism has been predominantly associated with the radical right. Mudde (2007) defines the ideological core of the populist radical right as a combination of nativism, authoritarianism and populism. Mudde's framework clearly focuses on nativism as the key feature of this ideology, and a similar emphasis is found in most of the literature on the populist radical right.

Populism is also found at the left end of the Western European party system (Katsambekis and Kioupkiolis 2019). The transformation of former communist and socialist parties, together with the rise of new parties, such as Podemos in Spain, the Five Star Movement (Movimento 5 Stelle, M5S) in Italy, La France Insoumise in France or SYRIZA (Coalition of the Radical Left – Progressive Alliance) in Greece, has resulted in the emergence and consolidation of a distinct radical left party family. March (2011, 8) defines the radical left ideology as one that rejects the structure and values of contemporary capitalism and advocates alternative redistributive policies in opposition to dominant market liberal economics. Rooduijn and Akkerman (2017) suggest that the contemporary radical left in Western Europe is generally populist. There is, however, greater heterogeneity in the programmatic and ideological appeals of those parties when compared with their radical right counterparts. Gomez et al. (2016) suggest, for instance, distinguishing between ‘traditional’ and ‘new politics’ radical leftist parties. Similarly, Ramiro (2016) warns against the danger of simplifying the complexity of the radical left family, acknowledging the plurality of policy mixes among those parties.

The malleability of populism and its ability to attach itself to a variety of parties and host ideologies pose a challenge to the apprehension of its electoral appeal, prompting the question of which ‘independent variable’ must be considered for analysis. Some authors, such as Rooduijn et al. (2017), suggest that populist voters differ in terms of their principal voting motivations and ideologies and that the dynamics of populist electoral mobilisation are strongly associated with the ideologies to which populism is anchored. In most cases, voting preferences are explained by variables relating to those ‘deeper’ ideologies, making it difficult to disentangle the possible effect of populism from the various sets of cultural and economic issues that are traditionally identified as sources of voting behaviour. Others such as Rama and Santana (2020) focus on commonalities between populists on the left and the right. Finally, studies such as Rovira Kaltwasser and Van Hauwaert (2020) examine the broader populist potential amongst the masses across different regional contexts and polities. Each of these various strands of literature provides valuable insights into the electoral dynamics of populism, which can be referenced into the broader comparative framework of the supply side and causes of the various manifestations of the populist phenomenon across time and space.

The Social and Attitudinal Basis of Populist Voting

Populist voting has consistent correlations with a number of socio-demographic attributes and attitudinal predispositions. Supporters of populist parties are often specified by their distinctively lower social position amongst disadvantaged groups, higher levels of political distrust and dissatisfaction, ideological extremism and opposition to European integration. However, recent literature demonstrates that populist electorates across the ideological axis are more diverse in terms of their socio-demographic characteristics and that we should be careful not to generalise findings about radical left and right voters to populist voters in general (Rooduijn et al. 2017; Rooduijn 2018; Rooduijn and Burgoon 2018). Moreover, we should not confuse studies that refer to populist ‘voters’ – i.e. those who vote for populist parties – and studies looking at populist ‘citizens’ – i.e. those who hold populist attitudes (Rovira Kaltwasser and Van Hauwaert 2020).

A Populist Gender Gap?

Most studies of the populist radical right have shown that a gender gap exists and have found that men are generally more likely to support those parties (Givens 2004; Arzheimer 2009; Zhirkov 2014; Kehrberg 2015; Han 2016; Van Hauwaert and van Kessel 2018). Harteveld et al. (2015) argue that men are more likely to attach greater salience to traditional radical right issues and that they may also be less repelled than women by the extremist reputation and political stigmatisation generally associated with those parties. Recent studies suggest, however, that the size of this gender bias varies strongly across countries (Immerzeel et al. 2013; Spierings and Zaslove 2015; see also Dingler et al. in this volume). The gender gap seems of lesser relevance in the cases of other populist manifestations. Studies of the radical left report that men are not more likely than women to support radical left-wing views (Visser et al. 2014; Beaudonnet and Gomez 2017). Ramiro (2016, 15–16) also finds considerable variation in the effect of gender across Western European countries, which may account for the absence of a more general discernible pattern. In their more recent study, Santana and Rama (2018) find that gender does not have a significant impact on voting for left-wing populists.

Populism and the Secularised Voter

In the case of the populist radical right, the relative propensity of women to support those parties is often associated with religiosity, pointing to the fact that female voters tend generally to be older and more religious (for example, Montgomery and Winter 2015, 394). Arzheimer and Carter (2009) find that religious voters are less inclined to radical right voting despite those parties claiming to defend traditional Christian values, and that religious voters remain primarily attached to traditional Christian Democratic and conservative parties. Montgomery and Winter (2015) find robust support for the assumption that Christian religiosity negatively correlates with radical right populism, while increasing the odds of voting for a party of the mainstream right. In relation to this, recent studies also suggest that conservative and traditionalist positions on issues of gender, sexuality and morality are not significant factors in support for the radical right in Western Europe (Lancaster 2020) and that a significant share of radical right-wing voters belong to a group of ‘sexually modern nativists’ whose core concerns are immigration and nationalism (Spierings et al. 2017). Similarly, Kriesi and Schulte-Cloos (2020, 5) find that cultural liberalism has no effect on the radical right-wing vote. Research on radical leftist voting provides similar evidence of those parties predominantly drawing their electoral support from secularised voters, which reflects the traditional ideological antagonism of the radical left *vis-à-vis* religion. Gomez et al. (2016) find, for instance, that radical left-wing parties do successfully attract non-religious voters and that the negative relationship with Christian religiosity is significantly stronger in the case of radical leftist parties with a ‘new left’ appeal. Ramiro (2016) provides further evidence that the likelihood of radical leftist support decreases with both religious affiliation and Church attendance, finding attendance patterns to be stronger predictors than simply belonging to a religious denomination.

Are Populist Voters the ‘Losers of Modernisation’?

The recent cross-national study of populist attitudes by Rovira Kaltwasser and Van Hauwaert (2020) shows that, in the European context, populist attitudes are predominantly found among the lower socio-economic strata. Their findings suggest that lower levels of education tend to be associated with greater support for populism. In contrast, the socio-demographic profile of populist citizens is more heterogeneous, for instance, in Latin America, where it does not necessarily fit the ‘losers of modernisation’ profile. Turning to populist voters, the numerous empirical studies of the populist radical right confirm that affinity for those parties is stronger among voters with a lower education and that the lower socio-economic strata are overrepresented among the radical right electorate (Arzheimer 2009; Kehrberg 2015; Han 2016; Lubbers and Coenders 2017). This is accounted for by the fact that voters with a higher education tend to hold more liberal values, have more favourable socio-economic positions and exhibit lower levels of political distrust, which makes them less susceptible to the xenophobic and authoritarian appeal of those parties. There is a social desirability bias associated with the radical right, and individuals with high levels of education may also be less inclined to report they vote for those parties.

There is no consistent evidence that people with a lower education are more likely to support radical populist parties of the left, however. Gomez et al. (2016) find education to have a significant effect on the probability of voting for traditional radical left-wing parties and that those parties have a larger base of support among the least educated. Ramiro (2016) reports a relatively complex U-shaped curvilinear effect, whereby support for the radical left is higher among both those with the highest educational levels and those with no formal education. Other scholars, such as Visser et al. (2014, 552), demonstrate that voters with a lower education are less likely to support the radical left than people with a tertiary education. Ramiro and Gomez (2017) suggest that Podemos voters differ from the conventional descriptions of globalisation losers found predominantly among those with a lower education. This is corroborated by Beaudonnet and Gomez (2017, 10), who examine radical left-wing voting covering a large number of parties in the 2009 and 2014 European elections, and find that education has no clear effect on the likelihood of someone supporting the radical left. Santana and Rama (2018) report similar findings with respect to educational level and find no relationship with left-wing populist voting. The study by Segatti and Capuzzi (2016) shows that parties such as Podemos, SYRIZA and the Five Star Movement achieve higher levels of support among young, highly educated urban dwellers.

These divergences are reflected in analyses of the social class determinants of populist voting. A large block of research focuses on the strong appeal of radical right populist parties to working-class voters (Rydgren 2013) and the challenge this poses to parties of the left. The ‘proletarianisation’ of the social bases of the radical right has been extensively documented in the literature on populism, and it is generally explained by cultural factors (Oesch and Rennwald 2018). Kriesi et al. (2008) argue that radical right populist parties draw most of their electoral support from ‘globalisation losers’ among the working class, the lower middle class and the unemployed, who are affected the most by modernisation, economic competition and feelings of cultural insecurity. Working-class and lower-middle-class voters are more likely to feel threatened by rapid changes in post-industrial societies and fears of ethnic competition in the job market. They tend to hold less culturally liberal views on immigration, while supporting economic redistribution, and they are also more prone to anti-establishment attitudes (van Der Brug and van Spanje 2009). Van der Brug et al. (2012, 70) suggest that the electoral weight of working-class voters varies among radical right-wing parties, but show that parties such as the Danish People’s Party (Dansk Folkeparti, DF) and the French National Rally (Rassemblement National, RN; formerly National Front, Front National, FN) share more substantial lower-class support and that Eastern European radical right-wing parties have a larger working-class base than their Western counterparts. Harteveld (2016) generalises these findings and shows that economically centrist or centre-left pro-welfare radical right parties attract larger shares of voters with lower socio-economic backgrounds compared with their more market liberal counterparts.

Looking at the relationship between populism and the economic position of voters, Elchardus and Spruyt (2016, 125) fail to identify that the economic position of voters – taken from a composite measure of income, financial assets and occupation – has a significant direct effect on their populist inclinations. The authors argue that economic vulnerability may have an indirect effect on populism inasmuch as it fosters feelings of relative deprivation and a declinist view of society, which may fuel populist sentiments. The work by Rooduijn and Burgoon (2018) corroborates such a mechanism of 'relative deprivation', whereby voters experiencing economic hardship are more likely to turn to radical parties when socio-economic circumstances are favourable. The study by Han (2016) finds support for the radical right to be generally higher among the 'poor'. Looking at interactions between country-level and individual-level variables in Western European countries, Han stresses that rising income inequality in a country increases support for the radical right among low-income earners – particularly manual workers and the lower salariat –, while decreasing it among voters with a higher income. Han contends that in adverse economic times, the poor seek to identify 'with a cross-class socio-cultural identity and increasingly shift their attention to their socio-cultural traits, such as nationalism' (63).

In contrast, there seems to be growing evidence that the populist radical left may be tapping into wider sectors of the electorate. The work by Beaudonnet and Gomez (2017, 10) refutes the assumption that manual workers or the unemployed are more prone to vote for radical left-wing parties. Ramiro and Gomez (2017) point in the same direction and show that Podemos voters in Spain do not fulfil the traditional profile of the populist voter. Their data suggest that the party is drawing support from a broader coalition of voters across all social strata, and that it is relatively more successful among educated voters hit by the economic crisis. The research by Santana and Rama (2018) finds no statistically significant effect for having a manual occupation or suffering economic difficulties on voting for left-wing populists, while 'those who are employed and who perceive a worsening of the economy are more likely to vote for those parties' (ibid., 8). The authors conclude that 'the sheer belonging to groups traditionally identified as the losers of globalization (manual workers or unemployed) does not provide LW-PPs [left-wing populist parties] any advantage in comparison to LWPs [left-wing parties]' (ibid., 12). In another study looking at European countries with both left-wing and right-wing populist parties, the authors show, however, that individuals who feel materially deprived are more prone to support a left-wing than a right-wing populist party (Rama and Santana 2020). The analysis of economic correlates of populist attitudes by Rico and Anduiza (2019) suggests that an important explanation for populist attitudes is the sociotropic evaluation by individuals of the economic situation in their country. Gomez and Ramiro (2019) show also that support for the radical left in Western Europe is positively associated with unemployment in the country, irrespective of voters' ideological affiliations and regardless of government composition – i.e. whether there is a left-wing or right-wing incumbent.

Political Distrust as a Unifier of Populist Voters

It is generally acknowledged that the background characteristics of voters have only limited explanatory power and that populist voting is primarily influenced by general ideological orientations (van der Brug et al. 2000). Existing research on the ideological profile of populist voters suggests, however, variability in the issues and attitudes that motivate support for the populist radical right and left, respectively. In a recent study, Kriesi and Schulte-Cloos (2020) suggest that support for radical right-wing and radical left-wing actors is rooted in distinct types of socio-structural conflicts – i.e. the new demarcation-integration conflict for the radical right and a renewed version of the old class conflict for the radical left – and that their translation into electoral choice is conditioned by individual political discontent.

There is a large consensus in the literature on populism that radical right populist parties typically mobilise support on the socio-cultural dimension, most particularly by politicising immigration and law-and-order issues (Norris 2005; Rydgren 2008; Dunn 2015). Anti-immigrant attitudes are presented as crucial determinants of radical right-wing voting and the strongest predictors of electoral support for those parties (Lubbers et al. 2002; Ivarsflaten 2005; van der Brug et al. 2005; Arzheimer 2009; Zhirkov 2014; Kehrberg 2015; Stockemer 2016). Van Hauwaert and van Kessel (2018) show that individuals who are more prejudiced towards immigrants are more likely to support right-wing populists, as are individuals who hold authoritarian attitudes. Populist radical right-wing voters perceive immigrants as both a cultural and an economic threat. The study by Lucassen and Lubbers (2012) reveals that cultural fears are predominant among radical right supporters. Other research, such as that by De Koster et al. (2013), shows that those voters exhibit significant welfare chauvinism, that is, a 'system of social protection only for those who belong to the ethnically defined community and who have contributed to it' (Kitschelt 1995, 22). Lubbers and Coenders (2017) find that voting for radical right-wing parties is associated with national pride and an ethnic conception of nationhood.

In contrast, traditional economic issues are generally considered of lesser relevance to radical right-wing populist voting (Mudde 2007). Cross-national studies suggest that the social groups attracted by the radical right often share heterogeneous if not conflicting views about the economy, which are filtered by cultural issues (Ivarsflaten 2005). The study by Allen (2017) emphasises regional differences, pointing to the more leftist economic orientation in post-communist far right voters in Eastern Europe. Authors such as De Koster et al. (2013) propose that diverging socio-economic preferences among populist voters are reconciled by a mix of egalitarianism and welfare state criticism. Derks (2006) argues similarly that electoral support for right-wing populism is strongly influenced by 'economic populism', which is defined as the combination of egalitarianism and anti-welfarism.

Economic issues achieve greater importance among the populist radical left. The study by Van Hauwaert and van Kessel (2018) suggests that individuals with left-wing positions on economic issues are more likely to support left-wing populist parties. Since 2008, economic issues have also been associated with the unfolding of the global financial crisis. Beaudonnet and Gomez (2017) find, for instance, that voters with negative retrospective views on the economy show a greater tendency to support the radical left. The authors find the impact of economic evaluations to have significantly increased since 2009. As suggested earlier, there seems to be convergent evidence that the economic crisis has enabled the radical left to build a broader yet more heterogeneous electoral base of support (Beaudonnet and Gomez 2017; Ramiro and Gomez 2017; Santana and Rama 2018). In cultural terms, left-wing populist supporters tend to be more liberal and they generally hold left-leaning attitudes (Van Hauwaert and van Kessel 2018; Kriesi and Schulte-Cloos 2020). However, recent studies, such as that by Rama and Santana (2020), suggest that left-wing populist voters may share similar anti-immigration attitudes with their right-wing counterparts and that populist voters across the board tend to converge on negative perceptions of immigration. Additionally, Santana and Rama (2018) show that left-wing populist voters take more restrictive stances on immigration when contrasted with their mainstream counterparts on the left.

One aspect which stands out as a possible unifier of populist voters across time and space is political distrust and disillusionment with mainstream politics. Many studies outline the relationship between populist voting and dissatisfaction with the political system, demonstrating that those who are less satisfied with politics are more prone to support populist parties. The vast literature on the radical right corroborates this link (for example, Lubbers et al. 2002; Arzheimer 2009; Werts et al. 2013; Zhirkov 2014; Kehrberg 2015; Lubbers and Coenders 2017), a pattern which is of course consistent with those parties' profile as populist anti-establishment actors. Similarly, political distrust is identified as a key factor in the electoral dynamics of the populist radical left. Studies such as that by Gomez et al. (2016) indicate that dissatisfaction with democracy considerably increases the probability of radical left-wing voting, while others point to the significance of a 'disaffected voter' syndrome (Ramiro 2016, 20). Looking at the attitudinal basis of support for Podemos in Spain, Ramiro and Gomez (2017) confirm that the party has assembled a cross-sectional coalition of voters hit by the crisis and deeply dissatisfied with mainstream politics, who hold negative views on both the government and the opposition.

Further empirical evidence of the relevance of political disaffection in populist voting is provided by comparative studies of left-wing and right-wing manifestations of populism. Ivaldi and Zaslove (2015) find that supporters of European populist parties on the left and right demonstrate higher levels of mistrust towards political institutions. Schumacher and Rooduijn (2013) demonstrate that 'protest attitudes', which the authors define as an expression of anti-elitist feelings, are strong motivations for people to vote for populist parties on both the left and the right, and that populist voters differ in this respect from those of the mainstream. Using a path analysis of Dutch panel data, Rooduijn et al. (2016) look symmetrically at this relationship, demonstrating that political discontent fuels support for populist parties but that the anti-establishment message of these parties may also cause political dissatisfaction among voters. Rama and Santana (2020) examine more specifically countries where left-wing and right-wing populist parties compete against one another and show that individuals who mistrust political parties are more likely to support a left-wing than a right-wing populist party. Kriesi and Schulte-Cloos (2020) find an independent effect of political dissatisfaction for both types of radical parties.

Recent studies have been able to go beyond findings on political trust in the existing literature on populism, emphasising the impact of populist attitudes amongst voters. The findings by Akkerman et al. (2014) from a sample of Dutch voters show that populist party preferences are interrelated with populist attitudes and that holding such attitudes significantly increases the probability of people supporting populist parties. The cross-national study of nine European countries by Van Hauwaert and van Kessel (2018) confirms that populist attitudes are strong predictors of the populist vote on both the left and right of the spectrum, and that such attitudes may serve as a 'motivational substitute' to stimulate populist support amongst individuals removed from extreme issue positions on the economic and cultural dimensions. More generally, Rovira Kaltwasser and Van Hauwaert (2020) show that populist citizens are supportive of democracy in general while being dissatisfied with how it actually functions.

Populists Opposing Europe?

Finally, there is a wealth of empirical evidence which shows that the populist backlash today is being increasingly directed against European integration (Kneuer 2019; Kriesi 2020), which also attests to the connection between populist anti-establishment and anti-EU attitudes among voters. It has been shown that Euroscepticism is a common trait of most radical right-wing populist parties (Vasilopoulou 2011), which stems from the perception of the EU as a major driver of immigration, multiculturalism and economic liberalisation, and as a primarily elite-driven project. Recent work by Kriesi and Schulte-Cloos (2020, 5) corroborates that Euroscepticism contributes to both the radical right and radical left vote in Europe. A large number of studies have highlighted that opposition to European integration is strongly related to voting for the populist radical right (for example, Lubbers and Scheepers 2007; Arzheimer 2009). The work by Werts et al. (2013) demonstrates that Euroscepticism is a predictor of voting for the radical right and that it has a significant independent effect beyond the perceived ethnic threat and political distrust (see also Lubbers and Coenders 2017, 111).

Similar evidence is found to the left of the European party system. Recent research points to an increase in the salience of European integration issues and growing Euroscepticism among radical left-wing voters. March and Rommerskirchen (2015) show that macroeconomic adversity and a high level of public Euroscepticism in a country provide fertile ground for the electoral success of the radical left. Looking at individual-level determinants of voting for the radical left, Ramiro (2016) finds support for those parties to be strongly associated with negative opinions about EU membership. The analysis by Gomez et al. (2016) corroborates the relationship between Euroscepticism and voting for the radical left, suggesting that negative views of the EU are more pronounced among supporters of traditional leftist parties compared with those of the radical 'new left'. Looking more specifically at the impact of the global financial crisis, Beaudonnet and Gomez (2017, 16) find that voter support for the radical left in Europe is increasingly based on Eurosceptical attitudes, and argue that those parties have also been able to attract pro-EU voters dissatisfied with the management of the economic crisis and austerity policies imposed by national and EU elites. Santana and Rama (2018) suggest that voters who are most critical *vis-à-vis* the EU are more prone to support left-wing populist than mainstream parties. Looking at competition between leftist and rightist populists, Rama and Santana (2020) find no significant difference with regard to attitudes towards European integration and show that individuals with negative views on the EU are equally likely to vote for both types of populist parties.

Future Populism Research

A Global Perspective on Populism

There are a number of questions worth exploring in future research on the electoral basis of populism. First, while significant progress has been made, future studies should expand on the burgeoning literature that focuses on a comparative analysis of the left-wing and right-wing variants of electoral populism (for example, Lefkofridi and Casado-Asensio 2013; Ivaldi et al. 2017; Rama and Santana 2020). More research is needed on the electoral dynamics of populist politics to explore which common features populist voters across the spectrum may share and which may, on the other hand, oppose them. More cross-regional analyses of populism are also desirable in future studies. We agree with Castelli Gattinara (2020) that we should go beyond the traditional 'Eurocentrism' in populism studies. Contemporary populism is widespread in Europe and America, and scholars should be encouraged to cover populism across a broader geographical range and different regional contexts (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2012; De la Torre 2015; Oliver and Rahn 2016; Hawkins and Littvay 2019; Ivaldi and Mazzoleni 2019; Rovira Kaltwasser and Van Hauwaert 2020). Exploring the interconnection between the experiences of populism across continents further might help inform our understanding of the electoral performances of populism.

Future research should also address the generalisability and travelling potential of concepts and theories of populist mobilisation across both established and new democracies. The literature on radical right-wing politics in the post-communist states of Eastern Europe suggests, for instance, that the radical right has been able to capitalise on specific political and economic grievances that have emerged from the processes of democratisation and transition towards a market economy (for instance, Bustikova and Kitschelt 2009; Bustikova 2014; Minkenberg 2015; Pirro 2015; Pytlas 2016; Allen 2017). Additionally, new 'centrist' anti-establishment parties have become successful competitors in Central and Eastern Europe (Havlík and Voda 2018; Engler 2020). These parties share some of the core features of populism and we should therefore further investigate areas of commonalities with other populist voters across both sides of the former Iron Curtain. Finally, we should expand our knowledge base of right-wing authoritarian populism in emerging economies, and explore the socio-economic, cultural and political factors behind the rise of those actors in countries such as India, Indonesia, Brazil and Turkey.

The Populist Politics of Globalisation

In current research literature, the populist phenomenon is increasingly seen as a political backlash against globalisation (Rodrik 2018). As regards the demand side of the rise of populism, we clearly need more empirical research that explores the mechanisms linking specific forms of populism to different globalisation shocks, i.e. economic, cultural and political, and the complex interactions between such factors (Colantone and Stanig 2018; Guiso et al. 2019; Hays et al. 2019). Authors such as Hooghe and Marks (2018) describe the emergence of a new 'transnational' cleavage which emphasises the defence of national political, social and economic ways of life against external threats, and which produces new political opportunities for populist entrepreneurs. In the European context, we also need more studies that bridge the literature on populism and that related to Euroscepticism to explore the connection between populist and anti-EU voter attitudes and help refine the traditional 'horseshoe' hypothesis (van Elsas et al. 2016). Additionally, an important and fast expanding area of research relates to the intersection between populism and sovereignism. Sovereignism is at the crux of the current wave of radical right-wing populism, and we should explore further how populism and sovereignism may be connected through a set of attitudes that emphasise popular and national sovereignty, and how these attitudes may shape electoral behaviour across a variety of actors and contexts (Basile et al. 2020; Mazzoleni and Ivaldi 2020).

Populism and the Coronavirus

One final area of research concerns the coronavirus pandemic and its repercussions. Future studies should examine the electoral impact of the outbreak and global spread of the new coronavirus. Early research, such as that by Fetzer et al. (2020), documents the rapid emergence of economic anxiety, which has the potential to affect political support. Looking at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Bol et al. (2020, 6) show that emergency lockdowns have primarily increased support for incumbents, and that this has had a 'positive spillover effect' on trust in governments and satisfaction with democracy. However, future populist mobilisation may tap into the many frustrations and exploit whatever economic or cultural anxieties and grievances that the pandemic will inevitably produce across many democracies.

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CHAPTER 12:

POPULIST PARTIES IN POWER AND THEIR IMPACT ON LIBERAL DEMOCRACIES IN WESTERN EUROPE

Tjitske Akkerman

Introduction

Populist parties are widely perceived as a threat to liberal democracies. Now that populist parties are increasingly participating in national governments, their impact on policies and polities should be at the centre of scholarly attention. This chapter will discuss the effects of radical right-wing populist parties on the quality of liberal democracies when they gain executive power. Its focus will be on their impact on consolidated democracies in Western Europe. Populist parties entered the Western European political scene as important players in the 1990s. These parties were predominantly right-wing parties. Left-wing populist parties have been far less successful in the past few decades; only SYRIZA in Greece and Podemos in Spain have managed to gain governmental power. Right-wing populist parties, in contrast, have entered office in various countries.

Right-wing populism is predominantly a *radical right-wing* phenomenon in Western Europe (Rooduijn and Akkerman 2017). Although there are some centre-right populist parties, such as Forward Italy (Forza Italia, FI), and unclassifiable populist parties like the Five Star Movement (Movimento 5 Stelle, M5S), radical right-wing parties, like the Freedom Party of Austria (Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs, FPÖ), the Danish People's Party (Dansk Folkeparti, DF), the Norwegian Progress Party (Fremskrittspartiet, FrP), the Finns Party (Perussuomalaiset, PS), the Dutch Party for Freedom (Partij voor de Vrijheid, PVV), the Swiss People's Party (Schweizerische Volkspartei, SVP) and the League (Lega, formerly Northern League, Lega Nord, LN), have been the most successful in setting up a populist profile (Rooduijn et al. 2014). The disloyalty of populist parties to the political establishment and their aspirations of changing both the formal and informal rules of the game contrast starkly with the commitment of established parties to the *status quo* (Abedi 2004; Akkerman et al. 2016). Moreover, populists differentiate themselves from centrist parties – namely Christian democratic, conservative, liberal and social democratic parties – by taking radical positions on economic or cultural issues (Meguid 2005; Adams et al. 2006).

Defining Populism

Populism has become a large encompassing framework for understanding political phenomena. The most elementary characteristic of populist ideology in Western Europe is the separation of society into two antagonistic groups: the pure people versus the corrupt elites (Mudde 2007). The antagonism between the people and the elites can be defined in political, cultural or economic terms (Mény and Surel 2000). The definition of the people varies historically as well as regionally (Canovan 1981). Nowadays, populists in Western Europe define the people and the elites primarily in political terms. Left-wing and right-wing populists both position political dissatisfaction with the domination of elites in liberal and representative democracies at the centre of their discourses. While both types of populists target political elites, left-wing populists also attack economic elites. In contrast, radical right-wing populist parties (RRPPs) tend to emphasise *cultural* antagonism between elites and the people. They define the people as culturally homogeneous, adhering to the idea that only members of the native group belong to the people, and that non-native people and ideas are fundamentally threatening to the nation state (Mudde 2007). This nativist populism has been translated programmatically into anti-immigration stances, and more recently into anti-European Union and anti-Islamic positions.

Populism and Democracy

Populists are opposed to the predominant *liberal* form of western democracies (Mudde 2007; Rovira Kaltwasser 2014; Müller 2016). They reject a conception of democracy based on the idea that the rule of law, division of power through checks and balances, and constitutionalism are essential for the protection of individual rights. Liberal democracy also presumes that society comprises plural groups with diverging interests, while populists perceive society to be divided by a single cleavage between the people and elites. Their ideal is a majoritarian type of democracy founded on the general will of the people. For them, the will of the majority – often channelled through a strong leader – should be supreme. Some scholars argue that populism is not only a threat but also a corrective to liberal democracy. Populism may counter the propensity of liberal democracy to move too far away from its foundations in popular sovereignty and to delegate too much power to elites (Mény and Surel 2002; Schmitter 2007; Plattner 2010; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2012). The idea that populism should be regarded as a potential corrective to democracy presupposes that populists aim to restore the balance between pluralist elite rule and the will of the majority.

These views of populism – as an anti-liberal threat or a corrective to liberal democracy – skate on rather thin theoretical ice. Populism is a thin ideology with little intellectual backing from authoritative texts. Populist analyses of what is wrong with current democracies, what kind of future society should replace them and what means are required to build up an alternative society are not very well elaborated. It is no wonder that some call it a style or discourse rather than an ideology (Stanley 2008; Aslanidis 2015). The thinness of populism does not provide sufficient grounds for settling the key debate about its impact on liberal democracies. It leaves room for a wide range of interpretations. Empirical evidence is therefore crucial. Evidence to substantiate one claim or another is often randomly gathered from various regions. Populists like Hugo Chávez and Rafael Correa in Latin America or Viktor Orbán in Eastern Europe are often used as examples to demonstrate what the phrase ‘empowerment of the people’ really means. These populist leaders have undertaken constitutional reforms that systematically curtail the power of parliament, the media, the judiciary and civil society. The results are authoritarian, illiberal regimes based on plebiscitarian politics combined with strong leadership. It is rash to presume that populist parties in Western Europe not only aim to copy them but will also be able to do so. Regional contexts differ fundamentally with respect to institutional and cultural constraints. Moreover, populism itself varies according to regional contexts.

The core ideology of populist parties appears to be highly relevant to assessing the threat to liberal democracy. Ideologically RRPPs exclude large parts of the population as not being a legitimate part of 'the people'. Left-wing populist parties, on the other hand, emphasise an inclusive *demos* (Rooduijn and Akkerman 2017; Akkerman 2020). The policies of right-wing populists appear to affect minority rights negatively, while those of left-wing populist parties tend to have positive effects (Huber and Schimpf 2017). It should be noticed, though, that with respect to other aspects of democracy, such as checks and balances, the distinction is less clear. (Huber and Schimpf 2017; Akkerman 2020) To assess the impact of populism on democracies in Western Europe, it is justifiable to focus on the threat of radical right-wing populism. RRPPs tend to be considered to be the most apparent threat in Western Europe. Not only do they affect minority rights negatively, but they also have a more powerful electoral and executive presence than radical left-wing populist parties.

Mapping the Research Field

RRPPs in Western Europe have not only been electorally successful during the past few decades, but they have increasingly joined coalitions in various countries. The first radical right-wing party to enter government in Western Europe was the Northern League (Lega Nord, LN) in 1996. This was a short experiment that demonstrated the difficulties populist newcomers experience in governing. After the turn of the millennium, beginning with the Freedom Party of Austria (Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs, FPÖ), which entered a coalition government with the Austrian People's Party (Österreichische Volkspartei, ÖVP) in 2000, RRPPs have been on the march towards executive power. Based on the definition outlined above, we can identify nine radical right-wing populist parties that have participated in 25 cabinets either as formal coalition parties or formal supporting parties of minority governments in Western Europe since the turn of the millennium.

Table 12.1: Radical Right-Wing Populist Parties in Office

Country	Party	Cabinet	Composition	Period
Austria	FPÖ	Schüssel I	ÖVP-FPÖ	2000-2005
	BZÖ	Schüssel I	ÖVP-BZÖ	2005-2006
	FPÖ	Kurz I	ÖVP-BZÖ	2017-2019
Denmark	DF	A.F.Rasmussen I	V-KF-(DF)	2001-2005
	DF	A.F.Rasmussen II	V-KF-(DF)	2005-2007
	DF	A.F.Rasmussen III	V-KF-(DF)	2007-2009
	DF	L.L.Rasmussen I	V-KF-(DF)	2009-2011
	DF	L.L.Rasmussen II	V-(DF)	2015-2016
	DF	L.L.Rasmussen III	V-LA-KF (DF)	2016-2019
Finland	PS	Sipilae I	KESK-KOK-PS	2015-2017
Italy	LN	Berlusconi I	FI-AN-LN-CCD-UCD	1994-1994
	LN	Berlusconi II/III	FI-AN-LN	2001-2006
	LN	Berlusconi IV	PdL-LN-MpA	2008-2011
	LN	Conte I	M5S-LN	2018-2019
Netherlands	LPF	Balkenende I	CDA-LPF-VVD	2003-2003
	PVV	Rutte I	VVD-CDA-(PVV)	2010-2012
Norway	FrP	Solberg I	H-FrP	2013-2017
	FrP	Solberg II	H-FrP	2017-2018
	FrP	Solberg III	H-FrP-V	2018-2019
	FrP	Solberg IV	H-FrP-V-KrF	2019-2020
Switzerland	SVP	-	-	2003-2007
	SVP	-	-	2007-2011
	SVP	-	-	2011-2015
	SVP	-	-	2015-2019
	SVP	-	-	2019-

Notes: FPÖ: Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs; BZÖ: Bündnis Zukunft Österreich; DF: Dansk Folkeparti; PS: Perussuomalaiset; LN: Lega Nord; LPF: Lijst Pim Fortuyn; PVV: Partij Voor de Vrijheid; FrP: Fremskrittspartiet; SVP: Schweizerische Volkspartei.

Research devoted to RRPPs' performance in government and their impact on liberal democratic systems or civic cultures is still relatively scarce. There are numerous case studies but only a few systematic studies which investigate the impact that these parties have when they participate in national governments. Admittedly, systematic research in this field is not always easy.

Impact is a complex phenomenon that can be exerted in various fields including public opinion and debate, electoral competition, policy areas and political institutions. Moreover, an impact can be exerted in different political arenas at the same time. RRPPs may have considerable indirect influence once they break through electorally and gain entry to national parliaments (Schain 2006). Electoral success pressures other parties to reconsider their policy agendas with respect to the key issues that RRPPs have successfully politicised. The step from opposition to government provides these parties with opportunities to increase their impact directly through executive action. The difficulty is that, in the latter case, agenda setting and policy effects are still also mediated at several levels through interaction with other political parties and parliament (Heinisch 2003). Analytically disentangling the impact of RRPPs through government power from their impact as successful opposition parties can be a daunting task. Case studies can successfully provide some insight into distinctions between indirect and direct impact (Bale and Hampshire 2015).

Research focusing on Western Europe comparing the impact of RRPPs in opposition and in government suggests that their impact in government should not be overrated. While the electoral rise of radical right-wing populist parties contributes to more restrictive trends with respect to the rights and freedoms of minorities, it is far from clear that their access to executive power accelerates such trends (Akkerman and de Lange 2012; Akkerman 2012; Carvalho 2016). RRPPs are probably more effective in shaping policies through electoral success and blackmailing power when they are in opposition rather than when they gain executive power (see Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2012, 209). A large-n study by Huber and Schimpf (2017) including RRPPs in Eastern as well as Western Europe, indicates that RRPPs have a (negative) impact on minority rights and checks and balances both when they are in government and when they are in opposition. However, Spittler (2018) concludes in a large-n study that there is only a negative impact – on individual rights – when these parties are in government. The negative effects found in these studies, however, are mainly attributable to Eastern Europe.

The Impact of Radical Right-Wing Populists in Government

RRPPs in Western Europe do not tend to attack liberal democracy explicitly. No leader of a radical right-wing populist party in Western Europe has voiced their aversion to liberalism as clearly as Viktor Orbán, Hungary's prime minister and leader of the populist party Fidesz – Hungarian Civic Alliance. He openly defied liberal democracy and praised 'illiberal democracy' when he was re-elected in 2014. Although RRPPs in Western Europe tend to refrain from explicitly promoting an alternative, illiberal model of democracy, various leaders of these parties openly admire Orbán (Akkerman 2020). Although RRPPs do not attack liberal democracy as such, they pursue anti-immigration policies that conflict with the fundamental freedoms and rights of 'non-native' groups. Moreover, they tend to attack press freedoms and independent courts (Wodak 2019, 206; Akkerman 2020; Holtz-Bacha 2020, 117; Petrov 2020; Voeten 2020).

Notwithstanding the electoral success of RRPPs and their increasing participation in government, until some years ago there was a consensus that these parties were not very effective in challenging democratic rights and freedoms (Minkenberg 2001; Akkerman and de Lange 2012). Case studies of the Austrian coalition government, which included the FPÖ from 2000 until 2005, the Berlusconi governments including Lega Nord between 2001 and 2011, or the Swiss governments including the SVP after 2003 have indicated that in Western Europe such negative effects were absent (Duncan 2010; Albertazzi and Müller 2013; Bobba and McDonnell 2015; Fallend and Heinisch 2015; Verbeek and Zaslove 2015). However, with the unabated electoral rise and some unexpected successes of these parties in 2016, such as the UK Independence Party (UKIP) winning the Brexit referendum and Donald Trump winning the presidential election in the US, concerns regarding their impact on liberal democracies have increased. Moreover, some RRPPs are becoming more experienced in governing and learning to avoid beginners' mistakes (Rensmann et al 2017).

Even though Western European countries still rank as the most democratic in the world and most countries are considered full democracies, some countries have suffered partial score declines in the protection of the rights of migrants and refugees, including the rights to due process, freedom from discrimination and to seek asylum (Freedom House 2019a). Denmark, for instance, where the Danish People's Party supported minority cabinets from 2001-2011 and 2015-2019, stands out as an established democracy that enacted measures to curtail the rights of asylum seekers (Freedom House 2017). Press freedoms are also under attack from populist parties (Freedom House 2019b; Kenny 2020). In countries where populist parties hold a majority and take part in government, they can change media laws to curtail the freedom of the press. In Western Europe, however, more indirect methods prevail. RRPPs in government have targeted public service broadcasting in particular (Holtz-Bacha 2020, 116). Press freedom in Austria declined in particular during the ÖVP-FPÖ government in the last months of 2019 according to the World Press Freedom Index (Reporters Without Borders 2020). However, all countries in Western Europe still rank as good or fairly good on this list.

With respect to constraints on executive power, there is some evidence of negative effects when RRPPs govern (Huber and Schimpf 2017). RRPPs most openly attack the role of international courts, such as the European Court of Human Rights. Yet, the impact on the ECHR as an institution has been negligible so far (Voeten 2017; Petrov 2020). The impact of RRPPs on domestic courts or parliaments is still largely unexplored (Lacey 2019). Although there are some signs of a negative impact, there is not an overall and clear trend that established democracies in Western Europe are backsliding (van Beek et al. 2018). A large-n cross-regional study concluded that populists do not have a significant effect when the quality of democracy is high (Ruth-Lovell et al. 2019). In sum, liberal democracy in Western Europe has on the whole remained foolproof against the attacks of RRPPs, notwithstanding partial declines in freedoms.

Empowering the People?

Populism has been claimed to be a corrective, positive force that may restore the balance between elite rule and the will of the majority of the people. Populists regard mainstream parties and their representative institutions with suspicion, and often aim to introduce more tools of direct democracy, such as popular initiatives and referendums (Mudde 2007, 153). Referendums have been on the rise for some decades with populist parties joining the chorus of post-materialist supporters such as green and libertarian parties more recently. However, they do not seem to have had much success in bringing about major reforms in this area when in government. The FPÖ, for instance, had a policy agreement with its coalition partner the ÖVP in the Schüssel I cabinet (2000-2002) to introduce a citizen-initiated referendum, but failed to get it accepted (Jacobs 2011, 104–108). Major reforms such as the introduction of a referendum are difficult to realise because they often require supermajorities. It is more promising for RRPPs to make use of referendums to realise their policy goals. In Switzerland, the referendum arena offers the SVP an exceptionally favourable opportunity to take part in government, while also maintaining a profile as a protest party and shaping the agenda around its own issues, namely those of Europe and immigration (Mazzoleni 2016). RRPPs have been mostly successful in this respect when in opposition, however. They have been particularly active in mobilising no votes in Eurosceptic referendums. Since 2005, a majority of the national referendums that have been held on EU policies have been won by the anti-EU side, consisting to a large extent of radical right and radical left populist parties (Rose 2019, 215). The successful campaign for the no vote against the proposed EU Constitution in France and the Netherlands in 2005 was supported by radical right-wing populist parties together with radical left-wing populist parties (Startin and Krouwel 2013). UKIP was a crucial player in the result of the Brexit referendum (Bale 2008). The Dutch radical right party Forum for Democracy (Forum voor Democratie, FVD) was one of the initiators of the successful referendum against the Association Treaty of the EU with Ukraine in 2016 (Hendriks et al. 2017, 19–28). Whether RRPPs 'empower the people' in this way is questionable, however.

RRPPs may succeed in giving a voice to groups that do not feel represented politically and in mobilising excluded sections of society (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2012). There is some evidence that RRPPs manage to make democratic participation more inclusive by mobilising disaffected non-voters. (Anduiza et al. 2019) For instance, the Pim Fortuyn List (Lijst Pim Fortuyn, LPF) in the Netherlands and Flemish Interest (Vlaams Belang, VB) in Belgium have managed to engage specific groups of citizens (van Praag 2003; de Lange and Akkerman 2012). However, this does not necessarily lead to an increase in turnout among dissatisfied voters (de Lange and Akkerman 2012). Systematic analysis of turnout at national elections in Western Europe shows that RRPPs do not encourage groups of voters who feel excluded to participate in elections (Immerzeel and Pickup 2015; Anduiza et al. 2019; Leningen and Meijers 2020; Zaslove et al. 2021). Populist right-wing voters tend to engage more in non-electoral participation, such as demonstrating, petitioning or online activism, than other voters. (Pirro and Portos 2021) With respect to referendums, Jacobs and colleagues (2018) find that dissatisfied voters are more supportive of referendums but not more likely to turn out to vote. To sum up, there is no evidence that RRPPs have an impact on making liberal democracies more direct when in government, but they may contribute to voters who feel excluded by mainstream parties engaging in non-electoral forms of participation.

Explanations

It is clear that the impact of populists in government is much more limited in Western Europe than in regions like Latin America or Eastern Europe (Ruth-Lovell et al. 2019). In Latin America or Eastern Europe, populists have established illiberal and authoritarian democracies by gaining a supermajority in government and/or by taking advantage of weak democratic institutions. In Western Europe, they have been constrained above all by proportional electoral systems. Their executive power to establish fundamental reforms through constitutional changes is relatively weak as they lack supermajorities. With the exception of the Swiss People's Party and Lega Nord in the Conte I cabinet, RRPPs have not managed to gain a simple majority of seats in parliament. This implies that they have been mostly junior parties in coalition governments. Coalition governments require compromises (Fallend and Heinisch 2015). For instance, when PS entered the Finnish government in 2015, the party was pushed into concessions on asylum policies and European integration (Widfeldt 2018). The role of coalition partners should not be overestimated, however. RRPPs are largely dependent on coalitions with mainstream right-wing parties in Western Europe. Comparative research indicates that mainstream right-wing parties only incidentally manage to pressure RRPPs to moderate their anti-immigration positions, their EU scepticism or their populist rhetoric when forming coalitions. They only have a constraining effect on their anti-establishment behaviour (Akkerman et al. 2016).

Another important constraint is voter support. Voters in Western Europe value the legitimacy of parties. When voters perceive RRPPs to be anti-democratic, they are less inclined to vote for them (Bos and van der Brug 2010). Electoral considerations are, therefore, also important in restraining these parties from too openly attacking liberal democracies in Western Europe. Although there has been some decline in support of democratic values among younger generations, the overall high level of support for democratic values in Western Europe has restrained RRPPs from implementing their agendas so far (Rovira Kaltwasser and Taggart 2016; Kriesi 2020). Moreover, the ability of RRPPs to gain executive power has been curbed by relatively strong institutions. Strong judiciaries, in particular, prevent RRPPs from curtailing fundamental freedoms (Albertazzi and Müller 2013). Rigid constitutions and constitutional courts are highly important when fundamental freedoms are at stake. In the case of Switzerland, for instance, the absence of a constitutional tribunal, in combination with strong, direct democracy, provides the SVP with relatively favourable preconditions (Mazzoleni 2016). In other countries, however, constitutional courts have watered down the impact of RRPPs in government on legislation affecting minority rights. The Austrian Constitutional Court, for instance, rejected several directives from the Schussel I and II cabinets consisting of the ÖVP and FPÖ that curtailed the rights of asylum seekers, and the Italian Constitutional Court, for instance, constrained the impact of Lega Nord when it questioned the legitimacy of the deportation of irregular immigrants in 2004 (Albertazzi and Müller 2013, 352–3; Carvalho 2016).

European courts and conventions are also proving to provide important backup in this respect (Müller 2013; Fallend and Heinisch 2015). The European Court of Human Rights, for instance, adjudged the rejection of boatloads of mainly African immigrants by Lega Nord, when it was in charge of the Italian Interior Ministry between 2009-2013, to be a violation of the European Convention on Human Rights (Albertazzi and Müller 2013, 354). Lega Nord, however, has continued to engage in such initiatives. The current leader of Lega Nord, Matteo Salvini, faces trial at the moment of writing for blocking a migrant ship off Italy's coast in August 2019, when he was interior minister in the Conte I cabinet. The role of strong parliaments in restraining RRPPs is also an important factor. Parties in opposition have effectively resisted the anti-liberal reform agendas of RRPPs. Left-wing parties, in particular, can be an important constraining force here (Fallend and Heinisch 2015; Verbeek and Zaslove 2015).

Conclusions

RRPPs have clearly not managed to fundamentally reshape polities in Western Europe. They show little respect for traditional media, checks and balances or international courts, do not refrain from policy proposals and legislative initiatives that conflict with minority rights, and they have sometimes affected these rights negatively. Yet, there is no clear and overall trend that democracy in Western Europe is backsliding. Proportional electoral systems, voter support for liberal democratic values, the opposition of parliaments, and national and international courts have constrained the impact of RRPPs on minority rights, press freedoms or independent courts. While the electoral success of these parties has certainly contributed to a partial decline in the rights of immigrants and asylum seekers, it is far from clear that their increasing access to executive power has accelerated such trends. The threat of RRPPs has not been turned into reality, and their promise to 'empower the people' has not been very effective either. The idea that populists in opposition or in government contribute positively by increasing the turnout of dissatisfied voters in elections or referendums does not hold true.

The conclusion that RRPPs have not managed to fundamentally reshape liberal democracies in Western Europe does not mean that they fail to make their message heard. Their impact may be more significant when it comes to subtler forms of erosion, but research tracing such nuanced forms of their impact is still scarce. Press freedom, for instance, is not so much under pressure from legislative changes or outright repression in Western Europe, but from less sweeping mechanisms such as proactive support of friendly outlets through lucrative state contracts or preferential access to state information, while critics can be quashed with regulatory and financial pressure, public denunciation of honest journalists or intimidation on social media (Freedom House 2019b). Moreover, the attacks of RRPPs on international and domestic courts may not have much structural impact, but their legitimacy may suffer. Courts becoming more reluctant to refer to norms set by international law, for instance, may indicate such a decline in their legitimacy (Brandes 2019; Voeten 2019). Broadening the indicators of impact to include more nuanced ways in which RRPPs (or other political parties) affect liberal democracies in Western Europe should therefore be high on the research agenda.

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CHAPTER 13:

HOW FAR DOES NATIONALISM GO? AN OVERVIEW OF POPULIST PARTIES IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Sergiu Gherghina, Sergiu Miscoiu and Sorina Soare

Introduction

Populism is one of the central concepts in contemporary politics. Its importance is accompanied by controversies in both analytical and practical terms. Since Ionescu and Gellner (1969) reopened the discussion about how populism can be defined, its conceptual solidity has become controversial (van Kessel 2014; Hawkins et al. 2019). The negative emotional charge carried by populism has often been used to criticise its normative and evaluative biases (Mudde 2007; Rovira Kaltwasser et al. 2017). In post-communist countries, these normative judgements rapidly proliferated and, soon after regime change, populism was perceived as a major threat to democracy (Jowitt 1992). Beyond the regional focus, over the last two decades a particularly fertile collection of literature has brought numerous conceptual refinements to populism, clarified its meaning and addressed the challenge of its normative valence (Mudde 2016; 2017). Populism is now considered both a legitimate and a necessary concept.

The literature on populism refers both to empirical facts, such as the expansion of electoral support for populist parties across Europe and on almost all other continents (Gherghina et al. 2013; van Kessel 2015; Rovira Kaltwasser et al. 2017; Norris 2020; Gherghina and Fagan 2021), and to the perception that populism represents a major challenge for contemporary democracies (Abts and Rummens 2007; Mudde 2007; Pytlas 2018; Norris and Inglehart 2019). This is also the case in Central and Eastern Europe, where the rise of populist parties has generated a rapidly expanding set of literature (Pirro 2015; Pytlas 2015; van Kessel 2015, Minkenberg 2017) that deals with populist parties' discursive strategies, their organisational features, their influence on mainstream party competition and public debates, etc. From an empirical perspective, most of the recent post-communist forms of populism have built their manifestos around denunciating corrupt and self-serving elites who have robbed people of their rightful sovereignty. Their frequent calls for the people to be defended echo a plebiscitary model of politics, and their leaders claim the right to be unobstructed by (national and/or European) norms and rules considering that, in voicing the will of the people, they should be free to act and make those wishes true even if these acts imply a discriminatory use of power against minorities (Urbinati 2017).

This chapter aims to provide an overview of populist parties across Central and Eastern Europe, with a focus on six countries (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia) between 1990 and 2020. The most recent elections taken into consideration are those in Slovakia in February 2020. The chapter starts with a theoretical section about the ambivalent framing of populism in the region. This section also includes details about the varieties of populist actors and presents their electoral fortunes and general features of development. One caveat must be mentioned. The vast majority of post-communist parties that correspond to the criteria identified in our theoretical part are classified as radical right forms of populism. The supply of inclusionary forms of populism is narrow and blurred. By combining socialist and populist ideas, the early 1990s Romanian Socialist Labour Party (Partidul Socialist al Muncii, PSM) used an economics-based interpretation of society to distinguish the people from the elites, while stressing the necessity of implementing policies for the inclusion of the poor in post-communist economic and political life. Inclusionary populism also partially corresponds to the case of the Polish party Samoobrona (Self-Defence of the Republic of Poland, SRP).

With a mixture of leftist and nationalist stances, the former trade union and social movement obtained relevant electoral support in the 2001 and 2005 elections, exiting parliament afterwards (van Kessel 2015, 61–62). In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the so-called *integration magnet* induced most mainstream parties to align on pro-free-market and cosmopolitan Europe (Vachudova and Hooghe 2009). This made room for policies on resisting EU integration in the name of the economic (and more recently cultural) well-being of their communities. They challenged the established parties on issues such as corruption or socio-economic inclusion. For example, inspired by the experience of Podemos (We Can) in Spain, the Polish party Razem (Together) can be seen as a form of socio-economic inclusionary populism that draws a moral distinction between 'the common people' and the corrupt, conservative and nationalist elites. In order to provide an in-depth, although succinct, analysis of the features of post-communist populism, sections one and two focus exclusively on its radical right forms.

The second section presents a qualitative content analysis of the party programmes of six populist parties, one from each country, in the most recent legislative elections. Then we discuss the ambivalent relationship between discourse and practice by revealing populism's two major contradictions. In order to broaden the discussion, the final section goes beyond the category of radical right populists. There, we integrate insights into our analysis about left-wing forms of populism and leaders that strategically use a populist-based discourse in order to mobilise their voters – although they cannot be considered representatives of populist parties according to our definition or the consolidated literature on this subject area. These two additional insights are used as so-called control cases in order to frame the peculiarities of populism better in the area of reference of this chapter. The conclusions summarise our main findings and shed light on avenues for further research.

The Ambivalent Framing of Populism in Central and Eastern Europe

Populism in post-communist Europe has become a major concern of academic research since the early 1990s. While, in the early days, scholars focused mostly on single case analyses, over the last decade several comparative analyses have deepened our knowledge on the post-communist variants of the phenomenon. The most recent literature on populism goes beyond an emphasis on regional peculiarities (for example, repertoires based on both material and identity-based interests) and engages more intensively with the literature on Western Europe (Bustikova and Kitschelt 2009; Stojarová 2013; Minkenberg 2015a; van Kessel 2015; Pirro

2015; Pytlas 2015, Gherghina and Fagan 2021). Building on this literature and in line with the minimal definition endorsed by this Handbook, we refer to populism as a discursive frame that aims to challenge the *status quo* with the aim of restoring the power of the people and replacing the establishment (the elites) and their dominant ideas and values. In other words, we assume that before being 'a reaction against power structures' *tout court*, populism is 'an appeal to a recognized authority' (Canovan 1999, 4), namely the people, seen as the unique source of sovereignty and the genuine depositary of virtues. Implicitly, the emphasis on the pureness of the people echoes the rottenness of the antagonistic group: the elites in power who have proven incapable of dealing with the (real) post-communist problems. One caveat must be mentioned. Drawing on Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser's (2013) methodological precautions, we are aware that the implicit consequence of referring to a minimal definition is that our point of departure is rather high on the ladder of abstraction and, as such, we refer to a highly inclusive definition which accounts for a wide variety of parties and movements. The limitations in terms of precision due to this highly inclusive definition are, however, counterbalanced by the extension of the cases covered.

Conceptual Delimitations: A Multifaceted Political Phenomenon

Building on Mudde (2004, 543), we can use two core criteria to identify a populist party: its anti-establishment criticisms and its exaltation of the iconic role of a harmonious people in democracy. The two criteria are necessary and sufficient conditions; focusing on only one of the two criteria does not justify a party's inclusion in the family of populist parties. In line with the chameleonic quality of populism (Taggart 2000), the content and the intensity of the two criteria can vary across time and space according to the specific context in which the populist parties evolve; this affects the degrees of populism.

The first criterion focuses on parties' voicing of the malfunctioning of post-communist democracy. Significantly, most post-communist populist parties did not challenge the legitimacy of democracy *per se*. They depict themselves as the 'true democrats', those who translate the real problems of society and advocate correctives for a more transparent democracy which is interested in the people. This 'allegiance' to democracy has to be connected with the legal dispositions adopted since the early 1990s through constitutions and party laws across the region (van Biezen 2012). Inspired by the German model of 'militant democracy', the post-communist legal framework promotes civil and political freedoms and cautiously restricts certain ideologies and party activities on the grounds that they contradict democratic principles (Casal Bértoa and van Biezen 2014, 299–300). With differing levels of explicitness and intensity, bans on fascism, Nazism and communism – and also on a wider category of extremist behaviour (for example, separatist, insurrectionary, etc.) – are in place across the region (van Biezen and Borz 2012). These legal instruments do not have full control over the forms of extremism chronicled by the literature on populism, in particular the myriad of movements and groups that have multiplied outside the parliamentary arena; still, they can be considered an important deterrent and explain the relatively few cases of (openly declared) leftist and rightist extremism across the region. In all the cases under scrutiny in this chapter, the parties have siphoned away violence as a solution to the democratic malaise.

For the sake of precision, it is important to specify the limited extent of agreement in the literature on populism on a clear-cut distinction between post-communist radical populist parties and extremist parties (Minkenberg 2000, 172; Pirro 2015, 23–27). While the extension of explicit or implicit legacies of the pre-communist authoritarian experiences has been directly connected with the anti-democratic/unconstitutional features of numerous post-communist parties (Minkenberg 2002), the left-wing counterpart has remained largely downplayed, if not ignored. However, we fully agree with Pirro's detailed argument: 'the "nostalgic" discourse of populist radical right parties in Central and Eastern Europe is still employed within the framework of parliamentary democracy and, at least nominally, abides by its rules' (Pirro 2015, 25). The bans chronicled by the literature, e.g. the Slovak Community-National Party, (Slovenská národná strana, SNS) (2006), the Romanian Communist Party (Partidul Comunist Român, PCR) (2008), the Czech Workers' Party (Dělnická strana) (2010) (Casal Bértoa and van Biezen 2014, 300) address the anti-democratic activities of the parties more than their ideological features (Casal Bértoa and van Biezen 2014). Although most of the parties reject extremism, several representatives of the party elites have been convicted of extremist crimes and the use of neo-Nazi symbols (as in the case of the People's Party – Our Slovakia, Ľudová strana – Naše Slovensko, ĽSNS) (Balkaninsight 2020). Last but not least, most of the legal aspects documented across the region in relation to this topic have dealt with small parties, avoiding legal action against major parties with the increased potential of contestation. The 21 parties analysed in this chapter are characterised by different degrees of radicalism, yet they abide by the democratic rules and can therefore be considered representatives of a radical right populist family that (with differences of intensity and content) embodies an opposition to the establishment in the name of a pure organic community and restored popular sovereignty.

The second criterion translates the Manichean populist idea. Like their western counterparts, post-communist populist parties distinguish between the people (depicted as pure, homogeneous and simple) and the deceitful elites. As in the western case, the way the idea of 'the people' is encompassed is context-dependent, and, as such, the definition of people may vary 'from populist to populist, even within one country' (Mudde 2004, 546) and, most importantly, across time. Unlike interwar fascism, most post-communist populist parties praise values of equality within the community of reference, although the usefulness of traditional hierarchies maintains its rhetorical power, in particular in relation to the dominant position of the party leader. Across the region, the enemies populism reacts against are not exclusively located within the establishment; they are mainly fought off in an attempt to hamper the intrusion of ethnic sources of heterogeneity (Bustikova and Kitschelt 2009; Minkenberg 2015a). As illustrated by Pirro (2015), the ethnic dimension is an omnibus issue for this political family. The myth of a homogeneous nation directly targets the local ethnic minorities (for example, Magyar, Jews and Roma) not only in relation to their disruptive effect on the culturally homogeneous community, but also in relation to their impact on the social-economic benefits (*in primis* the Roma community) and the alleged involvement of the Jewish community in anti-national conspiracies.

On this dimension, the literature on populism widely agrees that post-communist populism has had a stronger exclusionary identity *ab origine*; the parties' discourses have been more openly racist, anti-Semitic and xenophobic, echoing the relatively higher levels of aggregate xenophobia at a society level and the absorption of intolerant, aggressive and vulgar discourses by the media (Minkenberg 2015a, 40). Across time, the radical populist parties have found increased resonance within the political environment, considering the mainstream political parties' constant reluctance to denounce discriminatory speeches (Mudde 2005; Cinpoes 2015; Pytlas 2018), coupled with their progressive radicalisation (for example, Fidesz – Hungarian Civic Alliance, PiS – Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, Law and Justice, and, more recently, the Romanian Social Democratic Party, Partidul Social Democrat, PSD).[1] Across the region, there are many examples of legitimised ethnic, religious, social or moral taboo-breaking, not only among the representatives of the radical populist family but also among the mainstream parties, which have been transformed into nearby competitors of radical right populism (Minkenberg 2015a; Pirro 2015; Bustikova 2016; Pytlas 2018).

The ethnic dimension has been mainly used in two different ways. There have been attempts to isolate the out-group in order to reinforce the congruence within the in-group (for example, Gypsy crime in Hungary, the allegation of irredentism against the Hungarian minority in Romania). In parallel, the ethnic definition of the community has also been also used in order to reinforce the congruence among the members of the nation of kin-communities that reside outside the state's borders, with different intensities and levels of incorporation. The references to east-west emigration remained peripheral for a while in the national agendas, although there is increased evidence that parties engage differently with the community of emigrant citizens. To our knowledge, there is no specific mobilisation of radical right populism on external voting rights. Although different in terms of content, the two variants can coexist within the same party. A nuance has to be mentioned though; the intensity and extension of the ethnic definition of the community is influenced by indicators such as ethnic heterogeneity, cultural legacies and economic performance (Bustikova 2016). In the context of the 2015 migrant crisis, anti-immigrant political discourses multiplied across the region, adding a third dimension to the definition of the community of the natives; this happened in spite of limited numbers of refugees and asylum seekers (Cinpoeș and Norocel 2020).

Populist Diversity

On this common ground, the post-communist populists deploy a variety of programmes containing both inclusionary and exclusionary populism (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2013). While the left-wing dimension of populism has remained underdeveloped across the region, most of the cases chronicled by research literature exhibit predominantly radical right populist features, with a major emphasis on an exclusive ethnic identity (Pankowski 2010; Minkenberg 2015b; Pirro 2015; Pytlas 2015; van Kessel 2015).[2] The following pages focus exclusively on the parliamentary radical right populist frameworks of mass mobilisation. Focusing on the nativist dimension allows us to circumscribe the nature and the causes of the birth and endurance of post-communist populist parties over the last quarter of a century better. We identified 21 parliamentary parties that can be labelled as radical right populist parties. These parties are: Attack (Ataka), the IMRO – Bulgarian National Movement (VMRO – Bŭlgarsko načionalno dviženie)[3], the National Front for the Salvation of Bulgaria (Nazionalen front sa spasenie na Balgarija, NFSB) and Volya (Will) in Bulgaria[4]; the Coalition for a Republic – Republican Party of Czechoslovakia (Sdružení pro republiku – Republikánská strana Československa, SPR-RSČ), the Dawn of Direct Democracy (Úsvit přímé demokracie), and Freedom and Direct Democracy (Svoboda a přímá demokracie, SPD) in Czech Republic; the Movement for a Better Hungary (Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom) and the Hungarian Justice and Life Party (Magyar Igazság és Élet Pártja, MIÉP) in Hungary; the Confederation for an Independent Poland (Konfederacja Polski Niepodległej, KPN), the League of Polish Families (Liga Polskich Rodzin, LPR), the Movement for the Reconstruction of Poland (Ruch Odbudowy Polski, ROP), the Real Politics Union (Unia Polityki Realnej, UPR) and the Christian National Union (Zjednoczenie Chrześcijańsko-Narodowe), ZChN), and Kukiz'15 in Poland; the Greater Romania Party (Partidul România Mare, PRM), the People's Party – Dan Diaconescu (Partidul Poporului – Dan Diaconescu, PP-DD), the Romanian National Unity Party (Partidul Unităţii Naţionale a Românilor, PUNR) in Romania; the People's Party – Our Slovakia (Ľudová strana – Naše Slovensko, ĽSNS)[5] Sme Rodina (SR, We Are Family) and the Slovak National Party (Slovenská národná strana, SNS) in Slovakia[6].

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[1] A peculiarity of the entire region is the increasingly blurred boundaries between radical populist parties and radicalised mainstream parties (Bustikova 2016). If we accept that populist parties are characterised by a so-called 'thin-centered' ideology (Mudde 2004) and, as such, lack a coherent and complex grand vision of society, we consider that both Fidesz and PiS are first of all bearers of a 'full' conservative ideology. They have a thick ideology onto which radical right populist elements have been progressively grafted. Most notably, beyond their increased emphasis on the nativist dimension, these parties' relations with the democratic setting has been questioned, in particular in relation to their attempt to undermine the checks and balances (e.g. control of the constitutional court, neutralisation of the media, etc.) (Börzel and Schimmelfennig 2017). Similar attempts have been chronicled with regard to the Romanian PSD in the post-2016 period (Soare and Tufis 2019). We consider these parties to be in limbo between their original full ideology and the appeal of populist features. A rather different case is the Slovak party SMER, born as a protest party openly avoiding any ideological collocation. In the early 2000s, Smer is considered to have been a populist party (Deegan-Krause and Haughton 2009). However, Smer progressively abandoned its initial features and moved towards a traditional full ideology. Strategically, Smer gathered different small social democratic parties, increasingly appealing to voters of the social-democratic party from which Robert Fico originated. In parallel, the Party's programme has laid progressive emphasis on social justice as a main *topos* of its programmes. In brief, we can say that Smer is in a process of 'mainstreamisation', while the PSD, the PMP (Popular Movements' Party, Partidul Mișcarea Populară), Fidesz and PiS have gravitated towards populism. These elements explain why these parties have not been covered by this chapter.

If we adopt a *time caesura* linked to accession to the EU, we can see that 14 radical populist parties obtained their first parliamentary representation in the pre-accession period although, according to the literature on democratic conditionality, EU sanctions for anti-democratic behaviour were more dissuasive before accession than they were afterwards. Indeed, the implementation and applicability of sanctions in the case of breaches of democratic values after accession cannot compete with the radical threat of withholding membership during the pre-accession phase (Sedelmeier 2014; Gherghina and Soare 2016). The electoral results of the 21 parties in our sample indicate that only one party (the Hungarian Jobbik in 2014) scored more than 20 per cent in parliamentary elections, closely followed by the Romanian PRM in 2000 with 19.48 per cent (Figure 13.1). Two other parties scored more than 10 per cent. Nevertheless, many of these parties have been easily accepted into governmental coalitions (Minkenberg 2015a, 36). They are like the Phoenix, cyclically reborn, sometimes arising from the very ashes of their predecessors (for example, Jobbik in Hungary) or by ‘resurrecting’ defunct parties, as Marian Kotleba did with the Party of the Friends of Wine in the 2000s (Colborne 2020). Two possible (interrelated) explanations can be provided here, although further testing is necessary. On the one hand, this return testifies to a pool of entrepreneurs ready to invest in radical right populist ideas. On the other hand, these parties’ successful electoral mobilisation seems to suggest that there are latent grievances that potentially create demands for the parliamentary representation they deliver.

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[2] Other exclusion criteria range from religion to gender and from social to cultural issues (Minkenberg 2015, 28).

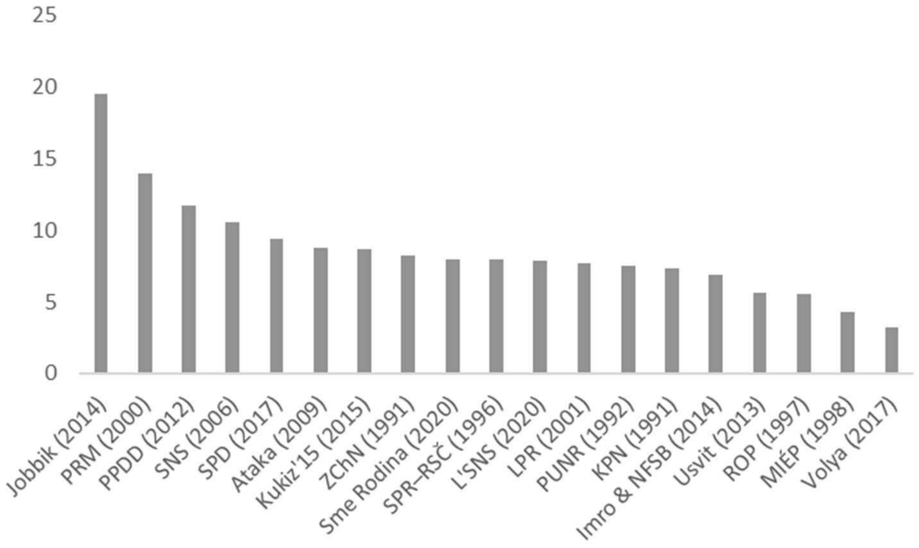
[3] As illustrated by Krasteva (2013), IMRO has formed alliances with parties holding different views on nationalism, some of which were definitely non-nationalist, like the UDF in the 1990s. Starting with the 2001 legislative elections, its partners have been exclusively connected with nationalist rhetoric, and the party has progressively radicalised its profile.

[4] The ideological match between these three parties in Bulgaria was reflected in the creation of an electoral alliance between them (United Patriots) for the March 2017 legislative elections.

[5] Over the last few years, both the L'SNS and UPR have radicalised their profile and moved towards the extremes of the political spectrum.

[6] We have excluded various splinter groups from our sample: in Slovakia, for instance, the Real Slovak National party (Pravá Slovenská národná stran, PSNS) or the United Slovak National Party (Zjednotená slovenská národná strana, ZSNS). These are short-lived political experiences, which for the most part reintegrated themselves into the SNS.

Figure 13.1: Best Electoral Results in Parliamentary Elections (per cent of votes, 1990-2020)

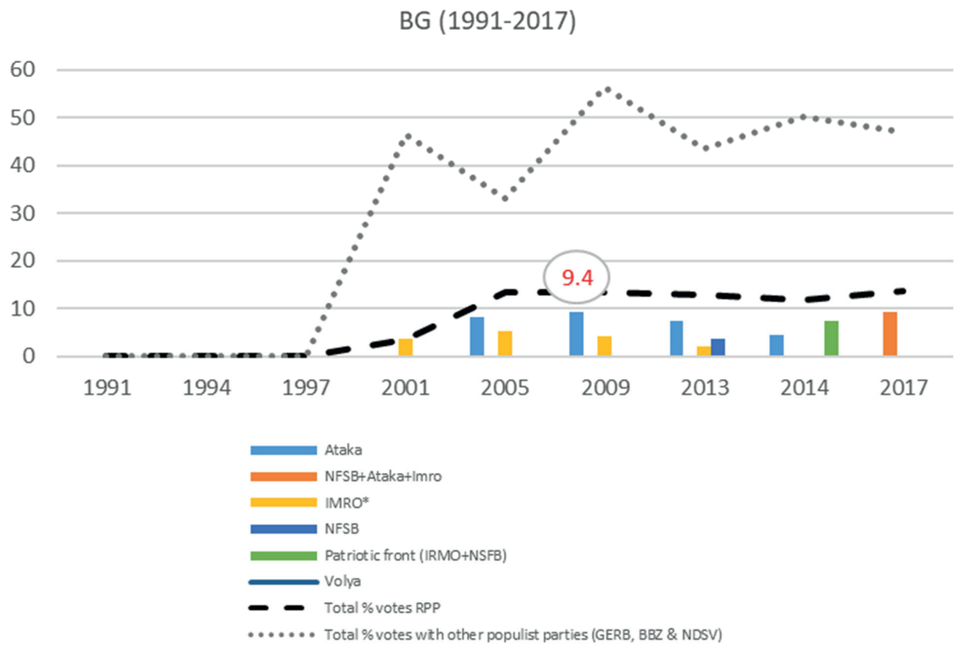


Source: European Election Database and authors’ data

Note: In 2017, Ataka, IMRO and NFSB formed an electoral alliance called the United Patriots. In 2014, IMRO and NFSB formed an electoral alliance called the Patriotic Front. We have included IMRO’s electoral results after the 2001 legislative elections and the alliance with George's Day Movement. In 1991, the ZchN is part of the Solidarity Electoral Action.

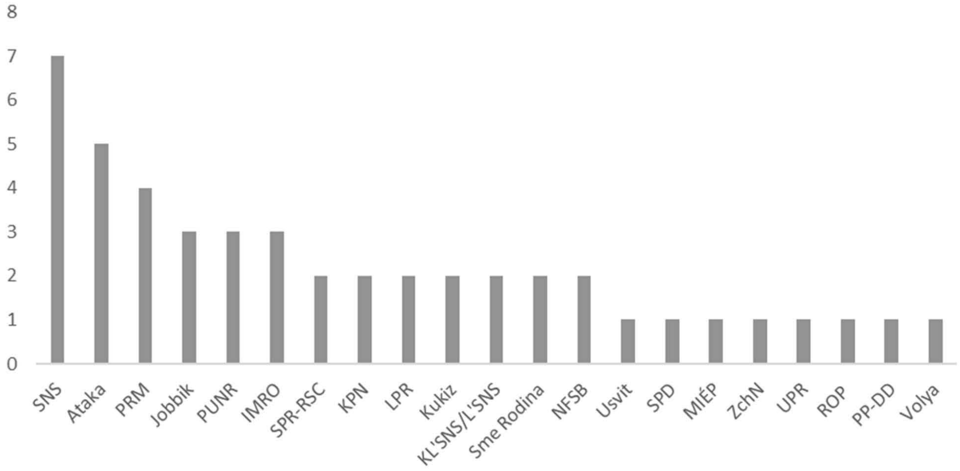
Overall, the post-communist radical right remains a weak and electorally volatile political family. It is on average considerably less durable, electorally successful and organisationally developed than its mainstream competitors. Compared to their nearby competitors, such as radicalised mainstream parties or other populist parties, their electoral relevance is limited. For illustrative purposes, Figure 13.2 compares and contrasts the vote shares received by the radical right parties with those of other populist parties in Bulgaria. The average vote for radical right populist parties has been below 10 per cent, while the cumulative vote share for all the radical right parties has been relatively constant in the last five elections; it is somewhere around 12 per cent. In contrast, the total votes for other populist parties (excluded the radical right populists) oscillate between 30 and 55 per cent. The difference is very large and shows the limited appeal that such parties have in society in spite of various efforts made to augment their electoral appeal. For example, in the 2017 legislative elections three of these parties formed an electoral alliance in an attempt to mobilise the radical right electorate.

Figure 13.2: A Comparison of the Radical Right with Nearby Competitors in Bulgaria (per cent votes, 1991-2017)



If we analyse the duration of their parliamentary representation, only the Slovakian SNS has been in parliament from 1990 until today, but with three interruptions (2002-2006, 2012-2016, 2020-). On average, the parties under scrutiny here have been in parliament for 2.2 terms (the top position being held by the Slovakian SNS, followed by Ataka and the PRM). As illustrated in Figure 13.2, more than one third of these parties have had an episodic presence in the legislature. They gained parliamentary representation once and then failed to cross the electoral threshold or completely vanished from the political scene.

Figure 13.3: The Number of Legislative Terms (1990-2020)



Source: European Election Database and authors' data

In order to explain the widespread diffusion of such contestation based on exclusionary populism, specific cultural and structural factors can account for the endurance of this family. At the basis of this line of argument, the emergence of the populist radical right in post-communist Europe has been largely associated with post-communist stimuli generated by the triple or even quadruple transition to democracy, together with the cumulative weight of pre-communist (for example, irredentism, fascist experiences and clericalism) and communist (for example, types of communism, minority issues and features of state socialism) legacies (Bustikova and Kitschelt 2009; Mudde 2000; Pop-Eleches 2010; Pirro 2015; Pytlas 2015).

On the cultural dimension, three main legacies can be identified: the type of nation and nationalism in relatively recent states, the ethnic borders cutting across other independent states and minority-majority relations (Minkenberg 2015a, 38). The *extension* of the cultural dimension is potentially explained by the fact that the economic dimension offers few political alternatives, but further testing is needed. Although the literature on populism places more emphasis on the crisis of values produced by the accelerated social and cultural changes of 1989 (Minkenberg 2002), economic transformation has also contributed to the framing of radical populist discourse. With very few exceptions (e.g. SNS), most of the radical right populist parties adopted a leftist position on economic issues as a direct consequence of their mobilisation in favour of (national) state control over the economy. Similarly, these parties converged on the rejection of both western individualism and a liberal model of democracy (Pop-Eleches 2010).

On this basis, two complementary topics have fuelled their discursive frames: the illegitimacy of the wealth accumulated by domestic elites and the high levels of corporate state capture (Minkenberg 2015b; Pirro 2015; Pytlas 2015). Not only were post-communist states confronted with the economic costs of the transition to democracy (for example, increased social and economic inequalities), but they had to deal with the political elites, who prioritised economic, social and cultural compliance with EU criteria over 'national' interests. Both leftist and rightist forms of radicalism criticised the loss of national autonomy over economic policies. In both cases, globalisation was perceived as a source of evil. The radical right framework has further fine-tuned its critical position against the EU by referring to the cosmopolitan and culturally inclusive model of EU citizenship, which is increasingly associated with special rights for ethnic, sexual or social minorities (O'Dwyer 2012; Kitschelt 2015).

Populist Discourse

These different forms of populism are also reflected in the types of discourse and policies promoted by these parties. For illustrative purposes, this section briefly analyses the content of the political programmes used by six populist parties – one from each country – in one recent legislative election. Our selection includes: Ataka (Bulgaria) in 2014, Úsvit (Czech Republic) in 2013, Jobbik (Hungary) in 2014, the UPR (Poland) in 2015, the PP-DD (Romania) in 2012 and the ĽSNS (Slovakia) in 2016. We analyse these party programmes because they reflect the long-standing positions of the parties and they are often used as election manifestos. Only in the case of Jobbik do we use the policy programme. All the programmes were available on the parties' websites. Our qualitative content analysis will focus primarily on the topics mentioned in the programmes and the priorities given by these parties to various policy areas.

At a glance, most of the programmes analysed take a holistic approach to the problems and do not go into too much detail. They are limited to the identification of the main problems in society and rarely describe the matters in depth or provide solutions. An exception to the rule is Jobbik, which focuses on several dimensions of policies; this is partly due to its continuous representation in the legislature since its formation. In general, the populist parties investigated seek to include the core elements of their ideology in concentrated messages that catch the eye of voters. In that sense, four parties (Ataka, Úsvit, the PP-DD and the ĽSNS) structure their message according to a number of points, and the UPR in Poland partially does the same. Ataka uses the 20 points that promoted them to parliament in 2005, Úsvit focuses on 18 points that touch upon key issues in Czech society, the Romanian PP-DD presents 100 points with eclectic and contradictory statements, while the ĽSNS structures its ideas according to 10 points (called 'commandments' by the party). As a result of these features, these populist programmes are minimalistic and have several strong messages to convey.

Table 13.1 includes a comparison of several features of populist discourse among the parties analysed. The first column summarises the general message conveyed by the party programme. The previous section showed how the emergence and development of populism in Central and Eastern Europe followed the lines of ethnic divisions, strong nationalism and a radical, anti-elitist approach. Reading the programmes used during the most recent parliamentary elections indicates that these parties have diversified their messages to address other prominent issues in society. In this sense, the conservative parties are Ataka and the PP-DD, which promote nationalism at the core of their programmes. Both advertise the importance of nationality and call for a ban on ethnic parties. Ataka ends its programme with 'Let's regain Bulgaria for the Bulgarians!', while the PP-DD's programme is filled with utopian promises targeting Romanian citizens (Gherghina and Miscoiu 2014). The other four parties chose to cover different issues in their programmes. Úsvit focuses extensively on the provision of public goods for Czech citizens in order to help reduce disparities between them and Western Europe, and on the necessity of education for a broad segment of society. Jobbik, known for its anti-minority and anti-elitist discourse, focuses on the issues of economic development of the country through growing productivity (industry plus agriculture) and selective external cooperation with big European actors, for example Germany and Russia, in its policy programmes. Approaching the topic of nationalism through the lenses of diaspora, Jobbik advocates the necessity of the Hungarians living in neighbouring countries to have rights. The Polish UPR speaks primarily about decentralised decision-making and refers to the necessity of lower taxation at national level (and allowing local-level authorities to collect a higher number of taxes, which can be reinvested). A similar economic concern is displayed by the ĽSNS, which focuses on reducing unemployment in Slovakia.

Table 13.1: A Comparison between Several Features of Populist Discourse in Central and Eastern Europe

	Primary message	**Nationalism**	**Anti-elite**	**State**	**Anti-international**
Ataka	Nationalism	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong (NATO, IMF)
Úsvit	Public goods and education	Moderate	-	Minimal	No
Jobbik	Economy and diaspora	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Selective cooperation
UPR	Decentralization and taxation	Moderate	-	Minimal	Anti-EU
PP-DD	Nationalism	Strong	Strong	Strong	No
ĽSNS	Employment	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Strong (EU, NATO)

Note: - is used when an issue was not explicitly mentioned in the programme.

The dominant themes in populist discourse – nationalism and anti-elitism – are not embraced or used to a similar extent by the six political actors investigated here. Two of the parties (Úsvit and UPR) are quite moderate in their nationalist approach and they have no explicit statement about the elites. They have isolated references to corruption but do not point to elites as being the beneficiaries of such practices. Úsvit has a slightly higher tendency than the UPR to refer to the dichotomy people vs. elites by expressing its support for direct democracy, in which people are given a direct say in decision-making. The other four parties have strong nationalist messages combined with religious (for example, the UPR or ĽSNS), cultural (the PP-DD) or territorial messages (Jobbik).

The variation in their approaches increases in terms of the role of the state and anti-international perspectives. The ideological fuzziness that is placed under the broad umbrella of populism is quite visible when the differences between the ways in which these parties see the state are discussed. Ataka and the PP-DD favour a strong state that provides a series of goods for its citizens and goes beyond the usual bundle of public goods. According to these parties, the state is responsible for the welfare of its citizens, and its degree of assistance and subsidies for them should be extensive; this is extremely visible in the case of the PP-DD, which favours state-controlled resources and the extensive provision of goods to citizens (Gherghina and Miscoiu 2014, 191–192). Jobbik and the ĽSNS believe state involvement should be moderate: Jobbik considers the state should be active in the process of industrialisation and in providing a framework that allows ethnic minorities to live peacefully within the country; the ĽSNS refers to a certain level of welfare provided by the state but emphasises the individual responsibility of citizens. It speaks against people who refuse to work, calling them parasites, and claims that such individuals should not be entitled to receive benefits. Úsvit and the UPR advocate a minimal state in which taxes should be lower and the authorities should be mainly concerned with the provision of public goods. Among these, education is highly valued by both parties.

In terms of anti-international discourse, Ataka and the ĽSNS are against international organisations. Both argue against NATO, which they see as a disruptive organisation; Ataka has issues with the IMF (due to the loans provided to Bulgaria), while the ĽSNS takes issue with the EU. The UPR is another party that argues against the EU and has particular objections to the centralised way in which decisions take place within European institutions. As previously explained, Jobbik favours selective cooperation with some of the big economic countries in Europe and does not directly attack the EU or any other international organisation in its most recent policy programme. The remaining two parties do not have an aversion towards international organisations: Úsvit opens its programme with a statement regarding cooperation between members and non-members of the EU, explicitly mentioning that it is 'for a free Europe without barriers regarding the movement of goods, services, investment and people'; the PP-DD does not display an anti-international attitude due to the high level of consensus among the Romanian public regarding the country's membership of international organisations. This short qualitative content analysis of party programmes illustrates a diversity of approaches towards several issues that lie at the core of populist developments in Central and Eastern Europe. For a more nuanced view, the following section delves into the ambivalent relationship between discourse and practice, using several populist parties and leaders from the region as examples.

The Ambivalent Relationship between Discourse and Practice: Populism's Two Major Contradictions

As far as the relationship between the populist discourse and its political practice is concerned, one of the most recent analytical efforts was to measure the distance between the two and to celebrate (or more rarely to deplore) the apparent incapacity of (radical left and right) populist leaders to keep their (electoral) promises (Arditi 2005, 72–74). Such approaches present populist discourses in purely instrumental terms: discourses are simply meant to support a populist platform for achieving a larger number of votes in elections and have no structuring effects on that populist party's ideology or strategy. Although this is not the place to present discourse theory's argument concerning the constitutive effects of discourses (Miscoiu 2012), we will just underline the fact that the diversity of populism throughout the world (including Central and Eastern Europe) should be regarded not only as an effect of the cultural variety of our planet but also as a consequence of the permanent metamorphosis of the shapes of populism – an operation where the discursive dimension plays a key role (or even the central role).

This section analyses two major aspects in order to assess the nature of Central and Eastern European populism. The first is the apparent contradiction between, on the one hand, its denunciation of representative democracy as illegitimate and anti-popular and, on the other, its struggle to obtain higher numbers of elected officials in various local, regional, national and even transnational assemblies. Originally, populism railed against people's political representation both as a principle of organisation and especially as a practice. In a nutshell, this stance is mainly due to two reasons (Taggart 2002). First, populism is opposed to the very concept of representation and builds its entire argument on the idea that the people are not representable and that parliaments are simply not representative. As we have seen in the cases of some post-communist countries, such as Romania or Slovakia, the 'left-wing' populists of the former communist parties' radical factions depicted the parliaments in terms of 'great national assemblies', which, during the communist period, were entirely controlled by the states' respective authoritative leaders.[7]

This lack of representativeness may be due to the structural inability of the establishment elite to understand and support people's needs and demands. In Central and Eastern Europe, this discourse is more noticeable in the aftermath of European Union integration, after the middle of the 2000s rather than in the 1990s, and mainly denounces the Europeanised and cosmopolitan elite. In Hungary, by the end of the 2000s, Viktor Orbán had campaigned precisely against the increasing gap between the internationalised elite, made up of the liberal and socialist leaders, and the 'national people' that his neo-conservative party pretended to represent. Once in power, the war against the 'liberal' elites continued in an increasingly authoritarian form. One can identify similar developments in Poland, where PiS won the parliamentary and presidential elections in 2015 and 2019 and, respectively, in 2015 and 2020, and in Romania, where the PSD-led alliances won the parliamentary elections in 2012 and 2016 by campaigning against the insufficiently popular, pro-European and not-so-national incumbent governments.

On the other hand, it is precisely the distance between the people and their allegedly non-representative politicians that motivates populist parties to deploy various office-seeking strategies. The populists accuse the establishment parties' pacts of banning them from parliament using different technical tools (such as high thresholds, two-round majority electoral systems or gerrymandering) or by building *cordon sanitaire*-like coalitions in order to prevent the election of some populist MPs. Thus, being present in parliament equals having at least partially defeated the 'system'. For instance, in 1992 and 1996, the entry of his national populist Romanian party into parliament facilitated the emergence of Corneliu Vadim Tudor as a politician; later on, he succeeded in qualifying for the second round of the 2000 presidential election and consolidating his party as the second most important political force in the Romanian spectrum (Miscoiu 2015). Moreover, the populists are generally among those MPs who extensively use the tribunes of parliament to increase their public visibility, for instance by tackling governments or by provoking conflicts during the legislature's sessions. This was the case with the far right populist party Ataka in Bulgaria, whose leader, Volen Sidorov, used the entrance of his party into parliament in 2005 to calibrate his assaults on precarious Bulgarian institutions in a more legitimate way (Novakovic 2013).

Finally, as far as local councils or regional assemblies are concerned, several Central and Eastern European populist politicians were able to emerge as national leaders after having gained

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[7] This was the case with Ion Iliescu in Romania and Vladimír Mečiar in Slovakia. The first denounced the second post-1989 parliament as 'having almost no popular support, as opposed to the President, who is the genuine incarnation of the will of the people'.

(sometimes partial) control of municipal or provincial legislatures' majorities. For instance, this was the case with the nationalist mayor of Cluj-Napoca (Romania), Gheorghe Funar (PUNR), who emerged in the early 1990s as a national leader and presidential candidate by using his local entrenchment as a political trampoline. Consequently, the opportunity to be locally elected as a member of the legislature or as leader of the executive and to attack the mainstream parties from a more visible position appeals to a skilful populist leader who seeks national recognition.

The second major contradiction is that between the discourses that demand more power for the people and those projecting a new political order, based on strong leadership and top-down management. In fact, on the one hand, populism's main claim is that the establishment's elites pretend to govern for the people, while they rule for themselves. In order to make a rhetorical difference, the populists pretend to restore the people's role within the decision-making system by various means. First, they favour direct democracy and the multiplication of popular referenda as tools for increasing the people's participation in decision-making processes. For example, one of the points of the 2006 campaign by the Slovakian populist leader, Robert Fico, was to introduce a general referendum on issues such as the reintroduction of the death penalty and the reintroduction of severe punishments against recidivist offenders. The populist leader of the Romanian PSD, Liviu Dragnea (2015-2019) actively supported the organisation of the conservative and homophobic campaign for the October 2018 referendum on a constitutional amendment against same-sex marriage. Then, populist parties claim there is a need to involve the people in policymaking processes, too. This includes some fields that have never been subjected to popular scrutiny and validation through voting before (and that are generally constitutionally prevented from being made the object of referenda or non-institutional participatory debates), such as the administration of the judicial system or the level of taxation.

Finally, populism pretends that the exclusion of the people from the systems of governance is due to their capacity to take much more reasonable decisions favouring themselves than those taken by the elites. Well entrenched in the people's everlasting cultural heritage, 'popular good sense' allegedly contrasts with 'elites' hypocritical refinement' and allows the 'genuine people' to know better what to do for themselves. The good sense discourse was, for instance, one of the main discursive ingredients of one of the emerging leaders of the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (Komunistická strana Čech a Moravy, KSČM), Oldřich Bubeníček, who, by mixing populism and anti-neo-liberalism, succeeded in becoming this party's first regional governor. But it also suited the Serbian President, Aleksandar Vučić, very well in his 2017 presidential campaign against the pro-western progressive parties and his arguments for maintaining the organisation of the very controversial 2020 parliamentary elections boycotted by the pro-European opposition.

However, on the other hand, populism underlines the necessity of promoting strong leadership in order to deeply reform the political system. To start with, in order to gather the popular forces on a common platform, there is a need for a charismatic leader endowed with perceived extraordinary qualities (generally these stem from the people, and the leader is able to understand their needs and fight for their demands) (Pombeni 2007). This stance goes hand in hand with populism's lack of trust in any institutional framework, including the populist movement's structures, and with its insistence on a direct relationship between the people and its leader. For example, one of the main topics of two re-elected presidents of the region (Traian

Băsescu, 2004 and 2009, and Andrzej Duda, 2015 and 2020) during their populist campaigns was to show that an authentic popular leader stands above (and most frequently against) any institutional system. Then, the people's good sense needs orientation in order to become effective and to transform itself into public policy. This transformation cannot take place without the energetic action of a strong leader, who is capable of galvanising and shaping the popular will and imposing it on the establishment. For instance, in 2009 and later in 2017, the leader of the populist movement GERB, Boyko Borisov, claimed that the measures of his would-be Bulgarian government would bring the natural good sense of the people to the fore in such a way that the 'normal hierarchic order' would prevail once again (Miscoiu 2014; Krastev and Holmes 2019).

To conclude, the inner contradictions of the Central and Eastern European forms of populism could be seen as related to the tougher constraints the populist leaders of the region have to face: unlike their western counterparts, who are free to attack democracy and liberalism *per se*, they rarely openly rail against liberal and democratic principles because of the frustration people accumulated under the communist period (Mudde 2002, 222–223). However, as illustrated by the reforms enacted by Fidesz or PiS, and more recently GERB and the PSD, the space for direct challenges against fundamental EU norms and values increased, with relatively few (effective) options available for the EU to counteract. In general, the Central and East European populist parties often create alternative rhetoric strategies to mobilise the people against liberal democracy; the price they pay for this is their confrontation with this series of fundamental contradictions.

Conclusion

Populism is regularly used to analyse post-communist party politics. It has often been framed as a form of general contestation of post-communism together with the exclusionary claims of domestic minorities as well as any groups perceived as a potential source of disharmony, e.g. sexual minorities, immigrants. As such, the literature on populism widely agrees that post-communist populism is predominantly right-wing with an ethnic-based and exclusivist identity. On these grounds, this literature has suggested a variety of possible explanations for the proliferation of populism. So far, most approaches have focused on the importance of historical legacies, the socio-economic side effects of the transition to democracy, political opportunity structures or elements linked to post-communist structural (for example, limited civic and social participation) and cognitive aspects (for example, limited trust in political institutions, partial tolerance towards different people and incomplete trust in others). Over the last decade, the aforementioned literature has focused on the efforts of populist representatives – on both the left and the right or in consolidated and new democracies – to 'politicise' crises (i.e. the Great Recession, the migrant crisis) and claim the urgent need to rescue the community of the genuine/native people in economic, political and/or cultural terms (Kriesi and Pappas 2015; Caiani and Graziano 2019; Heinisch et al. 2020). Across the region, radical right populist parties have increasingly linked immigrants to a cultural invasion and economic hardship.

This chapter has provided an overview of populist parties across post-communist Europe over the last three decades, with a focus on six countries – Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia – covering 21 political parties. Our analysis has illustrated that, although rightfully depicted as a particularly fertile breeding ground for populism, with the exception of Jobbik in 2014 and the PRM in 2000, none of these parties has achieved the electoral success of western radical rightist parties. However, over time their electoral relevance has increased, and in several cases these parties have become members of coalition governments. We can therefore conclude by identifying these parties' diffuse electoral success with a couple of electoral peaks spread across the region. Still, for those familiar with post-communist party politics, nationalist discourses and anti-establishment stances have been common features across the region since the early 1990s. The apparent contradiction here is explained by the strategic shift of the mainstream parties on dimensions common to the populist framework, in particular in the aftermath of their countries' EU membership. This last element has further diminished the opportunities for these parties to gain influence over the governmental agenda. However, the 2008 financial crisis and the 2015 refugee crisis have reinforced the post-communist party systems' openness to populists and the 'normalisation' of the populist agenda.

The qualitative content analysis illustrated the heterogeneity of the post-communist populist family, with a focus on six radical right parties. The analysis of the party programmes showed a variety of discourses, reflecting the heterogeneity of the forms taken by populism in the region. The analysis of the relationship between discourse and practice reveals a strategic use of populist themes by post-communist political actors (parties, party leaders or heads of state). Over time, the Central and Eastern European countries appear to be challenging empirical laboratories for anyone seeking to capture the essence of a heterogeneous type of populism. Such a type, with only a few exceptions, has never challenged the democratic settings and has rarely moved away from fringe politics. Chameleonic by definition, the populist parties in this region have been subject to different programmatic mutations across time. The result, after more than two decades, is the existence of a diverse array of parties that combine nationalist and anti-elite rhetoric with issues insufficiently (and inefficiently) addressed by the mainstream parties. They have gradually become a voice of protest in spite of their limited continuity in the political arena.

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CHAPTER 14:

SOCIO-CULTURAL LEGACIES IN POST-TRANSITION SOCIETIES IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE AND THE RELATIONSHIP TO THE RESURGENCE OF RIGHT-WING EXTREMISM AND POPULISM IN THE REGION

Vlastimil Havlík and Miroslav Mareš

Introduction

Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) can be considered a specific geopolitical area in terms of the spread of populism and research on this phenomenon. The communist era in this region blocked the development of a pluralist party system and open societies. After the fall of the non-democratic regimes, the rise in nationalist tensions in many countries was accompanied by the growing strength of far-right parties. Research on these phenomena has been a fairly well-developed part of current social sciences. Many questions are still unanswered, so we will try to explain paradigmatic approaches used in research on extremism, on the one hand, and research on populism, on the other hand, although in much of the research these concepts are closely interconnected. Before we move to the examination of the socio-cultural legacies in post-transition CEE societies which have contributed to the rise of far-right parties, a short terminological note is needed. Various authors use different concepts and terms in order to identify the specific parts of the political spectrum – right-wing extremism (von Beyme), the radical right (Minkenberg), right-wing radicalism (Weichsel) or the far right (Hloušek, Kopeček). These scholars use the terms synonymously and therefore we adopt a similar approach in this chapter. Focusing on extremist elements of right-wing politics in comparison with extremist elements of left-wing politics is typical of the research on extremism that has been conducted in Germany (the so-called 'theory of extremism'). Tom Thieme – one of the theoreticians of extremism – applied approaches used in this research in the East and Central European area, and he compared the legacies and strength of the communist and right-wing extremist parties (Thieme 2007).

As a starting point, we accept the existence of a far-right party family, which can be divided into two groups. We understand the term right-wing extremism to be the ideologies and movements aimed against the main values of a democratic constitutional state (mostly against pluralism, equality and democratic procedures) based on ideas of biological inequality (Bötticher and Mares 2012). On the other hand, the ideology of right-wing populist parties is based on a combination of nativism, authoritarianism and populism (Mudde 2007). In accordance with the introductory chapter of this book (Heinisch and Mazzoleni in this volume), populism is

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understood here as the 'intrinsically ambivalent claim diffused by individual and collective actors in order to challenge the *status quo* in favour of people's empowerment and elite change'. In other words, populism constructs the moralistic divide between the corrupt and allegedly incompetent elites and the pure people, whose power, previously held by the elites, should be restored (Mudde 2004a; Albertazzi and McDonnell 2008; Stanley 2008). Nativism is defined here in accordance with Mudde, that is, as 'an ideology that holds that states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the native group ("the nation") and that the normative elements (persons and ideas) are fundamentally threatening the homogeneous nation state' (Mudde 2007, 19). By authoritarianism, we understand 'the belief in a strictly ordered society, in which infringements of authority are to be punished severely' (Mudde 2007, 23). The main aim of this chapter is to examine both right-wing extremism and right-wing populism in Central and Eastern Europe, and research on them within the context of socio-cultural legacies with specific attention devoted to the legacies of communism. Its main focus is on the identity and the emergence of right-wing extremism and populism, partly from a perspective which compares both phenomena to West European experiences. After examining the current state of research, we summarise the main areas of contemporary research on right-wing extremism and populism in Central and Eastern Europe and outline possibilities for further research in the future.

The State of Research on Right-Wing Extremist and Populist Legacies

Right-wing extremism occupied a relevant position within the party system of new democracies in East Central Europe shortly after the start of the democratisation process. In the first or second elections after the fall of communism, right-wing extremist parties were successful in several countries (for example, the Serbian Radical Party, Srpska radikalna stranka, SRS). Also, at that time, there was the first surge in right-wing extremist violence in Eastern and Central Europe (mostly against the Roma, immigrants and political opponents; specific cases are the Baltic states, where Russian nationalists incited violence against local targets) (Mareš 2005; Mudde 2005). It is also important to mention that in the 1990s temporarily established right-wing authoritarian regimes existed (for example, the so-called Meciarism in Slovakia). Right-wing extremism during this era has been investigated in studies on transformation. There are studies on democratic consolidation (Beyme 1997, 34ff) within the broader context of consolidation of representation (Merkel 2010, 120), studies on nationalism (as an expression of ethno-nationalist tensions in the post-communist era) (Jahn 2008) and studies on non-democratic regimes (as a constitutive element of several new right-wing authoritarian regimes) (Balík and Kubát 2015). The more important legacy of current research, however, is connected with research on the radical right. Published by Klaus von Beyme (1996), it is based on the concept of organised intolerance (Ramet 1999) and comparative approaches within the research on political parties. Beyme also connected the issue of right-wing extremism with the spread of populism (Beyme 1996, 424ff).

A debate about the character of right-wing radicalism proceeded on the pages of the German journal *Osteuropa* in 2002. Its starting point was an article written by Tim Beichelt and Michael Minkenberg about the conditions of establishing and explaining the model of the radical right in transformation societies. The authors argued that the formation and consolidation of the radical right was a result of the social changes which took place after the socio-economic and socio-cultural modernisation in post-communist Europe (Beichelt and Minkenberg 2002a, 260ff). Several authors published case studies on the radical right in Central and Eastern Europe in this journal; other authors discussed the question of whether right-wing radicalism could be considered a phenomenon *sui generis* (Weichsel 2002). This debate was again summarised by Beichelt and Minkenberg (2002b). Minkenberg later analysed legacies of the radical right in Central and Eastern Europe with the help of the following categories: nation type, the existence of external homelands, the existence of strong national minority, regime conflict (regime contested by major political forces), transformation costs, non-reformed post-communist parties with 'communist-nationalist' predecessors and nationalist parties. Minkenberg labelled the radical right a 'syncretic construct' and he stated: 'it is derived from both pre-communist and communist legacies' (Minkenberg 2010, 20ff).

Specific attention was paid to the East and Central European radical right by Cas Mudde. He published an article about political parties (Mudde 2000a) and then he edited the book *Racist Extremism in East and Central Europe*, in which he analysed not only political parties but also militant non-parliamentary movements and subcultures, and racist incidents. Mudde concluded that the real political power of the right-wing extremist parties was limited and the level of racist violence in East and Central Europe was higher than in Western Europe (Mudde 2005). In his later contributions, Mudde researched the Eastern and Western radical right and extremist parties within a single analytical framework which included populism, radicalism and extremism (Mudde 2007; Mudde 2016). The far-right parties have also been researched within the context of party family research. An interesting approach can be found in the work of Vít Hloušek and Lubomír Kopeček. They stated: 'Comparing the identity of the East-Central European far right with the Western European far right at the end of the 20th century, generally the East-Central European far right was much more influenced by the historical legacy left over from the first half of the last century. In this sense the East-Central European far right was much "older" and "traditional"' (Hloušek and Kopeček 2010, 216).

The initial rise of right-wing populist parties in Western Europe is usually explained as a result of the 'silent counter-revolution' of the late 1960s (Ignazi 1992). While the resurgence of the green and libertarian parties stemmed from the counter-revolution within the context of the rising salience of post-materialist values (Inglehart 1977), right-wing populist parties emerged as the defenders of those feeling under threat from the changes brought about by post-industrial societies and globalisation (Kriesi et al. 2008). However, the original 'modernisation losers' thesis (Betz 1993) can hardly be applied to the rise of right-wing populist parties in Central and Eastern Europe after the fall of communism in 1989. Instead, taking into account the effects of the legacies of (post-)communist societies, we can use an innovative approach to modernisation theory as a heuristically interesting explanatory framework for the emergence and the ideology of the populist right in Central and Eastern Europe. As stated by Minkenberg (2002, 336), '[b]esides country-specific histories and opportunity structures, the overall analytical frame for the CEE radical right is multiple modernisation processes, that is, a transformation from authoritarian regimes to liberal democracies, from state socialist to capitalist market economies, and from industrialism to post-industrialism'. All three dimensions of modernisation have increased (the perceived) economic and cultural insecurity, which has created a breeding ground for the mobilisation of support for right-wing populist groups, which offer simplistic solutions to those negatively affected by the transformation.

Kitschelt (1995) noted in the mid-1990s that nationalist authoritarian appeals had often been combined with the leftist position on the economically defined axis of competition. This created a 'winning formula' that was different from the often economically neo-liberal right-wing populist parties in Western Europe (although the defence of extensive welfare spending has become an integral part of the programmatic base of radical right populist parties in Western Europe in recent years) (de Lange 2007; Jungar and Jupskås 2014). In other words, right-wing populist parties emerged as defenders of 'transition losers', suffering from the economic transformation and opposing the free-market capitalist environment. Moreover, unlike West European countries, the region of post-communist CEE has not (yet) experienced extensive immigration from non-European countries. This lack of non-European immigration has had important effects on the exclusionary ideology of CEE right-wing populist parties in defining the enemy of the nation as either 'within the state but outside the nation' (national or ethnic minorities) (Mudde 2007) or even beyond its borders.

As stated by Minkenberg (who takes into consideration the previous process of nation building), '"external homelands" and "lost territories" have been especially prominent themes for the radical right, who use "offensive ultranationalism" that targets neighbouring countries rather than defensive nationalism (typical of the radical right in Western Europe), which aims at protecting a nation's culture, welfare, etc. from immigrants' (Minkenberg 2013, 26). Consequently, the Roma minority became the target of nativist discourse of the Czech Association for the Republic – the Republican Party of Czechoslovakia (Sdružení pro republiku – Republikánská strana Československa, SPR-RSČ) (Hanley 2012), the Slovak National Party (Slovenská národná strana, SNS) (Spáč 2012) and Jobbik (Movement for a Better Hungary) in Hungary (Havlík 2012). In Bulgaria, the Turkish minority became the target of Ataka's nativist appeal. Expansive appeals by the Hungarian Jobbik (attacking the Trianon Treaty), the Greater Romania Party (Partidul România Mare, PRM) and the Bulgarian Ataka (Attack) are the most important representatives of this offensive ultranationalism in the CEE (Pirro 2014). To sum up, the most important consequences of communist legacies (and sometimes even the legacies preceding the instalment of the communist regimes) had important consequences on the ideological profile of right-wing populist parties in Central and Eastern Europe. First, they were established primarily as defenders of the losers of transformation, who criticised the introduction of liberal economic reforms. Second, the absence of an immigrant population and the presence of either national or ethnic minorities made the nativist appeal of right-wing populist parties considerably different from the majority of their Western counterparts.

In his study of populism in Central and Eastern Europe, Cas Mudde (2000b) examined the effects of the communist legacy on the presence of the three types of populism: agrarian populism, economic populism and political populism. According to Mudde (2000b, 41), the non-existence of agrarian populism was accounted for not just by the process of industrialisation but also by communist policies of collectivisation, having effectively liquidated the old family farms, which were traditionally the basis of agrarian populism in Europe and elsewhere. Exceptions were seen in countries in which the rural population resisted collectivisation (the rise of Self-Defence in Poland, Samoobrona Rzeczpospolitej Polskiej, SRP) (Stanley 2015) or where collectivisation was not as effective due to the partial liberalisation of economic policies (Hungary Independent Smallholders' Party, Független Kisgazdapárt). Despite the potential rise of economic populism stemming from socialisation under 'protective' state socialism, economic populism did not materialise in Central and Eastern Europe during the 1990s. Mudde explained the lack of economic populism (with the partial exceptions of Slovakia and Belarus) with reference to both the prevalent pro-market economic reform of the transition period and the persistent dominance of the neo-liberal economic paradigm on international markets.

As for political populism (equated with populist right-wing parties), the Leninist legacy created favourable conditions for several reasons. First, the existence of anti-political sentiments or anti-partyism as a result of the negative perception of former state parties is comparable to the Manichean division between the pure people and the corrupt elites, which is typical of populism. Moreover, it is reinforced by the nihilist, atomised post-socialist society. What is also important is that these anti-political sentiments were also expressed by some of the most influential intellectuals of the transition period, such as Václav Havel or Lech Waleşa. Havel's famous thesis about 'non-political politics' emphasises the role of citizenship in contrast to politics as a 'technology of power and manipulation with it or as cyber-management of the people or as the art of pragmatism and intrigues' (Havel 1989, 106). Another example is the narrative of the first Solidarity (Solidarność) in Poland, which stresses the non-political role of the independent trade unions (Ost 2006). The anti-political sentiment in polarised post-transition societies was later 'captured by opportunists and anti-democrats', be they right-wing (for example, the Association for the Republic – Republican Party of Czechoslovakia, Sdružení pro republiku – Republikánská strana Československa, SPR-RSČ, or Kotlebists – People's Party Our Slovakia, Ľudová strana Naše Slovensko, ĽSNS) or former communist parties, all of them capable of reacting to external conditions and even creating favourable discursive opportunities for themselves (Kluknavská and Hruška 2019; Kluknavská et al. 2021).

Nevertheless, to get a more detailed picture of the effects of communist legacies on the emergence of right-wing populist parties, the commonalities described need to be supplemented with a more idiosyncratic view which takes into consideration the specifics of the countries in question. Bustikova and Kitschelt (2009) used the well-known typology of communist regimes (patrimonial, national accommodative and bureaucratic authoritarian) (Kitschelt 1995) as their explanatory framework in their quantitative study of the electoral success of radical right parties in CEE. The former national accommodative communist regimes (for example, the states of the former Yugoslavia, Hungary) turned into states with a less polarised form of party competition, with both the governing and the opposition parties supporting the liberal democratic and economic reforms and, at the same time, trying to preserve the 'quasi-welfare state' inherited from the previous communist regime. The lack of contestation on the economically defined dimension of competition soon led to the opening of the social-cultural dimension of contestation between national conservative parties (sometimes emphasising Christian values) and liberal secular, universalistic, libertarian and cosmopolitan political parties. Moreover, the economic success of the 1990s accompanied by social policy compensation left only limited space for the rise of right-wing populist parties in the former national accommodative communist regimes. Although the economic decline that followed after the period of prosperity opened the door for the resurgence of right-wing populist parties, the strategy of intensifying the social-cultural dimension of competition pursued by the mainstream parties diminished the chances of success for the populist right (Bustikova and Kitschelt 2009).

In contrast, according to Bustikova and Kitschelt (2009), the former patrimonial communist regimes provided more favourable conditions for the rise of right-wing populist parties. The democratic transition was accompanied by great political (unstable institutions) and economic problems, although part of the authoritarian and nostalgic grievance generated by economic turmoil fuelled support for unreformed successor communist parties. The potential for the rise of right-wing populists remained quite high even after the partial economic recovery of the 2000s, partly because of the partial change in governmental policies towards the market-oriented economic reforms. As for the bureaucratic authoritarian regimes (the Czech Republic and the former East Germany), a polarised form of party competition between the centre-right and socialist forces over economic reform was established. Despite the introduction of (neo-)liberal economic reforms, the potential for the rise of right-wing populist parties remained only at a modest level because '[t]he intransigent communist party always remained available to rally voters disappointed with the introduction of the capitalist market regime' (Bustikova and Kitschelt 2009, 465). Another factor Bustikova and Kitschelt took into consideration was the ethnic composition of post-communist countries with the greatest potential for the rise of right-wing populist parties in countries 'with small, entrenched ethnic minorities, as well as with irredentist claims against their neighbours' (Bustikova and Kitschelt 2009, 468), such as Hungary and Romania.

The recent development of the radical right in Central and Eastern Europe is characterised by its strong impact on the governmental political sphere, at least in some countries (Hungary, Poland). As indicated by Michael Minkenberg in his comprehensive monography from 2017, 'EU membership and the institutions of liberal democracy prove insufficient to quell the anti-liberal and anti-minority effects of the radical right' (Minkenberg 2017, 148). Traditional legacies of the radical and extremist right in the East and Central Europe were significantly enhanced by the wave of interconnected crises which affected this area. The Eurozone crisis, the Ukraine crisis and migration caused a new rise of the Central and Eastern European extreme right (Bojinović Fenko, Lovec, Požgan, Crnčec 2019). A specific phenomenon that accompanied the migration crisis in this area were new vigilante paramilitary units with an anti-migrant focus in the Czech Republic and Slovakia which also had a strong pro-Kremlin orientation. They used legacies from various historical eras (Bjørgo and Mareš 2019, 310–313). Generally, the Russian ties to European extreme right have been broadly discussed (Shekhovtsov 2018). The recent COVID-19 crisis was at least partially utilised by some populist parties that have been able to retain or even strengthen their position, as the Polish or Hungarian cases have shown (Balfour 2020). As for corruption, the omnipresent valence issue in the region (compared to Western Europe), its contribution to the success of the radical and extremist right parties is questionable. Instead, it created opportunities for less radical, centrist populist parties such as the Action of Dissatisfied Citizens (Akce nespokojených občanů, ANO) in the Czech Republic (discussed below).

Ongoing Debates and the Limitations of Right-Wing Extremism and Populism in Central and Eastern Europe

Current debates refer to previous research. The relatively strong presence of right-wing extremist parties with a 'traditional' profile in the East Central European party systems in the middle of the 2010s is a challenge to democracy in this area (Jobbik in Hungary, the People's Party in Slovakia, the National Movement in Poland, and so on). The consolidation of several Central and Eastern European democracies was connected with EU enlargement. However, recent extremist trends are discussed in the analytical framework of the possible de-consolidation of democracy. Extremism is only one of more possible de-consolidation phenomena (Dufek, Holzer and Mareš 2016). An important debate is still focused on the issue of a possible specific character of right-wing extremism in Central and Eastern Europe. In research, this *sui generis* character is connected mostly with deeper links to the traditional fascist and right-wing authoritarian legacy (including irredentist goals or the existence of paramilitary units). However, we can observe tendencies towards the modernisation of right-wing extremism in East and Central Europe, on the one hand (the rise of new anti-Islamist movements) (Mareš 2014), and the rise of the 'traditional' right-wing extremist parties in other parts of the continent (for example, Golden Dawn in Greece, Chrysi Avgi), on the other.

Since the EU's enlargement, some of the right-wing extremist parties from Central and Eastern Europe have been involved in EU parliamentary politics and in cooperation with Western European partners. The presence of the extreme right parties is described by Michael Minkenberg and Oliver Kossack: 'The maturation of democracies in Eastern Europe, along with their integration into the Western capitalist order and the European Union, did not lead to a withering-away of ultranationalism in the region. Evidently the first outbreaks of ultranationalism and racist extremism during and after the collapse of communist regimes in 1989 failed to consolidate themselves into permanent features of the political order, as has happened with the radical right in most West European countries since the societal and political shifts of the 1980s.' (Minkenberg and Kossack 2015, 349). The right-wing extremist spectrum in Central and Eastern Europe can be divided according to geopolitical changes in the region. Right-wing extremists in the new member countries of the European Union are directly involved in multi-level EU politics. Right-wing extremist Eurosceptics occupy a specific position in EU candidate countries. In the Western Balkans, this part of the political spectrum is determined by the legacies of ethnic wars in the 1990s (Stojarová 2014). The rise of traditional right-wing extremism, including paramilitary units, is connected with the recent conflict in Ukraine (Færseth 2015). A phenomenon *sui generis* is right-wing extremism in Russia, where it is divided into pro-regime and anti-regime factions. The Russian extreme right has contact to Central and Western European countries, and the current Russian regime is an inspiration to or supporter of several right-wing extremist parties and movements in the European Union (Mareš and Laryš 2015).

The recent research on right-wing populism has gradually left the (previously not dominant) perspective of legacies. The Eastern enlargement of the European Union has resulted in the examination of the relationships right-wing populist parties have towards European integration. It is usually one of the topics of political analysis in broader cross-national comparative studies (Kopecký and Mudde 2002; Mudde 2004b; Lewis and Mansfeldová 2006) and national case studies (Szczerbiak and Taggart 2008; Kaniok and Havlík 2016). Not surprisingly, the nativism of right-wing populist parties determines their Eurosceptical stance, in which they either call for European integration to be turned into an intergovernmental form of collaboration or ask to leave the European Union. The parliamentary and sometimes even governmental presence of right-wing populist parties (the League of Polish Families, Liga Polskich Rodzin, LPR, between 2006 and 2007 or the Slovak National Party between 2006 and 2010) provoked an intensive discussion about the impact of (right-wing) populism on the quality of democracy (Deegan-Krause 2012; Hanley 2012; Havlík 2016; Stanley 2016), with ambivalent findings stemming mostly from the nature of populism as 'democratic illiberalism' (Pappas 2014). A number of studies have focused on the effects of the global financial crisis and the crisis of the

Eurozone on the electoral success of right-wing populist parties. Hernández and Kriesi (2016) found that the economic crisis led to the improved electoral performance of the radical right, the radical left and non-mainstream parties on average. Their edited volume on the impact of the economic crisis on populism in Europe (Kriesi and Pappas 2015) emphasises the effects of both economic and political crises. However, the impact of the economic crisis remains ambiguous in countries without a successful populist right, despite the fact they were heavily hit by the crisis (Romania and Slovenia). On the other hand, there are several countries that did quite well during the crisis but still experienced a (modest) rise in right-wing populist parties (the Czech Republic, Poland or Slovakia) (ibid.). In other words, the effects of the economic crisis on the rise of right-wing populist parties are one of the issues that needs further examination in the future.

Besides the radical right form of populism, an ideologically modest or less clear variant of populism with strong anti-establishment and anti-corruption appeal has arisen (Učeň 2007; Pop-Eleches 2010). Possibly the most visible case is the technocratic populist Action of Dissatisfied Citizens (Akce nespokojených občanů, ANO) that ended as the runner-up in the 2013 election and won the 2017 election in the Czech Republic. The party used the opportunities structures created by corruption scandals and the economic crisis that led to public dissatisfaction with traditional (ideological) party politics and offered a seemingly anti-political and anti-party platform built around the business background of its founder Andrej Babiš. The mixture of its stress on expertise (in contrast to ordinary politics) and populism (its anti-establishment element in particular) proved to be a winning formula in a society increasingly detached from the established political parties. Besides the strong philosophical tradition of anti-politics and anti-partyism in the Czech Republic mentioned above, the legacy of bureaucratic-authoritarian communism may have helped the party in its electoral success (see Buštíková and Guasti 2019). Moreover, the party skilfully used references to the interwar Czechoslovakia, which is well known for its economic prosperity and its tradition of successful self-made businessmen (Babiš compared himself to one of them) (see Hanley and Vachudova 2018; Havlík 2019; Hloušek et al. 2020). In other words, not only do communist legacies seem to have played an important role in the success of populist political parties in the region, but so do politics of memory in a broader sense, which requires further investigation in the future.

Conclusion

Right-wing extremism and right-wing populism in Central and Eastern Europe have been strongly influenced by historical legacies (including the legacies of the fascist and communist eras and the Versailles border system). The development of the first half of the 20th century left strong ethnic minorities outside their national states (most typically the Hungarian minority in Slovakia and Romania and the Romanian minority in Hungary). That has become an important issue in the nationalist mobilisation of both extreme and populist right-wing actors in Central and Eastern Europe. Moreover, while communism suppressed the ethnic tensions in the multinational federations (the former Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia), post-1989 democracy transition created an opportunity for the nativist and separatist appeals of the extreme and populist right. Unlike the extreme and right-wing populist parties in Western Europe, their nativist xenophobic appeals were not primarily aimed at non-European immigrants but very often at the Roma minority. Furthermore, the market-oriented economic transition often turned populist and extreme parties into advocates of ‘transition losers’, defending rather egalitarian policies with an emphasis on an extensive welfare state which protects the social groups most severely hit by the economic transformation. However, recent developments (including the immigration crisis) reveal a growing interconnection with pan-European issues, on the one hand, (Muslim immigration, in particular) and the influence of Russia, on the other. While scientific research into right-wing extremism and populism seems to be well developed, several important challenges for future research can be identified, including the ‘Russian card’, the perception of immigration, radicalisation of the mainstream and the rise of new populist actors.

The future research agenda on right-wing extremism in Central and Eastern Europe should verify the impact of the historical legacies on the character of this phenomenon. The possible *sui generis* element should be identified as a result of a comparison with other geopolitical areas. The historical trajectories of populist actors’ rise and loss of influence in individual countries need to be explained (for example, the return of strong right-wing extremist parties to parliaments in Hungary or Slovakia). The coexistence of traditional right-wing extremist scenes with right-wing authoritarian governments (for example, in Poland) or with new ‘Westernised’ anti-Islamist populism is also an interesting challenge to scientific research. The unclear borders between extremism, populism and the established political spectrum should be also clarified in the future. Due to international development, the ‘Russian card’ is an important factor in the development of right-wing extremism in this area. Some right-wing extremist groupings are strongly pro-Russian (for example, the National Democracy in the Czech Republic), and some are anti-Russian (for example, Right Sector, Pravyj Sektor in Ukraine). Russian right-wing extremist groupings are active in the Russian diaspora in Central and Eastern European countries. Scientific interest should be focused on countermeasures against right-wing extremism too. In Central and Eastern Europe, various instruments of militant democracy were applied (including a ban on right-wing extremist parties or associations); however, their short-term and long-term effects have not been described or analysed more deeply. This issue is an important part of the pan-European debate about the sense and effectiveness of counter-extremist measures (Mudde 2016, 129ff).

The ‘Russian card’ mentioned in the context of the extremist right is also relevant in the study of the right-wing populist parties that have expressed pro-Russian attitudes. One of the possible research topics that has arisen from this is the motivation for these attitudes – is it an ideologically driven choice resulting from Euroscepticism and/or the anti-liberalism of the populist right (the well-known ‘enemy of my enemy is my friend’)? Or is it a pragmatic *quid pro quo* step stemming from Russian ‘incentives’? The current immigration crisis provides at least two challenges for further research. First, it is the ‘Westernisation’ of right-wing populist parties in CEE that is making anti-immigration the most salient issue for these parties. Second, it is possible to observe what Michael Minkenberg called ‘radicalisation of the mainstream’. The policies of the Orbán cabinet in Hungary, the Szydlo and Morawiecki cabinets in Poland, and the xenophobic rhetoric of Czech President Miloš Zeman and the Slovakian Prime Minister Ficoare the most visible examples of the illiberal, populist turn of politics in Central and Eastern Europe (Rupnik 2007; Dawson and Hanley 2016). This makes the participation of populist parties in government and their impact on the quality of democracy one of the most important topics for future research, since Hungarian, Polish and most recently Czech experiences throw the rise of populism as a litmus test for the quality of democratic representation into doubt. Instead, the illiberal face of populism has gained the upper hand in the region of Central and Eastern Europe, although it is dependent on the particular faces of populist discourses and windows of political opportunity structures. A detailed examination of the ongoing changes and, more importantly, the reasons behind the rise of populism are necessary.

In fact, mainstream parties are becoming radical and – vice versa – radical parties are becoming mainstream. The fact that formerly moderate parties are moving towards authoritarian and nativist positions is also relevant from the perspective of the conceptual discussion about the nature of right-wing populism, which seems to have become a strategic rhetorical tool vis-à-vis the xenophobic majority of electorates. One of the questions that has arisen is whether we can still talk about the category of right-wing populist parties or 'just' about a degree of right-wing populist rhetoric which serves as a temporarily effective tactic in electoral competition. The role of the legacy of communism in underdeveloped civil societies and political parties that are not firmly socially rooted (van Biezen 2003) and are therefore more flexible in their programmatic and strategic choices is obvious. Moreover, besides the rise of several right-wing populist parties, future research should also concentrate on a new kind of populism in Central and Eastern Europe: the so-called new/centrist populist parties which make corruption the crucial element of their anti-establishment appeal. The communist legacy which has rendered society more prone to corruption and creating the favourable opportunity structures for the rise of these populist parties is apparent. Although these parties lack the usual radical element of the populist right, their illiberal, anti-party politics (often combined with the organisational model of business firm parties) (Havlík and Hloušek 2014; Kopeček 2016) makes them an important object in the study of the development of democracies in Central and Eastern Europe.

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CHAPTER 15:
ENTREPRENEURIAL POPULISM AND THE RADICAL CENTRE: EXAMPLES FROM AUSTRIA AND THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Reinhard Heinisch and Steven Saxonberg

Introduction

The international literature on populism has mostly paid attention to radical right-wing populism and, to a lesser extent, leftist populism. However, as the phenomenon of populism has grown and proliferated, we have seen a greater diversity of manifestations of populism. An important new variant of populism has arisen in Europe that we call ‘entrepreneurial populism’. By this we primarily mean political formations competing for public office that are led by charismatic business leaders, who claim that their ability to run businesses successfully means they will also be able to run a government well. While in the past similar parties have appeared in political systems that were centred on personalities or where the political systems were in turmoil, such as in Italy prior to Berlusconi, recently two such parties garnered enough votes to achieve parliamentary representation where these conditions do not apply. The parties ANO 2011 (Action of Dissatisfied Citizens) and Team Stronach für Österreich (Team Stronach for Austria, TS) entered the Czech and Austrian parliaments respectively in 2013 and were thus successful in countries that are *prima facie* unlikely candidates for this phenomenon. Moreover, Austria and the Czech Republic have otherwise not shown any convergent trends in party politics. Less than a decade on, the Czech Party now dominates Czech politics, has won re-election, boasts the most seats in the national legislature and controls the premiership, whereas its Austrian counterpart collapsed even prior to re-election and disappeared. How do we explain these differences? This chapter traces the emergence and trajectory of these parties by pointing to the strengths and weaknesses of entrepreneurial populism.

Entrepreneurial populism is emerging as part of a broader populist phenomenon, which can be seen by the fact that over the past decade other non-radical protest parties have entered national and/or regional legislatures in these two countries: Věci veřejné (Public Affairs) in 2010 and Úsvit přímé demokracie (Dawn of Direct Democracy) in 2013 as well as Bündnis Zukunft Österreich (Alliance for the Future of Austria, BZÖ) in 2006 and 2008 respectively. In each case, these formations pursued an anti-elitist message and purported to act on behalf of the ‘common people’. Yet, despite presenting themselves as anti-establishment parties, they also sought to distinguish themselves from radical right-wing populist parties by signalling a willingness to join centrist governments, and generally did not engage in racist or ethnocratic

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rhetoric. We may perhaps regard these parties as belonging to the 'radical populist centre'. All this suggests that despite the substantial differences between Austrian and Czech party politics, important demand-side factors are present in both countries that explain the willingness of a significant segment of voters to embrace such parties. In this chapter, we will explore the rise of entrepreneurial populism in general and examine the Austrian and the Czech cases specifically as two empirical examples. We are especially interested in understanding why voters find the message of entrepreneurial populists persuasive. Austria and the Czech Republic make good comparisons because although the two countries share some fundamental characteristics – comparable size, economic development, a shared history and formal political mode – , they have both had rather distinct patterns of party behaviour and electoral politics as well as different political legacies (Heinisch 2003; Saxonberg 2003).

Conceptualising Entrepreneurial Populism

After the era of Donald Trump, one is tempted to view the populist billionaire businessman turned president as the quintessential embodiment of entrepreneurial populism. However, while significant aspects of Trump's agenda and appeal related to him being a successful businessman and celebrity and although his 'drain-the-swamp' philosophy underscores his role as a political outsider and change agent, in other respects he resembled the radical right-wing populists we find in Europe and elsewhere. In fact, from the start, he framed his election campaign in terms of racist, nativist and nationalist issues by broadly labelling Mexican immigrants as rapists and drug dealers. Therefore, it remains debatable to what extent Trump corresponded to the concepts of entrepreneurial populism, which is more centrist in orientation and the subject of this chapter. We consider Ross Perot, who ran as a third-party candidate in the 1992 US presidential elections, to be the first well-known archetype of this phenomenon. In the past two decades, business tycoons turned political leaders have won elections in Thailand (Thaksin Shinawatra), Georgia (Bidzina Ivanishvili) and the Ukraine (Yulia Tymoshenko and Petro Poroshenko) (Mizuno and Phongpaichit 2009; Sakwa 2013). In the European context, the most famous case is undoubtedly Silvio Berlusconi. His party, Forza Italia (Forward Italy) was classified in terms of party politics as a business-firm party, which distinguishes itself from its more common conceptual cousin, the cartel party, by generating its revenue from the private sector, whereas the latter extracts resources chiefly from the state (Krouwel 1999, 261).

In business-firm parties, elected officials often do not consider political power an end in itself, but have other motives, such as advancing their business interests. The party leader is the face of the party and acts very much like a chief executive, running the party like a firm (Hopkin and Paolucci 1999). Such parties are less oriented towards interest groups, but instead employ modern demand-oriented marketing techniques to 'sell policy products wrapped in the most attractive package' (Krouwel 1999, 261). Conceptually, the business-firm party is a descendant of the electoral-professional party (Panebianco 1988), which shares a weak ideological orientation and no particular attachment to voter groups with the former. Their de-emphasis of ideology and their catch-all nature make them embrace broadly popular ideas to succeed in the electoral marketplace, while seeking to protect the economic interests and revenue sources of the business side of the party. Another conceptual precursor to entrepreneurial populism is the businessperson as a political entrepreneur in the sense of Dahl's 'self-made man' (Dahl 1961, 25), whose social status and financial resources allow him to command special political attention, especially in personalised political systems. In this manner, economic resources can be converted into political capital to achieve outcomes in the political area that benefit an entrepreneur's business or business in general.

In the case of both ANO and Team Stronach, we recognise aspects of the aforementioned characteristics. Both parties are headed by successful businessmen who draw on their personal wealth and their firm's fortune to advance political ambitions. They run their parties like businesses and act as change agents in the sense that they, too, talk about changing the rules. Yet, it is less clear what draws voters to these parties, because the Austrian and the Czech cases are rather different from those where we have seen such parties emerge. The tradition of business leaders going into politics might be well established in American politics, which are characterised by the domination of charismatic personalities over organisationally weak parties. But the Czech Republic and Austria have rather strong party systems. It is also not so surprising that strong leaders, who command loyalty, would emerge in political systems with strong clientelistic political cultures, such as Thailand's and Georgia's. Although we see clientelism in Austria and the Czech Republic, however, it is mostly associated with the established parties not political newcomers. The rationale that political systems undergoing sweeping change may provide opportunities for political entrepreneurs clearly applies to Italy and Silvio Berlusconi following the *Tangentopoli* scandal and the resulting systemic crisis in 1994. However, in all these cases, the systemic crisis was far more extreme, and thus the underlying conditions are rather different from those in Austria and the Czech Republic. In short, these factors do not seem to provide a clear starting point for an investigation except for some general observations. It seems that all entrepreneurial populists have in common that they are catch-call and eschew a well-defined ideological framework. Instead, they exhibit clear convictions about who is best-suited to rule and how the country should be governed. More than typical business-firm or businessperson parties, entrepreneurial populists claim to be anti-elitists and direct themselves towards 'the people' as a whole. They point specifically to wholesale corruption and incompetence on the part of the political elites as the chief source of national problems.

In this respect, entrepreneurial populists meet two widely accepted criteria that identify parties as populist. Accordingly, we define entrepreneurial populist parties as those that, like all populist parties, embrace a common man/woman ethos, purport to represent 'the people' as a unified whole (Canovan 1981, 265) and claim the people are so poorly served by the existing political system that sweeping change is necessary. This focus on the 'people' versus the 'elite' is seen as the core criterion in populism (Mudde 2004; Albertazzi and McDonnell 2008, 4; Hawkins 2009; Rovira Kaltwasser 2014; Rooduijn 2014). Populism pits virtuous and homogeneous people against elites and dangerous 'others', who are together 'depicted as depriving (or attempting to deprive) the sovereign people of their rights, values, prosperity, identity and voice' (Albertazzi and McDonnell 2008, 4). Along with a common man/woman ethos and the 'centrality of the purported popular will', as Decker (2000, 45) puts it, populism is also characterised by opportunistic and frequently inconsistent programmatic positions – Taggart (2004, 4) referred to this as populism's 'empty heart' – as well as by a strong preference for plebiscitary politics, direct and emotional appeals to the population, and the reduction of political issues to simple choices and ambivalent claims. This book expresses the opportunistic rather than dogmatic nature of populism in a previous chapter by defining populism in terms of the ambivalence of the claims populist actors make not only about the people and elites, which remain vaguely defined categories, but also about the state, democracy and societal groups such as women (see Dingler and Lefkofridi in this volume). Thus, like other populists, entrepreneurial populists take aim at unaccountable elites and pursue a catch-all strategy by making ambivalent claims and offering popular but vague proposals on a number of salient policy issues. The policy area where entrepreneurial populist parties appear to be most specific is the economy. Their positions are generally pro-business and favour economic deregulation, privatisation and less taxation. They also take a firm stance against state interference in entrepreneurial decision-making.

Although the policy solutions favoured by entrepreneurial populists draw on neo-liberal ideas, entrepreneurial populists are neither merely neo-liberal business parties nor small government liberals. In fact, they often want to increase support for social welfare programmes, which they claim they can afford to do without increasing taxes because they will make the government work more ‘efficiently’. Thus, in their public rhetoric they argue for a more fundamental reform of the political system but remain generally vague about specific policy proposals (for example, ‘reining in the power of bureaucrats’, ‘hard work has to pay off again’). Like protest parties in general, entrepreneurial populists profess to be beyond traditional politics and distance themselves sharply from the (old) mainstream parties, whom they portray as corrupt and generally alike. This is to say that like other protest parties, they follow the strategy of ‘de-differentiation’ (Schedler 1996, 294), denying that there are important differences among their political opponents. Instead, the appeal of entrepreneurial populist leaders is centred on their personal character and managerial savvy in transcending previously intractable problems. However, what sets entrepreneurial populists apart are two important characteristics: their tendency a) to be more pragmatic and engage in practical policymaking, and b) to show less verbal aggressiveness and relative moderation in their discourse on race, culture and ethnicity. Even in situations where entrepreneurial populists are critical of the *status quo*, they are generally less xenophobic, less Europhobic and less chauvinistic than is typical of radical populist parties. Thus, we find little evidence that entrepreneurial populists are particularly connected to the radical, xenophobic populist movements, such as the Austrian Freedom Party (Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs, FPÖ), the French National Rally (Rassemblement National, RN), the Italian Northern League (Lega Nord, LN) and the Belgian Flemish Block (Vlaams Blok, VB), that have made headway in changing the political landscape of Europe.

Mudde (2007) differentiates between radical right-wing populist parties (which oppose liberal democracy) and non-radical populist rightist parties (which accept liberal democracy). In fact, there is great variation in right-wing populist parties in Europe. For example, parties such as the Party for Freedom (Partij voor de Vrijheid, PVV) in the Netherlands and the Progress Party (Fremskrittspartiet, FrP) in Norway appear to accept democratic principles, but have a staunch anti-EU and anti-immigrant stance, whereas entrepreneurial populist parties seem to be more centrist, not necessarily xenophobic and not always anti-EU. Instead, they operate on the notion that the country can be saved by entrepreneurism because it is not beholden to entrenched interests and old ideological divides. They also appear to be focused on seeking office or at least clearly proclaim their willingness to join other parties in government. This, too, is different from the more radical populists, among whom similar efforts have been ancillary to voter-seeking strategies and have resulted in problems time and again because the radical nature of these parties has made governing difficult (Heinisch 2003). The collapse of the Austrian Freedom Party in government in 2019 again and in the same year the ousting of Matteo Salvini and his Lega after the botched attempt to seize the premiership in Italy by forcing new elections illustrate the shortcomings of radical populists in power. For this reason, other populist parties have preferred to stay away from government and exercise influence from behind the scenes by supporting conservative parties in staying in office. By comparison, the logic of entrepreneurial populism rests on the very ability to showcase superior executive decision-making and thus be in a position to demonstrate this ability. This raison d'être changes the entire political dynamic because the leader in a right-wing populist party is measured by his or her ability to garner votes and build electoral support – being in opposition and distinct from ‘those in power’ is part of the party’s identity. However, in entrepreneurial populism, the leader is also measured by his or her ability to execute or help execute policies in the manner outlined in the campaign. This, in turn, should also be reflected in the kinds of voters that support entrepreneurial populists.

Case Description

Almost simultaneously, parties advocating entrepreneurism as a remedy to the nation’s problems have emerged in Austria and the Czech Republic. They are catch-all, tend to be rather market liberal, but without rejecting generous social policies, and are not xenophobic or mobilise support based on cultural identity – for an overview of the Austrian and Czech political parties and their electoral performance, see Tables 15.1a and 15.1b at the end of this segment.

The Austrian Case: Synopsis

In 2012, the Austro-Canadian billionaire, Frank Stronach, announced that he was fed up with what he called the corrupt rule of party apparatchiks in Austria and formed a new party. Well financed, it performed extremely well in three state elections achieving 11.3 per cent, 9.8 per cent and 8.3 per cent of the votes respectively. In fact, for most of 2012 and 2013 Team Stronach polled between 8 per cent and 12 per cent nationally, which is extraordinary for a new political party as it drew voters away from all parties (see SORA’s Wahlanalyse Nationalratswahl – Election analysis of the national council election 2013). In the end, Team Stronach received ‘only’ 5.7 per cent of the votes and 11 seats in parliament. Yet, there was little indication that entrepreneurial populism had suddenly fallen out of favour with voters. Instead, the party leader, Stronach, made several major verbal gaffes in the final phase of the campaign, which caused his party to lose ground. Stronach’s Canadian background, political inexperience and ignorance of certain political conventions eventually became a liability. Yet, it is not difficult to see how a more experienced and professional campaign management team would have avoided the tactical errors committed in the final weeks of the campaign. Despite this, exit polls indicated the party’s supporters were motivated by the belief that it was ‘time for change’ (45 per cent), as well as Stronach's personality (38 per cent) and his business competence (38 per cent) (SORA’s Wahltagsbefragung und Wählerstromanalyse Nationalratswahl – Election polls and analysis of the flow of voters in the national council election 2013).

The Czech Case: Synopsis

In the Czech Republic, a more 'traditional' type of radical right, xenophobic populist party – the Republicans – emerged in the early 1990s, but they quickly disappeared after failing to make it back into parliament in the 1998 elections. At the same time, a tradition arose in which small market liberal parties surfaced as alternatives to the more dominant market liberal party, the Civic Democratic Party (Občanská demokratická strana, ODS), then led by the charismatic economist Václav Klaus. This includes the Civic Democratic Alliance (Občanská demokratická alliance, ODA) (in parliament from 1992-1998), Freedom Union – Democratic Union (Unie svobody, US) (in parliament from 1998-2006) and now TOP09 (in parliament from 2010 to the present). Surveys showed that the voters of these parties placed themselves to the left of the ODS, while the actual leaders of these parties placed themselves to the right of the ODS, or at least considered themselves to be market liberal rather than sharing the centrist, social liberal views of their voters (Kitschelt et al. 1999 for data). Consistent with our argument that voters are not as attracted by the market liberal philosophy as by a desire for change and centrist economic policies, these smaller market liberal parties quickly disappeared (ODA, US) or quickly suffered a great loss of seats in parliament (TOP09) (Saxonberg and Sirovatka 2014). In short, the likely explanation is that voters initially supported them not because they wanted a market liberal alternative to the market liberal ODS, but rather because they were hoping that these new parties would be more social liberal and bring about a change of the political *status quo* (Saxonberg and Sirovatka 2009).

Table 15.1a: Elections for the Austrian National Parliament (Lower House)

		Political Parties							
Election year		**List Pilz°**	**Greens**	**SPÖ**	**ÖVP**	**FPÖ**	**BZÖ***	**Team Stronach**	**LIF/ NEOS**
1990	% of votes	-	4.8	42.8	32.1	16.1	-	-	-
1994	% of votes	-	7.3	34.9	27.7	22.5	-	-	6.0
1995	% of votes	-	4.8	38.1	28.3	21.9	-	-	5.5
1999	% of votes	-	7.4	33.2	26.9	26.9	-	-	-
2002	% of votes	-	9.5	36.5	42.3	10.0*	-	-	-
2006	% of votes	-	11.1	35.3	34.3	11.0	4.1	-	-
2008	% of votes	-	10.4	29.3	26.0	17.5	10.7	-	-
2013	% of votes	-	12.4	26.8	24.0	20.5	-	5.7	5.0
2017	% of votes	4.1	3.8	26.8	31.4	25.9	-	-	5.3
2019	% of votes	-	13.9	21.1	37.4	16.7			8.1

[1] Includes only parties with seats in parliament. Grey cells denote representation in government.

[2] Note that national election dates and government terms do not exactly coincide due to the time that elapses between elections and government formation.

[3] The second ÖVP–FPÖ government lasted only until April 2005, after which the BZÖ* formally replaced the FPÖ as coalition partner of the ÖVP without there being elections. °List Pilz renamed itself into 'Now' in 2018 but did not return to parliament in 2019.

Source: Ministry of the interior

Thus, as these smaller, market liberal parties have had short lifespans, political entrepreneurs in recent years have switched to a more populist strategy, which might capture the support of the more centrist voters. Rather than trying to build distinctively social liberal policies that would place them in the centre of the political spectrum, these new leaders have tried to combine market liberal issues (such as low taxes) with issues that would gain wider support, such as advocating generous social policies, and claiming that they would fight corruption and even introduce more direct democracy. Similarly to Berlusconi's party, one businessman dominates ANO. As a businessman, he adopts rather market liberal economic ideas, such as opposing tax increases, but he learned from the failure of the previous market liberal competitors of the ODS. In a country where support for generous social policies is rather high (for example, Saxonberg 2005; Saxonberg and Sirovatka 2014), he probably concluded that his party would suffer the same fate as previous smaller market liberal alternatives to the ODS. Since there is no room for so many market liberal parties – especially since the market liberal TOP09 remained in parliament despite losing about one third of its voters in the last election – and since most of the voters are clearly negative towards the recent austerity policies and prefer more centrist policies, ANO has become a 'catch-all party' that tries to combine market liberal issues (such as low taxes) with promises of increasing support for social policies (such as taking away fees from the healthcare system). Such policies appear contradictory, but the party leader claims social policies can be made more generous by making government work more efficiently. Thus, the party is following the Berlusconi tradition of claiming that, as successful businessmen, they could run any organisation – including a government – efficiently. They are like saviours who can liberate the country from corruption and poor management.

Table 15.1b: Elections for the Czech National Parliament (Lower House)

		Political Parties[1]									
Election year		**Social Democratic Party (CSSD)**	**Civic Democratic Party (ODS)**	**Communist Party (KSCM)**	**KDU-CSL-US-DEU**	**Christian & Dem. Union-Czechoslovak Peop. Party (KDU CSL)**	**Green Party (SZ)**	**TOP 09**	**Public Affairs (VV)**	**ANO 2011**	**Dawn of Direct Democracy (Usvit)**
2002	% of votes	30.2	24.47	18.51	14.27	-	-	-	-	-	-
		35	29	20.5	15.5	-	-	-	-		-
2006	% of votes	32.32	35.38[2]	12.81	-	7.23	6.29	-	-	-	-
		37	40.5	13	-	6.5	3	-	-		-
2010	% of votes	22.08	20.22	11.27	-	-	-	16.7	10.88	-	-
		28	26.5	13	-	-	-	20.5	12		-
2013	% of votes	20.45	7.72	14.91	-	6.78	-	11.99	-	18.65	6.88
		25	8	16.5	-	7	-	13	-	23.5	7
2017	% of votes	7.27	11.32	7.76	-	5.8	1.46	5.31	-	29.64	-
		7.5	12.5	7.5	-	5	0	3.5	-	39	-

[1] Only parties which received seats in parliament are included in the table.

[2] Between 2006 and 2010 the Czech Republic had three different governments: a minority government by the ODS from 4.9.2006 till 9.1.2007 followed by a CSSD–KDU–CSL–SZ coalition. After the resignation of the cabinet a technocrat government was formed (8.5.2009–25.6.2010).

Grey colouring indicates participation in government.

Source: Czech Statistical Office (http://www.volby.cz/index_en.htm)

Explaining Entrepreneurial Populism: Argument and Hypotheses

There have been no noteworthy convergent political trends in Austria and the Czech Republic: Whereas the Austrian Conservatives (ÖVP) have been all except the staunchest supporters of

European integration, the Czech Conservatives (ODS) have been ardent critics of European integration. While Austria's dominant parties of the centre-left and centre-right have tended towards cooperation and political convergence, the main Czech parties of the left and right have preferred competition and divergence. While a radical far right populist party emerged and blossomed in Austria, it did so in the Czech Republic only briefly in the 1990s. At the same time, neither country is especially known for embracing economic liberalism or entrepreneurism, least of all Austria. Neither country can be said to have weak institutions and a party system which would otherwise facilitate personalistic politics. In both countries, those discontented with the political *status quo* would seem to find any protest sentiments already well-served. In Austria, there is a major radical populist opposition party (Freedom Party) and a centre-left anti-establishment Green Party (Die Grünen – Die Grüne Alternative). In the Czech Republic, there is even a wider range of choices available, including a market liberal anti-corruption party (TOP09), a far leftist anti-system party (Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia, Komunistická strana Čech a Moravy, KSČM) and an anti-corruption conservative liberal party (SNK European Democrats, SNK Evropští demokraté). Unlike Austria, the main Czech leftist and conservative parties have alternated in government, thus providing clear alternative choices. Yet, despite these differences, both political systems converge with the appearance of entrepreneurial populist parties. Identifying common factors in otherwise divergent cases sheds light on the causes of entrepreneurial populism.

Despite their many differences, both countries can be said to be suffering from a political crisis, primarily involving the established mainstream parties, that is prompting voters to search for new political choices. In Austria, the maintenance of grand coalitions between the Social Democrats and Christian Democrats can give the electorate the feeling that there are no important differences between the main parties. Meanwhile, in the Czech Republic, the previously dominant parties, the Social Democrats and the ODS, have reputations for putting corruption and power ahead of ideology. Therefore, although they have not formed coalitions at the national level, there still seems to be a widely held perception that the two parties do not differ much in practice (Saxonberg and Sirovatka 2014). Moreover, these two parties have quite often formed coalitions at the local and municipal levels. In addition, from 1998 to 2002 the Social Democrats ruled with the support of the ODS in parliament (Saxonberg 1999). This explanation corresponds well with the arguments put forth by Katz and Mair (1995) about former mass parties turning into cartel parties, which, through their penetration of state institutions, can extract resources to such an extent that they become relatively immune to voter input. Why would such voters then not avail themselves of other party political choices? The likely answer is that voting for the other parties would not make much of a difference, or the voters considered these parties to be too extremist in other respects (people who want radical political change are not necessarily extreme xenophobes or racists). Therefore, we argue that it is the political crisis that renders the existing main parties undesirable to many voters, while radical populist parties, market liberal reform parties and other niche parties also remain unattractive to these voters. This, in turn, causes them to search for a new political alternative and provides a window of opportunity for entrepreneurial populists.

Voters who are political centrists but who favour radical change are drawn to capable and credible change agents, especially if they feel that otherwise it *does not matter* which party one votes for because nothing will change. In Austria, the long history of grand coalitions would support this view, whereas Czech voters are likely to conclude that it *does not matter* which party one votes for because the main parties (the ODS and Social Democrats) are more interested in gaining private wealth through corruption than in running the country. Thus, surveys in both countries consistently show their populations' low levels of trust in the government or in political parties.[1]

We may therefore summarise our argument as follows: First, a new form of populist parties has emerged; and second, at least in Austria and the Czech Republic, their voting base comprises (mostly middle-class) voters who are more centrist in orientation, normally would have voted for moderate mainstream parties and are not in favour of dismantling the existing welfare state. However, they are looking for a political actor most likely to effect change. By contrast, entrepreneurial populist parties are less attractive to rather marginalised, less well-educated (typically male) voters, who are drawn more to the xenophobic types of populist parties. It is the desire for 'radical' but not 'extremist' change on the part of voters that provides entrepreneurial populist parties of different stripes with the opportunity to compete successfully. However, those voters for whom charisma and leadership ability (typically in the form of demonstrable and tangible competence) are overriding concerns will gravitate towards the tycoon-led entrepreneurial populist parties.

Hypotheses

H1: *Voters who perceive little distinction between the existing major parties of the right and left are more likely to support entrepreneurial populist parties (EPPs).*

Explanation: Populist parties often succeed in portraying the rest of the political spectrum as all the same and equally culpable for the undesirable *status quo*. As populists, the EPPs make no exception.

H2: *Voters with middle-class backgrounds in terms of education and income are more likely to support EPPs rather than radical populist parties IF these voters are dissatisfied with the political status quo.*

Explanation: The electoral niche that EPPs have found is to appeal to discontented middle-class voters.

H3: *Voters whose social views are, on the whole, tolerant are more likely to support EPPs IF they are dissatisfied with the political status quo.*

Explanation: Discontented middle-class voters desiring sweeping change are not necessarily intolerant and thus reject radical right-wing parties in favour of EPPs.

H4a: *Voters who regard leadership as central are more likely to support tycoon-led EPPs.*

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[1] For Austria, see SORA's Wahltagsbefragung und Wählerstromanalyse Nationalratswahl (Election polls and analysis of the flow of voters in the national council election) 2013, especially the table Parteien wollen nur Stimmen der WählerInnen, ihre Anliegen interessieren sie nicht (Parties just want votes and don't care about the voters' concerns); APA/OGM's Vertrauensindex BundespolitikerInnen (Political trust index9 2012; for the Czech Republic, see Mishler and Rose 1997; Vlachová 2001; Saxonberg and Sirovatka 2014.

H4b: *For voters who support EPPs, the leader (charismatic leadership) is the primary motive for supporting such a tycoon-led EPP.*

Explanation: Voters of EPPs are persuaded by the ability and personality of the leader/top candidate of EPPs to be a better steward in national politics.

H5: *Voters who support EPPs display social liberal attitudes by supporting generous existing welfare states.*

Explanation: Supporters of EPPs differ from typical neo-liberal and pro-business voters in that they share the common man ethos of populist parties and thus welcome welfare state protection. The voters of EPPs accept the claim that current government revenues are not put to effective use, so EPPs can maintain or even improve welfare policies by making the system more effective and accountable.

Data Sources and Method

When testing our assumptions, we relied on survey data from the Czech Republic and Austria. For the purposes of this paper, our empirical focus lay on ANO and Team Stronach given that for the Czech Republic, the overall tiny number of voters for Dawn did not provide us with a sufficient number of respondents to test our argument sufficiently. We also dropped the Austrian BZÖ from this analysis because the party failed to re-enter parliament. For the logistical regression analysis employed in this analysis, in the Czech case we used the most recently available public opinion survey before the 2013 elections, which was conducted in September 2013 by the Centre for Research on Public Opinion (Centrum pro výzkum verejného mínení) at the Institute of Sociology of the Czech Academy of Sciences (Politická orientace ceských obcanu – zárí 2013). Since the survey was conducted one month before the election, it is the most accurately available survey of political opinions for the period around the elections. Unfortunately, no exit polls are publicly available, as they would provide even more reliable data. As is often the case, new parties – especially populist ones – tend to be underestimated in such polls, partially because some potential voters are afraid to admit their true voting intentions (as they might be aware that it is not considered ‘respectable’ to vote for these parties) and also partially because such parties tend to get the protest votes of people who were undecided until election day or right before it. Consequently, ANO only has the support of slightly more than 8 per cent of the population in this survey although in the actual election they received over 18 per cent.

In analysing social liberal values in the Czech Republic, we performed factor analyses and saw that there were two distinct dimensions: support for liberal economic policies and human rights, and support for increased welfare spending. In other words, social liberalism has a dimension of classical, rights-based liberalism and a dimension of supporting generous welfare policies (see Table 15.2). In order to deal with missing variables, we performed multiple imputations (28 imputations) using the Stata ‘mi impute mvn’ command. Since none of the variables had complete observations, we eliminated the cases with missing observations if the number of missing observations was ten or under. Thus, we dropped missing cases for sex, support for state involvement in the economy, profession, education and age-level. This brought the total number of cases down from 1029 to 1002. Then we used these variables to impute the scores for trusting the government, being satisfied with the political situation, trusting the representatives of the party one voted for, supporting the EU, and the factors liberalism and welfarism, using the variables: professional worker, self-employment, clerk, pensioner, unemployed, housewife, manager, education, sex.

Table 15.2: Factor Analysis of Social Liberalism for the Czech Republic

Variable	**Factor Score: Economic Liberalism and Human Rights**	**Factor Score: Social Welfare**	**Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy**
Supporting human rights	*.62*	.24	.76
Free enterprise	.75	-.25	.8
Against state ownership	.68	-.3	.84
Against the state guiding economic development	.52	-.28	.8
Against the state guiding large enterprises	.67	-.16	.8
Freedom of assembly	.66	.19	.76
State should guarantee jobs	-.06	.79	.71
State should provide social security	-.09	.81	.7
Redistribution	-.14	.66	.76
Overall			.78

In the case of Austria, we were not able to draw on a data set that was as detailed with respect to the questions we wanted to ask and for this paper had to rely on the Austrian National Election Study (AUTNES), specifically the Austrian National Election 2013: Voters and Voting Behaviour.[2] Whereas employing two different data sources is unfortunate, the indicators were sufficiently similar with respect to several key variables to allow us to test the main argument with respect to both cases. In the following, we will present our preliminary findings. The Austrian survey did not ask questions about tolerance and private entrepreneurship in order to be able to create a two-dimensional scale, as in the case of the Czech Republic. So, instead, we created a one-dimensional scale for welfare support, which included support for increased spending on education, healthcare, unemployment, pensions and welfare. The Cronbach alpha score of 0.58 is moderately acceptable (see Table 15.3).

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[2] See AUTNES Comparative Study of Electoral Systems Post-Election Survey 2013 – Questionnaire (German); for the data see: https://dbk.gesis.org/dbksearch/SDesc2.asp?DB=E&no=5856.

Table 15.3: Cronbach Alpha Test of Reliability for Austria

Variable	Alpha	Alpha if item removed
Spending on education	.6	.54
Spending on healthcare	.67	.49
Spending on unemployment	.59	.55
Spending on pensions	.56	.56
Spending on welfare	.65	.5
Test scale		.58

Note: (1) varimax rotation

In performing the multiple imputations, we eliminated cases of when there were no observations, or if the number of missing observations was under ten, so that we could impute the scores of the variables with many missing observations using variables without any missing observations. This involved dropping missing observations from university education, profession, parties making a difference, dissatisfaction with the way democracy is working and welfare attitudes. The imputations were made according to income group and Stronach being charismatic. The independent variables for the imputations also included gender, for which there were no missing cases, as well as the aforementioned variables after cases with missing observations had been eliminated. We conducted 28 imputations. Since we did not want to do imputations for the dependent variables, this further brought down the number of cases to 907.

Hypotheses Test and Empirical Findings

In the following, we present our findings when testing our hypotheses. The first question related to the voters' perception that all major parties seem alike:

Hypothesis 1: Voters perceive little difference between parties

ANO voters are indeed more likely to be dissatisfied with the political situation and more likely to be distrustful of the government (cf. Table 15.4, Model 1); however, the relationship is not statistically significant. This is probably because Czech respondents in general were dissatisfied with the political situation and distrustful of the government regardless of their political affiliation. On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being very dissatisfied and 5 being very satisfied, being satisfied with the political situation had a mean of 1.88, while trust in the government had a mean of 2.03.

Table 15.4: Logistic Models for the Czech Republic: Voting for ANO1

	Model 1	**Model 2a**	**Model 2b**	**Model 3a**	**Model 3b**	**Model 4**	**Model 5**	**Model 6**
Hypothesis 1: Voters Perceive Little Difference Between Parties								
Trust vernment	-. 25							-.21
Satisfied with political situation	-.11							-.24
Hypotheses 2: Supporters are from the Middle Class								
Education		.12**						.03
Professional			.14					-.17
Worker			-.6					-.2
Self-employed			1.15*					.93
Clerk			1.17*					.77
Pensioner			-.35					-.62
Unemployed			-1.29					-1.3
Housewife			.51					.37
Manager			.79					.43
Hypothesis 3: More Likely to be Tolerant								
EU support				.26				.19
Liberalism					.27*			.25
Hypothesis 4: Leadership Important								
Trust representatives of ANO						.57**		.78***
Hypothesis 5: Support for Welfare								
Support welfare							-.22[2]	-.11
Centrist (3–7 on scale of 1–10)							1.00***	1. 28***
Control Variable								
Sex								.05
Age								.1
Constant	-1.74***	-1.80***	-2.63***	-2.86***	-2.42***	-4.25***	-3.04***	-5.98***

Notes: (1) n=950, two imputed variables
We also ran age-level and educational level as ordinal independent variables, getting scores for each level, but since it did not change the final results, for reasons of space, we chose to only report the coefficient for the entire variable. The one substantive difference is that when only using educational level as the independent variable it turns out that the lowest educational level (level 2) is the only level that is significantly correlated with voting for ANO (it is negatively correlated).
(2) Probability of .06.

In the case of Austria, the post-election survey includes the more direct question of whether one thinks it matters who is governing. However, it turns out that there is no statistically significant relationship between voting for Team Stronach and believing that it does not make a difference who governs (see Table 15.5 Model 1). Nevertheless, there is a very significant relationship between voting for Team Stronach and being dissatisfied with the way democracy is functioning in Austria. While we cannot confirm this hypothesis, it is nonetheless clear that Austrian voters who support Team Stronach are politically unhappy and see no other party political alternatives.

Table 15.5: Logistic Models for Austria: Voting for Team Stronach

	Model 1	**Model 3**	**Model 4**	**Model 5**	**Model 6**
	coefficients	coefficients	coefficients	coefficients	coefficients
H1: Perceive Little Difference Between Parties					
Make diff	.01				.09
Not satisfied with democracy	.77**				.75**
H2: Voters are Middle-Class					
Employee		-.43			-.17
Manual		.85			.32
Civil servant		-.42			-.21
Self-employed		.65			.53
Income group		-.09			-.1
University educated		-.09			-.08
Hypothesis 4: Leadership More Important					
Stronach charismatic			.95***		.86***
Hypothesis 5: Social Liberal Values					
Support welfare policies				-.58	-.45
Control Variable					
Gender					-.58
Constant	-5.75***	- 3.63***	- 6.83***	-1.83	-6.2

Note: n = 907

Hypothesis 2: Those with middle-class backgrounds are more likely to support EPPs

Even though educational level is statistically significant in the case of the Czech Republic (Table 15.4 Model 2a), being a professional is not significant (Model 2b); however, in contrast to the more xenophobic extremist parties, being a worker is not statistically significant. Furthermore, being self-employed or being an entrepreneur who hires other people is positively correlated with voting for ANO, which shows that entrepreneurially oriented people are more likely to vote for entrepreneurial populism than other voters. Being a clerk is also positively correlated with voting for ANO, which again shows that its voters tend to come from the middle and upper classes. Educational level no longer remains statistically significant when one controls for profession (results not shown), which indicates that being a clerk or self-employed is more important than being highly educated. In the case of Austria (Table 15.5 Model 2), there is no statistically significant connection between having a university education and having voted for Team Stronach. Neither is there any significant correlation between one's profession and voting for the party. So even if this does not support our argument that voters for EPP parties are more likely to be well educated professionals, the fact that there is no statistically significant negative correlation at least disputes mainstream literature, which claims that voters for EPP parties come from less educated, more socially excluded groups.

Hypothesis 3: Voters are more likely to be tolerant

These new party leaders have not emphasised xenophobic positions, which is something that differentiates them from other populists. Thus, according to our calculations, Euroscepticism is actually lower among supporters of ANO than among the population in general, with only 19.8 per cent of ANO supporters claiming that the EU has been bad for the country, compared to 27.3 per cent among the entire adult population. However, this relationship is not statistically significant (Table 15.4, Model 3a). Another way to measure tolerance is the question of whether one believes the state should limit the right to freedom of assembly. There is actually a positive correlation between favouring the right to free assembly and voting for ANO, but the relationship is not statistically significant, so once again the hypothesis that voters for this EPP are more likely to be tolerant or at least not likely to be intolerant (since the relationship was not statistically significant) is supported. Furthermore, our scale of classical liberalism shows a statistically significant relationship between liberalism and voting for ANO (Table 15.4, Model 3a). Nevertheless, this relationship remains significant only at the1-level after one has controlled for attitudes towards the EU (results not shown). As the Austrian survey did not ask any questions dealing with tolerance or the EU, the issue will have to be revisited when new panel data, taken before the elections, become available.

Hypothesis 4: Leadership is more important for EEP voters

In the case of the Czech Republic, ANO voters are indeed much more likely to trust the party's representatives than voters of other parties (Table 15.4, Model 4). The Austrian survey did not include a question about trusting party representatives, but it did contain other questions that are useful. For example, over 47 per cent of TS voters find Stronach charismatic, while only 28.6 per cent do not find him charismatic and 23.8 per cent find him a little bit charismatic. There is also a very strong correlation between voting for Team Stronach and believing that he is charismatic.

Hypothesis 5: Voters display social liberal attitudes

Our calculations show that supporters of ANO in the Czech Republic appear to be centrist with social liberal economic values. ANO voters overwhelmingly support relatively generous social policies. On the one hand, they want relatively generous social policies, as 55.9 per cent of ANO voters think the state should be responsible for social security, while only 13.1 per cent think people should take care of themselves. This indicates some support for a rather generous welfare state, but only 22 per cent of ANO voters indicated that income should be relatively equally distributed. Thus, ANO voters are more centrist and social liberal than social democratic. This can also be seen by the fact that most put themselves in the centre. On a scale of 1-11, with 4-8 being the centre, a highly significant relationship emerges between being centrist and voting for ANO (see Table 15.4 Model 5). Table 15.4, Model 5 actually shows a negative relationship between supporting increased welfare spending and voting for ANO, but this is because support for generous welfare policies in general is very strong in the country, rather than because ANO supporters are against relatively generous welfare policies.

Team Stronach's voters also support relatively generous welfare policies. 40 per cent of TS voters favour increased welfare spending, while only 15 per cent favour decreased welfare spending (and 45 per cent are satisfied with current levels). Similar results arise for questions on spending on specific programmes. For example, 50 per cent of TS voters favour increased spending on pensions, while only 10 per cent want to decrease spending; 45 per cent support increased spending on healthcare, compared to 5 per cent who favour cutting back spending. In the area of education, fully 84 per cent of TS voters favour increased spending, while 16 per cent think current levels are acceptable and 0 per cent favour decreased spending. However, when it comes to unemployment benefits, their views were more negative as only 10 per cent favoured increased spending, compared to 35 per cent who preferred decreased spending. Even though TS voters basically have a social liberal profile in their support for welfare spending, the relationship between voting for TS and supporting welfare spending is not statistically significant for any of these issues, as Austrian voters in general support generous welfare policies, thus leaving little variation between TS voters and voters for other parties.

The full model shows that, in the case of the Czech Republic, placing oneself in the centre on a left-right scale and trusting the representatives of ANO were the only statistically significant variables. These findings confirm our hypotheses about the importance of leadership and the idea that entrepreneurial populist parties in Europe tend to attract centrist voters rather than extremists, as is the case with the more xenophobic types of populist parties. In the case of Austria, believing Stronach to be charismatic and being dissatisfied with the way democracy is functioning are the two variables that remain statistically significant in the full model. These confirm some of our hypotheses for entrepreneurial populists. On the other hand, these results would also confirm expectations about those who vote for more traditional populist parties.

Lessons Drawn

In the final analysis both parties developed along starkly different trajectories although they found similar conditions of party competition and opportunity. Whereas ANO went on to eventually dominate the government and win re-election, thus establishing itself the Czechia's pivotal political force, TS simply imploded and faded away even before it had the chance to run for re-election. Centrist entrepreneurial populism has distinct competitive advantages. First and foremost, its basic appeal is based on the seemingly non-ideological notion that prominent entrepreneurs know how to run a business and thus will know how to run the state. With them presenting themselves as non-politicians, their approach promises new no-nonsense solutions beyond the traditional ideological divides. Appearing pragmatic and non-ideological makes it comparatively easy for entrepreneurial populists to occupy the centre of the political spectrum. In short, their very appeal is their manifest contrast to professional politicians, and thus voters may be willing to forgive them for any transgressions from conventional behaviour and deviations from the norm.

However, as the case of TS shows, this, too, has limits and if, in the voters' minds, unconventional behaviour turns from distinctiveness to ridicule, personalised parties will have nowhere to turn and no party apparatus or, in the case of TS, even finances to fall back on. Almost immediately following the national elections in 2013, in which TS received 5.7 per cent of the votes and 11 out of 183 seats, Stronach announced his withdrawal from politics and left for

Canada. He also resigned his seat in parliament in early 2014. In public polls, the party's support subsequently plummeted to 1 per cent. In a personalised party led by a business tycoon, it was of little surprise that Stronach would appoint a personal confidante from his business to the top position below him. As such, his head of office, Kathrin Nachbaur, initially became deputy party leader and the head of the parliamentary faction. Not only was she inexperienced in politics, but Stronach's idea of running a party indirectly and from afar by occasionally inserting himself in discussions and threatening to withdraw financial backing from the party are not merely quixotic details from the final three years of a minor Austrian party. In fact, it is instructive of the populist catch-all party, which is dependent on the whims and capacity of a single individual. In 2016, Stronach announced he no longer wanted to run for re-election and even withdrew his name from the party list on the ballot. After preparing to run under a new name, the party was informed by Stronach that it would instead be dissolved by the end of 2017. In 2013, the party had had significant potential evidenced by successes in regional elections and good results in pre-election polling. It seemed a desirable option for moderate voters fed up with the *status quo* but unwilling to support the radical right.

In the Czech Republic, ANO used this potential much more effectively. Its leader, Babiš, ran a much stronger campaign than Stronach and was able to gain a cabinet seat. He also had the advantage of having lived in Czechoslovakia and then the Czech Republic all his life, so he was not seen as the same kind of 'outsider' that Stronach was. In his role as finance minister, Babiš succeeded in convincing part of the population that he should be given credit for the country's strong economic showing. Since ANO's social democratic coalition partner was self-destructing due to infighting, in the 2017 elections many of the centrist social democratic voters went over to ANO in order to continue the main policies of the previous government. Even though Babiš could no longer run a campaign in 2017 as an agent of change, he was able to run a campaign based on his claim that he had proven his entrepreneurial populist argument to be correct: he *was* able to run the government successfully, just as he had successfully run his businesses. And speaking of successfully running businesses, in contrast to Stronach, he was able to get the support of much of the mass media, because he himself owned several of the country's most important newspapers. Consequently, ANO became the largest party in the country and continued its coalition with the social democrats, but this time they reversed roles, as ANO became the dominating party of the coalition and its leader, Babiš, became prime minister.

Conclusion

We have conceptualised a new type of populist party that we have dubbed entrepreneurial populist. The concept is derived from the literature on personalised parties and businessperson parties but has been developed further by us linking it to contemporary theories on populism, which define such parties as having a thin-centred ideology that is focused on a homogeneous, unified people threatened by unaccountable and sinister elites. Entrepreneurial parties are more moderate on socio-cultural issues than radical populist parties and they are rather explicit about office-seeking. Why do voters who are generally not neo-liberal in orientation and who already have a range of protest party alternatives available support a business tycoon who claims that a country should be run like a business? Our data indicate that our arguments correspond better to the Czech Republic. In both countries, the supporters of entrepreneurial populist parties were not neo-liberal in orientation and seemed drawn to those parties' respective leaders because of their dissatisfaction with the political *status quo*. In the Czech Republic, the positive relationship with education is significant and indicates an electorate beyond the typical supporters of right-wing populist parties. In Austria, a relatively large share of workers flocked to support Stronach, which may have had something to do with his particular image as a successful working man and job creator. In no case do we find evidence that people are drawn to ANO and TS because of the usual socio-cultural issues that fuel radical right-wing populist campaigns. Our chapter also shows the potential of such parties in both directions. The skill of the leader and the ability to flexibly adjust his or her party's position may prove to either be a singular advantage or even spell the end of that party as it has no other resources to fall back on. We chose to include this chapter in the Handbook, although the data available were far from perfect, because it underlines the idea that populism does not have to be radical right-wing or left-wing but can be more centrist. After developing our conceptualisation, we presented an empirical illustration of this phenomenon in the Austrian and Czech contexts. Our hope is that this provides a solid foundation for further research not only on these cases, but issues related to entrepreneurial populism as a whole.

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CHAPTER 16:
NEW POPULISM

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Introduction: A Wave of (New) Populism Continues to Pervade Europe

The political and socio-economic conditions in Western Europe – characterised both by the sunset of traditional ideologies and the economic crisis – have led to new forms of political mobilisation by parties outside the mainstream. Peripheral, disparate anti-establishment actors have received large electoral support across a number of European countries over the past ten years and this support continues to rise regularly. In particular, these political subjects appear more and more as a permanent presence in almost all Western liberal democracies' party systems. In Italy, the 2013 general election represented an unprecedented case in the country's national political history. For the first time, a new party (the Five Star Movement, Movimento 5 Stelle, M5S) obtained more than 25 per cent of the electoral vote. Not even Forza Italia (Forward Italy) in 1994 achieved similar results. Also, in the 2014 European elections, the M5S entered the European Parliament (EP) for the first time, obtaining 17 MEP seats. In the 2018 general election, the M5S was again the biggest single party with a third of the electoral vote and it initially decided to form a government together with the League (Lega, previously Northern League, Lega Nord, LN). In Spain, the party called Podemos (We Can) presented its candidates for the first time in the 2014 European election, when five members of its members were elected to the EP. The same party confirmed these successful results in the 2015 national general elections. Since that moment, Podemos has become a constant presence in the unstable Spanish party system, participating in parliamentary elections between June 2016 and April 2019 and now forming a coalition government, which has also caused internal divisions and multiple dynamics generated by some important changes inside the party (Agustin and Briziarelli 2018). In a similar context of economic crisis, in Greece, a party like SYRIZA (Coalition of the Radical Left – Progressive Alliance) indicated a new trajectory in protest voting. In the 2012 general elections, SYRIZA represented a previously unknown Greek political formation of the radical left, which, due to its electoral success, has since gained unprecedented visibility within the European public sphere (Stavrakakis and Katsambekis 2014). Also, this Greek party was marked by two controversial periods of government from 2015 to 2019. During the 2019 legislative election, the party was defeated by New Democracy (Nea Dimokratia, ND) and moved into opposition. In general, these phenomena indicate a new trajectory in the analysis of protest parties in opposition to mainstream parties. Primarily, all these cases, from their foundation until now (2020), have changed their role and they had the opportunity to test their party organisation with an experience of being in government with a lot of consequences from both an internal and an external point of view. Generally, they have become 'populists in power' (Albertazzi and McDonnell 2015; Blokker and Anselmi 2020). Also, in more and more cases, it is possible to identify protest voting outside the right wing of the political spectrum, even if the electoral success of right-wing populist parties persists in some countries, such as France, Denmark, the UK and Italy, too. All these political parties are often described under the general label of 'populism', which, according to scholars, can be assumed to share common traits and intentions (Canovan 1981; Taggart 1995; 2000; 2004; Mény and Surel 2000). Certainly, these parties thrive on anti-establishment attitudes, political discontent and socio-economic unrest, while also mobilising the Eurosceptic vote in a large sense. According to Mudde (2004), populism can be defined as a 'thin-centred ideology' that considers society to be ultimately separated into two antagonistic groups, the 'pure people' and the 'corrupt elite'. However, populism is able to attach itself to other ideological features, which can also be very diverse (such as nativism, nationalism and regionalism on the right and socialism on the left). So, the development of the so-called 'new populist parties' has produced different effects in likewise different countries. This is just what is happening now. In the European context, populism has been predominantly associated with the radical right (Mudde 2007), but the electoral success of parties such as SYRIZA in Greece, Podemos in Spain and the Five Star Movement in Italy since 2012 has attested to a new breed of populism located to the left of the political spectrum or outside the right-wing heritage. So, the rise and the electoral success of these extremely diverse populist phenomena is sparking a renewed discussion about what populism is and which features may be common to both its left-wing and right-wing (or post-ideological) manifestations. Do these parties, as Woods (2014, 11) suggests, represent a case of 'diverse but not disparate' populism? Moreover, the broadly accepted distinction between leftist and rightist populism may be ill-suited to parties that often claim to be 'neither left, nor right', as is the case, for example, with the Italian M5S. Thus, an important question in contemporary debates on populism concerns the political and ideological characterisation of the current parties using a claim about the people to mobilise voters. As Laclau (2007) points out, the substance of populist politics appears as widely divergent, from right-wing xenophobia to egalitarian socialism, which impedes the identification of a common ideational core among diverging occurrences of populism.

For all these reasons, the first purpose of this chapter is to analyse different traits in the current expressions of populism, with a particular focus on Western Europe. In fact, for many decades the debate about 'populism' was reserved for the extra-democratic context, and the populist label was used especially to describe extra-European regimes, such as the Argentinean model (and the Juan Perón regime). In the mass party era, especially in Western European democracies, the populist message was only considered a flash in the pan. In fact, the main forms of political participation were inside parties and the examples of populist forces were only outlined by episodic forms of democratic degeneracy (Mény and Surel 2000). For example, we can cite the cases of the Front of the Ordinary Man (Fronte dell'Uomo Qualunque) in Italy and the Poujadist movement in France. Other populist expressions were often captured by extreme right-wing forms of politics and were put at the service of authoritarian regimes and ideologies. So, this chapter aims to describe relationships between European democracies and contemporary new expressions of populism. Who are the new 'people' and the new 'elite' (political, cultural, economic)? What are in particular the analogies and differences between contemporary populist parties and their evolution? Which traits do different political subjects in different countries have in common?

A second aspect of interest relates to the political and ideological characterisation of the same parties and the extent to which they may represent 'post-ideological' expressions of populism in the current political landscape. Accordingly, the following section (the second) will describe two contemporary examples of protest parties, which are clearly left-wing: the Spanish Podemos and the Greek SYRIZA. The first question relates to their populist nature: Why is it possible to consider these parties to be populist projects? What are the analogies and differences between the two cases? Also, is it possible for them to have common traits with other examples of populist forces across Europe? In particular, we want to look comparatively at these various occurrences of populism and conduct an analysis considering the populist core in the most important contemporary populist parties outside the traditional right-wing arena. In the third section, we consider another specific and controversial case of contemporary European populism, that of the Italian Five Star Movement. This political subject represents an unprecedented case of populism with heterogeneous traits. In the fourth part of the chapter, we will consider the current debate on the concept of populism: can it be considered an ideology, a strategy, a communication style or all of those? In the conclusion (the fifth section), we will attempt to summarise contemporary trends in populist expression, also taking into account the very recent crisis caused by the rapid spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. We will consider the variation of current populist phenomena, illustrating different effects in different countries and institutional contexts. In general, we will remark on the need to redefine the concept of 'populism' and the importance of increasingly linking the rise of new populist organisations with periods of strong and multiple crises.

Understanding Contemporary Left-Wing Populism in Spain and Greece

As we mentioned before, the rise of protest parties with unseen traits suggests a new variant of populism, which is located outside the right-wing tradition. According to Mudde (2015), the quite recent electoral success of some left-wing populist parties has given the debate on populism in Western Europe new impetus: 'Until now, populism was almost exclusively linked to the radical right, leading to an incorrect conflation of populism and xenophobia. In its original form, populism is an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogenous and antagonistic groups (pure people vs. corrupt elite), and argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people.' Practically, in the development of their electoral project, populist parties almost always combine it with other ideologies, such as 'nativism' on the right and 'socialism' on the left (Mudde 2015, 1). Of course, 'the people' remain a central element in any conception of populism. However, beyond a general claim about 'the people', it is possible to identify a great deal of variation in interpretations of that same concept. Context, history and leadership style play key roles in giving content to the abstraction of 'the people' in current populism. As Kriesi (2014, 364) argues, 'it is impossible to arrive at a clear-cut definition of the phenomenon without giving the people a more specific meaning'. In this section, we suggest that it is the ideological core of populism that provides 'the more specific meaning' to populism. Exactly because it is a thin-centred ideology, populism attaches its restricted core to other ideological features and can therefore be found across political cleavages. In the European context, populism has been predominantly associated with the radical right, but more recently the rise of parties such as Podemos in Spain or SYRIZA in Greece indicates the development of a new variant of populism, which produces a new debate. Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser (2013) suggest that the populist left tends to have an economically inclusive notion of the people (inclusionary populism), while the populist radical right exhibits cultural views based predominantly on exclusionary ethnonationalist notions (exclusionary populism). Therefore, we will now consider the case of the Spanish Podemos as an example of contemporary left-wing populism strictly related to its national context. Then, we will take into consideration the case of SYRIZA in Greece in order to compare the two proposals.

Since 2013, a large academic debate on the populist nature of a new political phenomenon in Spain, the rise of Podemos, has been developing with no general consensus. However, nowadays some contributions exist on the 'populist hypothesis' regarding its agenda and its strategies (Gómez-Reino and Llamazares 2015). Certainly, the party arose with the intention of protesting and conveys a strong political message of rupture and change directed against the economic and political establishment (the 'caste') to 'common citizens', but at the same time it defines itself as a left-wing force with clear affiliations to post-Marxist ideology and with references to Gramsci's vocabulary. Despite the enormous discontent and the lack of political legitimacy brought about by the financial and political crisis, it was not easy to create a new 'us' in Spain (Rendueles and Sola 2015, 21). The formation of an inclusive national popular identity should not resort to the memory of the long-lived dictatorship. Also, the concept of *patria* (homeland) was not an effective way to create a new collective entity. Moreover, Spain is characterised by a delicate multinational context, with disputed identities and territorial conflicts in places such as Catalonia and the Basque Country. In this framework, the notions chosen by Podemos were a particular meaning of the 'people' (*el pueblo*) opposed to the caste (*la casta*). The caste – as in the case of the Italian M5S – is a collective made up of politicians, big corporations, the media, speculators and privileged groups in general. It is a diffuse category at the disposal of anyone to express their outrage towards the establishment with (Gomez-Reino and Llamazares 2015). The caste became the best enemy against which Podemos supporters define themselves. The emergence of the concept of *el pueblo* appears more controversial: the multinational character of Spain and its quite recent dictatorship past make it difficult for the party to use this concept in a 'positive' and 'emancipatory way' (Mouffe 2011, 111; Errejón 2012, 441). The Francoist use of the terms *nación* (nation) and *pueblo* especially leads us to consider its claim of being for the people in a negative way. So Podemos – in a first conception (in a political sense) – has constructed a concept centred on *la gente*. This is still a concept about the people but with more pluralistic connotations and fewer 'ancient' ideological references. With the expression *la gente de este país* (people of this country), Podemos proposes a type of popular sovereignty which is always in opposition to the privileged, the previously cited *la casta* (Errejón and Mouffe 2015, 126). The same concept of popular sovereignty can be replaced by *la mayoria social* or *la ciudadania* (citizenship). The main goal of the party is to construct an inclusive political project and not an exclusionary identity-based community. For these reasons, this Spanish party has detached itself from other contemporary examples of populism in Western Europe (the French Rassemblement National, RN, for instance). In Podemos' claims of being for the people, any reference to a society based on cultural or ethnic identity is totally absent. Then, the party embraced the project of a politically integrated and solidary country, defending immigrants and socially marginalised sectors of society, and proposing a political agenda strongly based on social rights.

Podemos, like other examples of 'new populism', has experienced a controversial period in government, which occurred after some electoral appointments. In 2015, it presented candidates for general elections for the first time and it became the third national party (gaining

20.6 per cent electoral approval and 60 seats). In 2016, Spain again voted in general elections and Podemos obtained 71 seats in coalition with the United Left (Izquierda Unida, IU). Just after this alliance, a strong debate and internal divisions started within the party, too. In 2019, the party – led again by Pablo Iglesias – received fewer votes and obtained 42 seats in comparison to the 71 three years earlier. In November 2019, after a long period of political impasse, Podemos decided to sign a government agreement with the Spanish Socialist Party (Partido Socialista Obrero Español, PSOE). Certainly, the same decision has had a lot of consequences on party organisation with an evolving situation and uncertain effects. The affinities of Podemos with left-wing populism are confirmed by some similarities with other examples, such as Chavismo in Latin America and especially with SYRIZA in Greece, which we will analyse in the second part of this section. In fact, in an affective register, the message of Podemos seeks to attract massive support by stimulating feelings of joy and hope (*ilusión*), by striving for 'victory' and by inspiring confidence in the possibility of imminent rupture. Additionally, as opposed to what happens in right-wing populism, 'the feelings of anger and fear nourished by job insecurity are projected onto the "domestic caste" rather than onto immigrants' (Kioupkiolis 2016, 103). In particular, Podemos arose in 2014 from the 2011 protest movements of the Indignados and it was able to catalyse citizens' distrust from a leftist point of view. Consequently, this Spanish party was able to use the cleavage between left and right in favour of the antagonism between common people and the corrupt elites. For all these reasons, it placed its strategies in a new style of populism that has favoured left-wing parties in other countries, too. Within this framework, it is possible to retrace another important element in Podemos' populist strategies at the beginning of its political activities: the party never renounced its leftist identity. Using an evidently left-oriented lexicon, Podemos has managed to position itself at the left of the ideological spectrum, also as a careful and strategic measure (Errejón and Mouffe 2015). In recent times, in Europe there have been some examples of populist forces (also parties with clearly right-wing ideas) using the effective slogan 'neither right nor left'. This is precisely the case with the French National Rally (Rassemblement National, previously Front National, *ni gauche, ni droite*) and the Italian Five Star Movement. However, similar rhetoric in Spain risks evoking associations with the fascism of the 1930s and the subsequent long-lived regime, or a more general 'anti-politics' sentiment, which is interpreted in a negative way by a large section of voters. Thus, declaring its affiliation to the left appears to be an effective and constant strategy for Podemos in Spain.

SYRIZA was initially founded as an electoral coalition (alliance) of radical left political parties and extra-parliamentarian organisations in 2004. Its main constituent, Synaspismos (founded in 1992), originates in the Greek Euro-communist tradition. In May 2012, it became a political party led by Alexis Tsipras and in 2015 it became the largest party in the Hellenic parliament, with party chairman Tsipras serving as prime minister from 26th January 2015 to 20th August 2015 and from 21st September 2015 to 8th July 2019. Due to its impressive electoral performance in the two general elections of May and June 2012, SYRIZA gained unprecedented visibility in the European public sphere, which was anxiously following developments at one of the epicentres of its deep economic crisis. Within a very short period, SYRIZA had managed to climb from 4.60 to 26.89 per cent of the vote, performing an electoral leap rather unique in modern Greece (Stavrakakis and Katsambekis 2014).

Nowadays, research literature offers few contributions regarding SYRIZA as an example of populism. However, Stavrakakis and Katsambekis (2014) made an impressive contribution in this sense. First of all, the question is: ‘Do we accept the populist characterisation of SYRIZA? Is the discourse articulated by SYRIZA and by its leader Alexis Tsipras a populist one? Does it fulfil the two criteria highlighted by Laclau (2007), namely a central reference to ‘the people’ and an equivalent ‘antagonistic discursive logic’? According again to Stavrakakis and Katsambekis (2014, 124), Greece is no stranger to populism. The country’s recent history, following the democratic transition marking the end of a seven-year military dictatorship (1967-1974), has been marked by populist movements of all kinds, ranging from the popular democratic left to the religious far right. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the political stage was dominated by PASOK’s populism, which put forward the demands of the so-called ‘non-privileged’ for social justice, popular sovereignty and national independence against an establishment accused of monopolising political access and economic privilege in various ways since the end of the Greek Civil War (1946-1949). However, today’s re-emergence of ‘populism’ comes in a completely new context, indicating a new shift to the left. After three years of austerity measures and massive budget cuts, the country, which entered the Eurozone in 2001, is facing one of the most difficult moments in its contemporary history. In the context of the global economic crisis, Greek’s debt and deficit were declared unsustainable and the austerity measures were demanded by the EU, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Against this background, the Greek radical left, SYRIZA, managed to appeal to and mobilise a noteworthy section of the voters. In their research, Stavrakakis and Katsambekis (2014) noted that ‘the people’ did not occupy a central position in SYRIZA’s discourse: ‘Its presence was rather indirect, through synecdoche and metonymy. Signifiers such as “youth”, “movements” or simply “society” were largely preferred; mass youth mobilisations against university reforms (2007) and a strong identification with social movement structures and activities thus overdetermined SYRIZA’s discourse.’ However, the unprecedented economic, social and political crisis in Greece has initiated a twofold process that has transformed both its discourse and its constituency. Consequently, the ‘people’ increasingly became a central element in SYRIZA’s discourse. At the same time, SYRIZA’s discourse was clearly articulated on the basis of a dichotomous schema, with the antagonistic pattern ‘us/the people against them/the establishment’ being the dominant one, so the authors concluded that SYRIZA’s discourse is a populist one. The problem remains the definition of this concept of the people in the sense of SYRIZA. Without doubt, in Podemos the reference to the same concept is clearer, as is its meaning. However, the point of contact between Podemos and SYRIZA is to be found in their power to resist austerity measures and defend democratic and social rights as examples of inclusionary populism (Graziano 2018). Font, Graziano and Tsakatika (2021) propose a comparison between the two parties and they consider varieties of inclusionary populism, also using the Italian Five Star Movement as a special case. More in general, it is possible to underline the fact that the emerging protest movements and parties from the left have especially arisen in countries strongly affected by the politics of austerity and the economic crisis. This is precisely the case in Spain and Greece.

An Unprecedented Example of Populism: The Case of the Italian Five Star Movement

Another example of contemporary European populism with unseen traits is the Italian Five Star Movement. In 2013, the M5S represented the most important novelty in Italy's political landscape since the 1990s. Founded in 2009 by the comedian Beppe Grillo, it became the largest single party in the lower house in the 2013 general elections, obtaining the 25.6 per cent of the votes. Not even Forza Italia in 1994 earned similar results: on that occasion, Berlusconi's party achieved only 21 per cent of the electorate's approval. In the same period, a new vacuum was created by the decline of the 'Berlusconian era': the vast majority of the existing parties were confronted with a new type of crisis and they attempted to reorganise themselves. From this breakable framework emerged a new political organisation, the M5S, marked by a strong protest sentiment. In the 2018 general elections, the M5S achieved an excellent result again and became the biggest single party with a third of the vote (37 per cent), but fell short of having a majority of seats in the national parliament. The second most voted party was the League led by Matteo Salvini (32.6 per cent). The same results showed that the League conquered broad swathes of Italy's north, while Five Star saw its strongest show of support in the south. So, after a quite long debate, the M5S and the League decided to form a governmental cartel with Giuseppe Conte as prime minister, which lasted until 2019. In September 2019, the same M5S created a coalition agreement with the Democratic Party (Partito Democratico, PD). This experience of populist party 'in power' has had a lot of effects on the party's characteristics and organisation (Corbetta 2017). In this section, we analyse the M5S's populist traits at the beginning of the project and the evolution of its political experience. Since 2012, literature on populism has accepted a general definition of the M5S as an example of post-ideological populism (Lanzone 2015), neo-populism (Graziano 2018) or web-populism (Corbetta 2013; Tarchi 2015). However, there is no consensus over the conceptions of the people contained in its specific political project. What kind of populist claim did the party propose at the beginning? What is moreover the nature of the antagonistic relationship contained in the M5S's populist message? And more specifically, is it possible to categorise the party's populist claim along the traditional left/right dimension? So, under these circumstances, the protest vote for the M5S appears to be a new populist answer to citizens' needs for renewal of the political class. However, the party's characteristics immediately show some contradictory elements which enable us differentiate this case from other examples of European and Italian populism in the contemporary landscape.

At first sight, the M5S does not appear to be a typical case of 'thick' populism, such as the French Rassemblement National. Certainly, it is possible to retrace strong anti-system characteristics in its original political project right away. Also, the party proposes a populist message as a political strategy. Its analysis of populism as an ideology and in particular its identification of the three conceptions of the people (political, cultural and economic) appears more controversial. With its effective slogan 'The parties are dead' and with the statement 'It is necessary to bring back the country to the people's will', the party founded by Grillo resolutely declares its populist purpose (in a political sense) and its distrust of traditional parties. In addition to this 'war' against the parties, the M5S also emphasises its general opposition to the traditional media, that they are responsible for and 'abettors' of politicians' scandals and their corruption. Consequently, there is no distinction between party power and old media power.

The M5S's opposition to the traditional media is part of a wider project of denigrating the elite. Therefore, in the M5S's populist claim, from 2019 to 2013, it is possible to trace a strong and broad appeal to the sovereign people, with opposition towards the political class (political elite) in particular and traditional political institutions in general. Instead, the party maintained a slightly ambiguous position with regard to the class-people claim (social and economic populism) for a quite long period until 2014 European elections, and in the same starting project the party's cultural (identity) claim especially is totally absent. As a result, the strong predominance of its first claim of standing for the sovereign people emerges in its analysis of its conceptions of the people.

This peculiarity probably detaches this example from other cases of contemporary populism: in fact, several important populist parties have included all three people conceptions in their projects. For example, the Italian League during its long electoral path expressed all three (Biorcio 2003). This specific nature of the M5S probably represents a weakness, too. The same weakness has featured in the last phase of the M5S's political path. In fact, the global political project proposed by the Five Stars took advantage of a strong socio-political crisis, and protest voting has been one of the main reasons for them mobilising a large section of the electorate (those 'disappointed' by current politics) with no clear ideological tendencies. Therefore, it is very difficult to characterise the ideologies embodied by this party. Certainly, its purposes are not motivated by ethno-nationalism, which is appropriate for a description of right-wing populism instead. Some data regarding its voters and its members confirms the M5S has no clear ideological position on the traditional left-right dimension of competition. As suggested by Bordignon and Ceccarini (2013), the M5S started as a left-wing pro-environment party before turning to a more 'catch-all' strategy, attracting voters from both sides of the political spectrum. Also, the party progressively incorporated a larger number of former right-wing supporters. Pedrazzani and Pinto (2015) observed a similar trend in their polling analysis: they underlined a significant increase in the proportion of party voters leaning to the right of the political axis, especially before the 2013 legislative elections. A high degree of heterogeneity also emerges at the level of party membership. The results of a web survey (2012-2013) pointed out an increase in its right-wing members (Lanzone 2015, 99). After 2011, a large portion of M5S supporters declared their support for right-wing ideologies. For example, in 2009 only 13 per cent of its members declared they advocated rightist values; in 2013 that percentage rose to about 30. It is possible to interpret this gravitation towards the right wing of the political spectrum by taking into account the anti-EU stance proposed by the M5S since the 2014 European elections. The party's decision to join the EFDD European Party Group (Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy) probably contributed to this change. The same group was formed following the 2009 EU parliamentary election, declaring its strong hostility to European integration and advocating the preservation of nationalistic and anti-immigration attitudes. After a controversial experience in the EFDD group (and also an alliance with UKIP) in the current legislative term, the M5S completely changed its stance and then its 14 MEPs decided to place the party's national delegation among the so-called 'Non-attached Members' (NA).

In conclusion, the M5S remains a party characterised by an unclear ideological stance, which we can define as a kind of 'post-ideological populism', able to adapt itself with difficulty to a two-year experience of government. Both its members and its voters maintain a high level of heterogeneity. This aspect has been one of the main factors in the party's successful results in terms of electoral approval, but, at the same time (especially over long periods), the absence of 'ideological cement' may become a weakness for the party's stability and cohesion. In fact, in the 2019 European elections, and the 2020 regional and municipal elections, the lists presented by the M5S experienced a significant decline in terms of approval. In some cases, the party proposed alliances with centre-left forces which do not greatly appeal to voters. Also, it used the same strategies (of non-ideological positioning) to justify its sequence of political agreements (at first with the League and then with the PD), moving the party away from its original purpose with a lot of consequences in terms of internal debate and electoral approval.

Populism Is Everywhere? Current Debates on the Concept of Populism

According to the notorious scheme proposed by Mény and Surel (2000), there are three conditions that historically have aided the emergence of populism: progressive weakening of the traditional apparatus of mediation (the political parties) around which representative democracy was structured; the continuous growth of the personalisation of power with the predominance of 'personal parties' (Calise 2010; 2015); and the development of the media's influence (so-called 'video-politics'). Under these circumstances, and according again to Mény and Surel (2000; 2002), any democratic political system currently appears able to be swamped by a surge of populism. Therefore, in this volatile framework, populism becomes an element which democracy must live with for a long period: a symptom of the crisis of the representative mechanisms. Also, it appears to be completely inherent in the institution of democracy and no longer an anti-democratic phenomenon. To exacerbate the situation, the pandemic in 2020 has had crucial impacts on Western liberal democracies and their political systems with a range of social consequences. A new institutional crisis has developed characterised by the reconsideration of the entire relationship between citizens and government that is able to accelerate previous processes. More in general, multiple manifestations of populism have emerged using Italy, the only country amongst consolidated constitutional democracies in which populist political forces have been in government on various occasions since the early 1990s, as the starting point and benchmark. Populism is a complex, multifaceted political phenomenon which redefines many of the essential characteristics of democracy: participation, representation and political conflict. This book considers contemporary versions of populism that pose a real challenge to representative and constitutional democracy. However, when we take into consideration these aspects, the following question remains crucial: What are we talking about when we talk about 'populism'? In this respect, Moffitt (2016) argues for the need to rethink the concept of populism. While populism is still based on the classic divide between the people and the elite, its reliance on new media technologies and the personalisation of politics leads us to redefine the concept. Moffitt contends that populism is not one entity but a political style that is performed, embodied and enacted by different political actors and across different cultural contexts. This new understanding makes sense of populism in a time when the media pervades political life, a sense of crisis prevails and populism has gone truly global.

Consequently, this section proposes the conceptualisation of new populism by distinguishing between global populist projects (born as anti-system parties), a populist style and populist rhetoric, which characterise some mainstream parties, too. According to de la Torre (2014), when citizens demand 'power to the people', they evoke corrupt politicians, imperialists or oligarchies that have appropriated power from its legitimate owners. These stereotypical narratives belie the vague and often contradictory definitions of the concept of the people and the many motives of those who use populism as a political tool. From a similar perspective, Rolfe (2016) places the general request for power to the people in a context of permanent tension between insiders and outsiders, between the political class and the populace, which are inherent in representative democracy. Since 2014, Europe has been pervaded by a strong wave of protest voting that is bound to continue. In this context of constant tension, it is possible to retrace some elements propagated by both mainstream and new parties. The financial crisis, the refugee crisis and terrorism have exacerbated the welfare conditions of many European citizens, contributing to the aggravation of their distrust regarding political representation in general. The health crisis caused by the pandemic has aggravated this already serious situation since the beginning of 2020. All these critical issues have catalysed some political consensus towards political parties that are characterised by populist references (Albertazzi and McDonnell 2008; Kriesi 2014). Even though research on European populism has been traditionally focused on anti-system parties, especially on the right (de Raadt, Hollanders and Krouwel 2004), there are other mainstream parties (on the centre-left, too), which have been involved in this process of 'populisation' of politics (Jagers and Walgrave 2007; Cranmer 2011).

In this political framework, the situation in Italy deserves special emphasis, due to Italian parties' communication style, the anti-political roots and the spread of populist activities that go back to the early 1990s (Biorcio 2007; 2015; Luengo 2016). In recent years, the growing discontent in Italy with mainstream parties (Bordignon 2014a; Roncarolo 2014) reached its peak with the success achieved by the M5S, but, at the same time, it has encouraged existing parties to reorganise themselves around new strategies using slogans and rhetoric that are more 'popular' and thus more able to be linked to populist phenomena. The success achieved by political actors traditionally considered populist has started a sort of emulative process of their populist communication style, which has resulted in their political parties being accused of being populist (Mudde 2004). The adoption of a populist communication style seems to be the key to getting closer to citizens, often playing on anti-political feelings (Aalberg et al. 2017). So, populism has also increasingly become a style, a language and a discourse that corresponds to media needs and the mediatisation process (Diamanti 2010; Mazzoleni 2014; Bracciale and Martella 2016).

Conclusion: New Populism for 'New Politics'?

In this chapter, we have considered current expressions of populism in Western Europe and their evolution. First of all, we identified a new wave of populism strictly related to protest voting and the economic crisis. However, the 'thin' definition of populism characterised by a general opposition between 'the people' and 'the elite' appears even more inappropriate for an effective analysis of contemporary populism as an ideology and as a political strategy, too. A first tendency among current populist parties relates to their attaching themselves to ideologies and to their ideological positioning along the left/right axis of the political spectrum. In fact, for a long time, populism was especially combined with right-wing phenomena often attached to nationalism or other nativist ideologies. Quite recent events in some European countries, however, have triggered a large debate on examples of populism, which have emerged outside the right-wing tradition. In this context – characterised by socio-economic crisis, citizens' distrust and electorate volatility – the Italian Five Star Movement represents a very distinctive case in the contemporary political landscape. In its original project, its reference to the people as a nation or a specific ethnic community is totally absent. However, inside the party (which remains very heterogeneous) there are some different positions. Since 2014, the party has taken a stand against EU policies and the refugee crisis with quite exclusionary ideas. Its claim of representing the people remains ambiguous and it has led the party to a post-ideological stance in which its positioning across the traditional right-wing spectrum is unclear (Lanzone 2014; 2015). The party has used the same "vague positioning" strategy to participate in government, with uncertain results in terms of future votes. Parties like SYRIZA in Greece and Podemos in Spain, on the other hand, represent two cases clearly embedded in the left-wing tradition. In particular, they propose an inclusionary version of populism (Katsambekis 2016; Font, Graziano and Tsakatika 2021), so an extremely relevant aspect in the analysis of new populism is the distinction between the different claims about the people deployed by the parties that want to use the opposition inherent in the 'people vs. elite' in their political projects. This perspective allows us to categorise different examples in different countries in order to trace analogies and differences between contemporary cases of populism (Pappas 2016). Recent elections in some European countries (such as France and the UK) have oriented the debate towards proposing enlarging the category of populism to include case studies on parties like the German The Left (Die Linke), the France Insoumise (Unbowed France) led by Jean-Luc Mélenchon, the Dutch Socialist Party (Socialistische Partij, SP) and the Slovenian The Left (Levica). Also, Jeremy Corbyn's leadership of Labour in the UK and 'Momentum', the movement that supports him, have been examined, too (Katsambekis and Kioupkiolis 2019).

If we again take into account the brittle contemporary context, a second important aspect in the debate on populism is related to political communication and the style of some contemporary parties. In fact, the previously cited 'mediatisation' of politics and also the process of personalisation are able to influence strategies among the mainstream parties, too. Also, the growing electoral success of protest parties has encouraged the most important mainstream parties to adopt their strategies. In particular, the Italian context has worked again as a 'political laboratory' for populism and its development. For example, changes in the leadership of the Democratic Party have conduced to a populist style especially in communication strategies (Biorcio 2015; Bordignon 2014b). So, it is possible to underline the presence of a form of populist political communication able to interest all contemporary parties (Aalberg et al. 2017). However, it is crucial to separate this last tendency from populism as a global political project (ideology and strategy) with its different claims about the people (Graziano 2018). In general, these two main tendencies in contemporary political systems enable us to embrace the assumption that 'populism is here to stay', even in Europe (Zaslove 2008; 2011), especially in a period of new and unprecedented crisis such as that caused by the rapid spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, it is possible (and necessary, too) to separate different types of populism and to redefine the same concept of 'populism'. First of all, it is crucial to separate two very different conceptualisations of the 'people': one inclusive, democratic and emancipatory, which is typical of left-wing parties; the second, which is characteristic of right-wing parties, is racially, ethnically and often authoritarian, too (Stavrakakis and Katsambekis 2014). Also, in times of strong economic and political crisis, we can identify a new form of populism outside the left/right tradition. In the same context, populist parties' archenemy became 'the caste' and corruptive politicians in general. So, the point of contact with all these new populist phenomena remains crisis from different perspectives: austerity policies and corruption that are able to produce constant animosity between the people and the elites. Also, the current health crisis has created an important lack of confidence able to exacerbate the previous situation and to produce insecurity in different parts of society.

Another important distinction that persists is that between a populist political organisation (a party or movement born with populist aims which proposes a clash between the people and the elite in different ways – political, economic and cultural), a political strategy able to evolve along time and space and a political communication style that is also able to interest mainstream and more traditional parties. In general, today evidence shows how the framework has been significantly changed and that traditional research orientations in the study of European populism should also be reviewed and regularly updated. In this regard, a new evident research issue concerning populist studies is that on 'populists in power' which pays particular attention to the consequences of this changing role. In this regard, authors such as Blokker and Anselmi (2020) explore multiple manifestations of populism using Italy as the only country amongst consolidated constitutional democracies in which populist political forces have been in government on various occasions since the early 1990s until now (2021). More generally, and according again to Mény and Surel (2000), being in government entailed collusion with the elites populist parties previously denounced, which is interpreted as disloyalty to voters. The same trend produces two type of effects: 1) the adaption of new populist parties to the new context, with their institutionalisation; 2) a difficult attempt by these parties to create new enemies able to maintain a form of populism, at least in terms of communication style. In the first case, in a context of permanent crisis, as is currently the case, the risk is to replace existing populist organisations with other political forces with populist traits, too.

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The Americas

CHAPTER 17:
TRUMP'S POPULISM

Carlos de la Torre

Introduction

Two broad perspectives inform how Americans understand populism. The first, influenced by historian Richard Hofstadter, sees populism as a paranoid style of politics based on conspiracy theories, the demonisation of enemies, and as backward-looking projects that aim to restore an imaginary golden past (Hofstadter 1955). The second, built on the work of left-wing historians, understands populism as a democratising movement that opposed big capital, created spaces for participatory democracy, built unions, farmers cooperatives and demanded fundamental reforms akin to social democratic projects in Europe (Postel 2016). A legacy of the history of the Populist Party is that some American scholars use the term populism to describe a political style and rhetoric that is used by social movements and politicians (Omi and Winant 2015; Grattan 2016; Lowndes 2016; 2017; 2019). Therefore, presidents with profound ideological differences, such as Nixon, Reagan, Clinton, Obama, and Trump, are labelled populists. Social movements that claim to speak for the 99 per cent against the 1 per cent, such as Occupy Wall Street, or that opposed government social programmes, like the Tea Party, are also described as populists. Political leaders as distinct as the leftist liberal Jesse Jackson, or as rightist as Pat Buchanan and Ross Perot are labelled populists. No wonder that some scholars restrict the use of this term to a particular time period, or simply refused to engage with populism (Skocpol and Williamson 2012; Hochschild 2016).

Differently from other world regions, where the term populism is a stigma in the US, both the left and the right dispute who is the 'true', 'authentic' or best populist. Criticising candidate Donald Trump, President Barack Obama, for example, said, 'I care about poor people who are working really hard and don't have a chance to advance… I suppose that makes me a populist'. Therefore, it is not a surprise that liberals and leftists reject using this term to describe Donald Trump, who they consider to be a right-wing, xenophobic and misogynist millionaire. Paul Krugman wrote in the *New York Times* 'Stop Calling Trump a Populist!'. However, the right also views populism favourably and proudly claims it as a mark of honour. After Donald Trump won the 2016 election, Steve Bannon asserted, 'Trump is the leader of a populist uprising… What Trump represents is a restoration of a true American capitalism and a revolution against state-sponsored socialism. Elites have taken all the upside for themselves and pushed the downside to the working and middle-class Americans" (Green 2017, 236). Another difference between the US and other world regions is that until Trump's election populism was confined to the margins of the political system. Political scientist Joseph Lowndes (2016, 245) explains:

Parts of this chapter draw on de la Torre 2017 and 2018.

> The Constitutional frame of US politics constrains and fragments political expression. Indeed, where populism demands popular sovereignty and unmediated representation of the people, the Constitution separates between three branches of government, breaks up representation over time and space (staggered elections, overlapping electoral units), divides sovereignty between the national government and the states, and filters popular expression into two great parties. Thus, there are, on the one hand, no durable 'populist' parties as one finds in Europe, nor the possibility of populist majoritarian control of government as one finds in Latin America.

Yet Trump's election got rid of any pretention of American exceptionalism or immunity to populism. 'Trevor Noah, the South African presenter of the *Daily Show*, depicted Trump as the "perfect African president"' (Cheeseman 2018, 357). This chapter first tells a very brief history of US populism and then analyses the crises that made Trump's populism possible, the links between leaders and followers, the construction of the people and the debates on the future of democracy under Trump.

A Brief History of US Populism

The US People's Party known as the Populist Party, an alliance or confederation of farmers, workers unions, temperance associations, women's groups and other reformist movements, was a powerful protest movement that, lacking a strong leader, remained at the margins of the political system in the 1890s. Laura Grattan's *Populism's Power* shows the democratic innovations of the Populists, such as grassroots political education, farmers' cooperatives and active participation in strikes. She maintains that the People's Party's ability to call the people together 'but also to find rhetoric that could leave "the people" open-ended' was crucial to its coalitional character (Grattan 2016, 62). She argues that the Populist Party 'was one of the largest democratic movements in American history, largely due to its vibrant "movement culture"' and the creation of alternative institutions of democratic education and economic cooperatives (Grattan 2016, 33). The horizontal nature of the movement did not translate well into the electoral policies of a third party. Their candidate James Weaver won 8.5 per cent of the vote in 1892, wining majorities in Colorado, Idaho and Nevada, and pluralities in Kansas and North Dakota. In 1894, the Populist Party did better, gaining seven seats in the House and six in the Senate. Yet after its failed alliance with the Democratic Party in 1896 under William Jennings Bryan's candidacy, the Populist Party, which had split over its decision to support Bryan, ultimately disintegrated.

Sociologist Richard Savage (2019, 408–409) reminds us that Hofstadter was not so far off base when he insisted that the Populist Party demonised enemies and was retrograde in so far as it looked to reconstruct the past. Populists imagined the populace as innocent, productive and victimised by predatory elites. The Populist Party used a Manichean and conspiratorial outlook that attributed 'demonic qualities to their foes' (Hofstadter 1965, 18). The aim of their conspiratorial enemies was to destroy the foundation of American democracy that lies in an ethic of producerism. They argued that the hard-earned labour of the producer classes of society is appropriated by the idle rich, such as bankers above.

After the Civil Rights movements of the 1960s, the right appropriated the producerist discourse. George Wallace, a Democratic former Governor of Alabama in the early 1960s, ran in the democratic primaries for president, and in 1968 as a third candidate president, obtaining about 10 per cent of the vote in each election. He was known for his defence of segregation. In his inauguration speech as governor in 1963, he said, 'in the name of the greatest people that have ever trod this earth, I draw the line in the dust and toss the gauntlet before the feet of tyranny, and I say segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever'. During his bid for the presidency, Wallace 'counterposed "pointy-headed intellectuals", "bearded bureaucrats", "anarchists" and "law breakers" to this man in the textile mill, this man in the steel mill, this barber, the beautician, the policemen on the beat' (Lowndes 2019, 191). He politicised white fears of integration with African Americans in neighbourhoods and schools, and dread about African American and other militants of the 1960s. Wallace portrayed his enemies as parasites, anti-American and as an imminent threat to democracy and the nation. He pretended to be an outsider uncorrupted by politics and used coarse language against enemies, talked as an uneducated Southerner and provoked violence in his meetings. Lowndes (2017, 240) argues he 'shaped the identity of US populism - as they [sic.] at once held the allure to transgressing the norms of respectable political behavior, and a return to what was felt to be repressed by a liberal power structure that rightwing populists saw as scolding, condescending, and coercive'.

In 1968, Richard Nixon used law and order and right-wing populist tropes to appeal to 'middle America', 'the silent majority' and 'forgotten Americans' as those producers squeezed by liberal government bureaucrats above and by 'welfare recipients, criminals, and rioters below' (Lowndes 2019, 192). Yet prominent conservatives opposed him, and the Watergate scandal did not allow him 'to cement the populist silent majority' (Lowndes 2019, 193). Pat Buchanan, who was Nixon's speechwriter, led a racial populist revolt in the Republican Party. When George Bush was running for his second term in 1992, he challenged him in the primaries, calling him King George. According to Lowndes (2019, 195), Buchanan articulated white working-class rage and alienation to white politics of identity that 'opposed free trade, immigration, affirmative action, and cultural decadence'.

The Tea Party was a collection of grassroots organisations, the right-wing media, especially Fox News, and elites that funded conservative candidates and ideas (Skocpol and Williamson 2012:190). The movement emerged in 2008 and became solidified in 2009 when it opposed Obamacare and mortgage relief as an attack by liberal elites against hard-working citizens to give handouts to the undeserving poor. It was also a conservative reaction to the first non-white president. They perceived Obama as a foreigner, 'an invader pretending to be an American… His academic achievements and social ties put him in league with the country's intellectual elite whose […] cosmopolitan leanings seemed unpatriotic' (Skocpol and Williamson 2012, 79). Tea Party supporters viewed blacks and illegal immigrants as freeloaders who are draining US taxpayers by using social services and government funds. Tea Partiers advocated 'restrictions on birthright citizenship, abridgments on freedom of religion for Muslim Americans, and suspension of protections in the Bill of Rights for suspected terrorists' (Skocpol and Williamson 2012, 50). Obama embodied the two enemies of right-wing populism: a cosmopolitan elite above and African-American dependents of colour below. Grattan sustains that 'Tea Partiers are notorious, in particular for their performance of anger and fear' (2016, 152). Their populism is based on an existential threat; 'they are afraid of losing their "way of life" and the promise of white, male, Christian privilege that comes with it' (2016, 153). Their anger leads them to action, to fight to take back the country, to restore it to its rightful inheritors white 'hard-working, independent men and women and their children' (Grattan 2016, 154).

Until Trump came along, the Tea Party was a movement in search of a leader (Urbinati 2014). Donald Trump, a Birtherist that denied Obama's Americanness, reached beyond the Tea Party social base of white older, wealthier and more educated conservatives, appealing also to the white working class. In his campaign, Trump challenged some basic tenets of neoliberalism such as free trade. He opposed NAFTA and the Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement. He linked national decline with the absence of industrial production. Trump singled out corporations like Ford, Apple, Nabisco and Carrier for moving factories overseas. He promised to bring manufacturing jobs back to the US. When in power he entered into several trade wars and imposed tariffs. Trump's nationalist critique of globalisation was linked to the construction of illegal immigrants as parasitical 'others'. In 2011, he wrote, 'Illegal immigration is a wrecking ball aimed at US taxpayers'. In his book entitled *Great Again: How to Fix Crippled America*, Trump wrote, 'We are the only country in the world whose immigration system places the needs of other nations ahead of our own'. He argued that foreign governments encourage illegal immigration 'to get rid of their worst people without paying any price for their bad behavior' (Smith 2016, 104). Once in power he cracked down on illegal immigrants, even separating children from their parents and putting 'illegal alien' babies in cages in overcrowded detention centres. In his 2016 campaign, he used blatant racist tropes against Muslims and Mexicans, destroying the myth that the US was becoming a colour-blind, post-racial society. Elites and many citizens believed that the election of their first black president showed that the US was moving towards a colour-blind, post-racial order, that overt racism was a thing of the past and that the goals of the civil rights movement had been achieved. He launched his presidential candidacy from Trump Tower in New York City asserting, 'When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best… They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people'. He expanded his racist platform by calling Muslims terrorists, promising to monitor Muslims within the US and banning those who want to enter the country.

Trump, like Tea Partiers, did not use openly racist terms but coded words to describe African Americans as people who are held back because of their own personal failings. Trump's expressions of hostility were against African-American militant groups like Black Lives Matter. Openly right-wing populist racism against Mexicans, as all Latinos are currently called in the US, is explained by long-lasting views of Mexicans as the non-national others and outsiders to the national community. Similarly, Muslims were targeted because their religion allegedly makes them alien to US Christianity. Instead of repudiating his white supremacy supporters from the KKK or other white nationalist groups, Trump embraced them, signalling that African Americans were also 'members of the out-group' (Hochschild 2016, 226). Trump aimed to abolish political correctness, promising a new dawn when white heterosexual males could freely express their opinions. He said, 'the big problem this country has is being politically correct' (Green 2017, 169). Some of his fervent white supporters were filmed yelling, 'Fuck political correctness'. Trump's message made sense to white voters' feelings of economic anxiety and racism (Cramer 2016, 89). He became the voice of 'white Americans who felt left behind by globalization and the shift to a post-industrial economy" (Judis 2016, 75). His base of support was not only made up of the losers of globalisation and uneducated white males. Middle-class white men and women also supported him because many felt that they were not getting their fair share and that they faced economic insecurity in their lives. They felt that women, blacks, Hispanics and gays were empowered by unfair policies of affirmative action and political correctness that negatively targeted white heterosexual males. Many 'also felt culturally marginalised: their views about abortion, gay marriage, gender roles, race, guns, and the Confederate flag all were held in ridicule in the national media as backward. And they felt part of a demographic decline… They'd begun to feel like a besieged minority' (Hochschild 2016, 221). Trump, in sum, was 'the identity politics candidate for white men' (Hochschild 2016, 230). As opposed to Hillary Clinton, who celebrated ethnic, racial and religious identity, egalitarianism and social justice, Trump's 'vision was one of ethnic and religious exclusion, nostalgic longing for a day when white Americans were the unquestionably dominant group' (Bonikowski 2019, 118). Once in office, he fulfilled his nationalist promises:

> The Trump administration has sought to build a border wall with Mexico, impose a travel ban on people from Muslim-majority countries, investigate affirmative-action admission practices at elite universities, defund the Civil Rights Division and curtail oversight of discriminatory police departments at the Department of Justice, repeal the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program for undocumented migrants brought to the United States as children, and pursue draconian law enforcement measures against undocumented migrants (Bonikowski 2019, 125).

On Crises

Jean Cohen (2019, 9) writes that understanding Trump's appeal 'involves analyzing the links between the feelings of political exclusion and loss of influence (we do not count anymore) and the sense of economic irrelevance, dislocation and declining material and occupational security (we are peripheral)'. Two crises explain the growth of right-wing populism in the US. The first is a long-term crisis of heterosexual, patriarchal white identity. The second has to do with the forms of dislocation provoked by neoliberalism, such as increasing inequalities, job insecurity and the penetration of market economy logic into all aspects of social and personal life. These crises have led to political polarisation and the weakening of informal and unwritten democratic norms such as 'mutual toleration or the understanding that competing parties accept one another as legitimate rivals, and forbearance or the idea that politicians should exercise restraint in deploying their institutional prerogatives' (Levitsky and Ziblatt 2018, 8–9). Omni and Winant (2015) refer to the movements of the 1960s and 70s- civil rights, women's liberation, LGTBQ rights – as the Great Transformation that democratised US society. The demands for racial and gender equality, women's control of their bodies, the right to choose one's sexual identity shook up traditional and hierarchical notions of the self and society. Right-wing politicians, intellectuals, organisations of civil society and religious institutions aimed to roll back the conquests of the 1960s by politicising white patriarchal Christian identities. Whereas African American and other poor people of colour were represented as freeloaders or criminals, feminists and LGBTQ activists represented the sinful and the unmoral threat to the American Christian heterosexual and patriarchal family. An alliance of Christian fundamentalists, Catholic conservatives and whites worried about law and order and the empowerment of African-American militants elected politicians with agendas to roll back abortion rights, ban gays from the military and restrict social benefits with the excuse of fomenting a work ethic of responsibility. Society became polarised in culture wars between secular and liberal understandings of the body, sexuality and identity, and traditionalist views of the family and sexual differences between men and women. Conservative politicians used populist rhetoric to conceive the rightful and good 'people' as white, independent, opposed to taxation and abortion, defenders of family values and patriots worried about the increasing browning of white America.

Wendy Brown (2018, 12) urges us to conceptualise neoliberalism as a form of rationality that 'economizes every sphere and human endeavor, and it replaces a model of society based on justice-producing social contracts with a conception of society organized as markets and of states oriented by market requirements'. Neoliberal rationality, she argues, becomes a form of common sense that governs all forms of human desire, decisions and institutions. Neoliberalism transformed images of the nation as a democracy into 'a competitive business' and 'an inadequate secure home, besieged by ill-willed or nonbelonging outsiders' (Brown 2018, 22). Neoliberal globalisation transformed the US' occupational structure from 'well-paid blue-collar male dominated jobs' to a service economy in a context of deindustrialisation that favoured 'jobs coded female over traditional male-coded jobs (requiring muscle)' (Cohen 2019, 10). The US became more unequal, and the promises of social mobility of the American dream evaporated. Years of unregulated markets led to the Great Recession of 2008. The collapse of the housing bubble and risk loan lending left millions of homeowners unable to pay their mortgages. Lehman Brothers had to close its offices threatening a major meltdown of the financial sector. Barack Obama was elected with the hope that he would help citizens over bankers, yet his policies prioritised the financial system. Nonetheless Obama introduced a stimulus package and a bill to help homeowners. In addition, he launched a national health insurance plan.

The Tea Party emerged to oppose policies that they argued siphoned away taxes from the middle class to those who made bad economic decisions and to the unproductive members of society, such as people of colour and illegal immigrants. These tropes made sense to white middle-class voters because, in contrast, the Great Depression, when unemployment reached 24 per cent and thus threatened both the working and middle class, did not end in huge levels of unemployment and the middle class resenting tax or health insurance increases to subsidise the poor and the non-white (Judis 2018, 68). Citizens resented political parties and traditional politicians but still trusted their democratic institutions. The strength of institutions for checks and balances, and of the two-party system led many scholars to downplay the dangers of democratic erosion under Trump. Historically, the US presidential system was different because two major catch-all parties competed for the median voter. Parties were pragmatic and willing to enter into coalitions. They recognised the legitimacy of democratic rivals, and party competition prevented polarisation.

After the movements of the 1960s and 70s, parties became more social movement oriented. Whereas African Americans and other people of colour, women, environmentalists and the LGTBQ movement found a voice in the umbrella of the Democratic Party, right-wing movements such as market fundamentalists, Christian evangelicals and white nationalists increasingly appropriated the agenda of the Republican Party (Roberts 2019, 136–137). Parties became ideologically polarised around race, religion, geography, cultural issues and even 'ways of life' (Levitsky and Zibblat 2018, 167). Whereas the Democratic Party is a party of ethnic minorities, the Republican is a white party. Democrats are more secular, and the Republican 'became the party of Evangelical Christians' (Levitsky and Zibblat 2018, 171). The Democratic Party 'remain a coalition of interest groups', and the Republicans are a coalition 'based on racial resentment, economic nationalism, neoliberalism, and nostalgia for a past in which white, male Protestants dominated the country' (Tarrow 2018, 192).

The primaries where very few citizens participate allowed activists to take over the agendas of both parties. Whereas the democratic establishment stopped the left-wing insurgency around Bernie Sanders in 2016 and 2020, the Republican Party was unable to prevent Trump's takeover. In sum, in contrast to the times when both parties competed for the median voter, were more pragmatic than ideological and were not polarised, the US political system before Trump's election was polarised into two distinct ideologically driven parties around race and religion. Elites lost control of the Republican Party to radical movements that in Trump found the figure who could unite their different demands and agendas. Therefore, as Roberts (2019, 134) argues, 'Trump's autocratic proclivities and his contempt for political rivals are merely the tip of the iceberg, rather than the source of the problem; they are the most visible manifestations of often submerged cultural and institutional changes that have altered the face of American democracy and created unprecedented levels of uncertainty about its survivability'.

Populist Nexus: Organisation, Charisma and the Media

This section discusses the organisational links between political entrepreneurs and followers. It analyses Tea Party organisations, Trump's charisma and his novel use of the media. The Tea Party was made of grassroots, bottom-up 'and largely self-sustained local organizations' (Grattan 2016, 151). The author of *Populism's Power* writes, 'when the movement's base was at its height, some two hundred thousand people took part in regular, face-to-face community organising through up to one thousand active groups across the country' (ivi.). Their membership consisted of relatively well-educated, middle-aged, white Americans that were mostly evangelical Protestants. Conservatives and libertarians coexisted in these organisations. Skocpol and Williamson (2012, 200) note a 'sharp bifurcation between generous, tolerant interaction within the group, and an almost total lack of empathy or sympathy for fellow Americans beyond the group'. The organisations of the Tea Party were insular and despised pluralism. They regarded organised African-American and Latino groups as threats to the nation, and Democratic Party and liberal organisations were portrayed as unpatriotic. Their insularity was magnified by their reliance on Fox News and its nightmarish representation of the US as a nation where 'illegal immigrants, criminals, and badly behaving people of color are overrunning America' (Skocpol and Williamson 2012, 202). Tea Party organisations did not foster the politics of a plural and democratic civil society. Their insularity didn't allow them to build links with other organisations, and their notion that they and only they constitute the true people leads to the autocratic exclusion of those considered to be the ultimate 'Other'. Tea Party organisations were electrified by the candidacy of Donald Trump and became his base of support (Hochschild 2016).

Trump's Charisma

Donald Trump triumphed in two mythical and almost religious arenas of American capitalism: the business world and mass entertainment. In the words of CNN journalist Chris Cilliza (2019), he is 'a pop-culture phenomenon… A sort of rock star'. From the beginning of his 2016 presidential campaign, Trump referred to his own extraordinariness. 'We need a truly great leader now. We need a leader that wrote *The Art of the Deal*… We need somebody that can take the brand of the United States and make it great again'. Billionaire Donald Trump flaunted his wealth; his name became a brand for skyscrapers, hotels, golf courses, casinos, steaks and other commodities; he owned the Miss Universe franchise; and with the TV show *The Apprentice* that he hosted for fourteen seasons, he became a media celebrity. People that attended Trump's rallies told ethnographer Arlie Hochschild (2016, 226) they were amazed to 'be in the presence of such a man'. Despite his wealth, he was like the common people, but also incredible superior to all of them. He shared their taste for wrestling, for example. But in contrast to most fans, he was inducted into the WWE Hall of Fame in 2013 with the words 'Donald Trump is a *WrestleMania* institution'. Challenging assertions that television and the internet buried old campaign techniques such as mass rallies, Trump's campaigns made ample use of mass meetings. Trump's rallies showed his followers, who for the most part were whites, that they were no longer a 'besieged minority'. A politician who claimed to represent their interests and identified with them finally addressed thousands like them. As Trump said, he was the candidate of 'the forgotten men and women of this country'; the white working and middle class. Hochschild (2016, 226) writes that to those 'who attended his rallies, the event itself symbolises a rising tide'.

Trump used verbal and physical violence to mark frontiers between his people and the out-groups, and to arouse passionate anger in his rallies. In 2016 he said, 'I'd like to punch him in the face'. 'Knock the crap out of him, would you? I promise you I will pay the legal fees' (Hochschild 2016, 224). In a campaign rally, pointing to a critic Trump said, '"There is a remnant left over there. Maybe get the remnant out. Get the remnant out". The crowd, taking its cue, then tried to root out other people who might be dissenters, all the while crying "USA". The candidate interjected "Isn't this more fun than a regular boring rally?"' (Snyder 2017, 45). As opposed to Hillary Clinton, who used sophisticated technocratic language to make arguments about the economy or world politics, Trump resorted to commonplaces and generalities. To *Make America Great Again*, he argued that what was needed was a successful builder, businessman, media celebrity and popular culture impresario who was not corrupted by the deals of politicians and lobbyists. He stirred emotions and was able to construct politics into a wrestling match between good, incarnated in his persona, and the crooked establishment, personified by Hillary Clinton. She was therefore portrayed as the embodiment of all that was wrong with America and, without a proper trial, Trump and his followers condemned her to prison, chanting at his rallies, 'Lock her up!'. Many proudly wore T-shirts or carried signs that read 'Hillary for Prison'.

Trump claimed to be 'someone who could represent what Americans really think, and perhaps more importantly, feel' (Lowndes 2016, 99). After winning the primary in Nevada, he said, 'I love the poorly educated. We are the smart people the most loyal people' (Berezin 2017, 324). Trump 'used the materiality and physicality of the building project to generate emotional recognition among his voters – a recognition that also resonated with his voters' fears that their world was out of joint – a world that needed to be made great again' (Berezin 2017, 326). He contrasted the producers of manual labour with the unproductive mental labour of the elites. He promised to bring back manual manufacturing jobs. Trump said he had 'visited the laid-off factory workers, and the communities crushed by our horrible and unfair trade deals. These are the forgotten men and women of our country. People who work hard but no longer have a voice. Trump promises, "I AM YOUR VOICE"' (Berezin 2017, 329). Trump confronted the elites. He said, 'the establishment, the media, the special interests, the lobbyists, the big donors, they are all against me' (Judis 2016, 72). His final campaign TV ad entitled *Argument for America* indicted the 'failed and corrupt political establishment' for giving up America's sovereignty to global and greedy elites that brought 'destruction to our factories'. With images of the predominantly white crowds that attended his rallies, he concluded, 'The only thing that can stop this corrupt machine is you. I am doing this for the people and for the movement'.

The Media

The Tea Party benefited from the deregulation of US media that allowed for evangelists to create their own media venues, and the emergence of cable television, particularly Fox News. Journalist Alexander Stille explains how Fox News, which began operating in 1995, transformed the news. They produced inexpensive in-studio programmes, and to keep people from changing channels they used provocative content: 'Bill O'Really pistol-whipping and cutting the mike of his guests or Glenn Beck spinning his bizarre apocalyptic conspiracy webs' (Stille 2017, 15). Fox News and other conservative media venues on the internet have not displaced professional journalism, yet they have created information niches that are the main or only source of news for their constituencies. They have also influenced other news venues to cover the events that they consider to be crucial. This leads to a cycle of news spinning as the mainstream media invite conservatives to present their points of view and then their critics to respond, which leads to further rounds of response. Before winning the 2016 election, Trump had a long relationship with Fox News. 'In 2011 he became a regular guest on *Fox and Friends*, complete with his own segment *Monday Mornings with Trump*' (Peck 2019, 226). Fox News became the official voice and broadcaster of Trump's administration. Fox executives had prominent positions in his administration, and in practice Fox News functioned like his personal broadcaster.

Under Trump politics and entertainment merged, transforming his administration into a media spectacle. Trump ran his office like a media event, where he is at the centre of the social order. His images, tweets, words and gestures dominated the media, causing enjoyment or shock among audiences. Some claim that these spectacles were smoke screens that hid how he was ruling in the interest of millionaires. Yet Trump is the show, and as long as he remains the lead story for journalists and pundits, he will continue to be the most important topic of debates and conversations. David Karpf (2018, 143) argues, 'Trump's reality-TV flair for picking dramatic fights that consume and divide our public attention is simultaneously his unique strength and greatest vulnerability'. Since his campaign, he has dominated news coverage and used social media to set the agenda for the mainstream media. Trump always needs to be at the centre of the news and will pick up fights with all kinds of enemies, especially with the media. After assuming power, he tweeted that the New York Times, NBC, ABC, CBS and CNN are the 'enemy of the American people' (Johnson and Gold 2017). He attacked journalist practices, labelling watchdog and critical journalism 'fake news'. His hyper-personalisation of the media and constant media exposure have so far worked for him, and for the networks that increase the number of viewers who are fixated on Trump. The CEO of CBS told a group of American bankers in February 2016 that Trump might not be good for America but 'it's damn good for CBS' (Dionne, Ornstein and Mann 2017, 40). Yet he is vulnerable to attacks on his persona, his competence and qualifications. Politics is becoming entertainment, and journalism is shifting from normative liberal rationalism to what Bourdieu describes as a 'demagogic capitulation to popular tastes' (Jutel 2019, 255).

Gendering and Racialising the People

This chapter has shown how the populist right used the logic of producerism to appeal to traditional notions of white patriarchal masculinity. The proper and real man is conceived as the producer, the maker who works with his hands to provide for his wife and children. Intellectuals and cultural elites who do not produce appropriate their labour to give handouts to dependents and perverts. As opposed to the rightful man that lives from his work, people of colour are represented as those who do not know how to postpone enjoyment and lack a producer ethic, and as parasites that live off others or as dangerous criminals. Using Christian images of the family, biological differences between men and women, and morality and immorality, the right has resisted women and LGTBQ rights. By framing the real, authentic and good people as being in danger of moral decay, corruption and perversion, they mobilise those who want to impose their particularistic views of gender, family, sexuality and the body. Masculine views of the white male provider and of women as being in charge of the moral upbringing of their children have mobilised millions of believers against abortion and gay marriage. Populists perform roles of hyper-masculinity and femininity. Trump presents himself as a regular guy with an unconstrained sexual appetite and with the power to grab any attractive women he wants. Sarah Palin performed images of hyper-femininity and referred to herself as mama grizzly, who 'like all strong conservative women, voraciously protects her cubs' (Peck 2019, 119). The gendered and racialised images of the people of right-wing populism are backward-looking and provoke strong emotions and feelings of being attacked, danger and fear which prompt thousands to take up arms in order to defend their family, children and women from perverts and unpatriotic global elites.

Trump and American Democracy

Weyland and Madrid (2019) built on populist experiences in Latin America and Europe to argue that strong democratic institutions will trump populism in the US. Their argument is divided into four parts: 1) The federal and presidential system of government enshrines the firm separation of powers, making it difficult for Trump to concentrate power in his hands; 2) Trump does not control the GOP establishment; 3) In a polarised party system Trump would have difficulty achieving endorsement from the majority. He has solidified the support of white-nationalist supporters, while alienating other constituencies; 4) He does not face an acute crisis that he could solve. 'The problems that fueled Trump's rise, such as deindustrialization and the loss of well-paid jobs, do not allow for a quick resolution, especially in a market economy, which precludes massive employment programs' (Weyland and Madrid 2019, 6). Roberts' chapter in the same volume challenges his colleagues' optimistic conclusions. He argues, 'Institutional checks and balances against unwarranted concentrations of power are neither automatic nor self-enforcing. In the wrong hands, or in contexts of acute political conflict or violence (whether domestic or international), democratic institutions can be "repurposed" and transformed into instruments of partisan advantage and autocratic rule' (2019, 133). Even though Weyland and Madrid recognised the dangers of an external crisis or war, they assume that the Republican Party is a normal party. Roberts (2019) shows how the Republican Party became a social movement party whose agenda is controlled by fundamentalist right-wing organisations. He sustains that the behaviour of the GOP would in part determine the future of US democracy under Trump. The actions of the GOP are shaping the future of democracy in the US. The party did not abandon Trump; on the contrary, 'the different factions and currents within the Republican Party stay loyal to their populist president, use his leadership and grassroots appeal to advance their narrow programmatic agendas, and deploy their institutional leverage to shield him from legal and political threats' (Roberts 2019, 147). White nationalist appeals, xenophobia, law and order, and projects to bring back nostalgic views of the white patriarchal heterosexual family have united Trump's different constituencies.

Political scientists' focus on institutions overlooks how Trump is attacking the democratic public sphere, a plural and vibrant civil society, and daily interactions. Sociologist Bart Bonikowski (2019, 126) writes, 'The president's frequent reliance on racist, xenophobic, and Islamophobic language has reconfigured the boundaries of mainstream public debate, and, with it, of what is permissible in everyday interactions'. Trump has emboldened white nationalist groups, and his supporters have verbally and physically attacked non-white immigrants. Trump has already damaged the democratic public sphere. Hate speech and the denigration of minorities are replacing the politics of cultural recognition and tolerance built by the struggles of feminists and anti-racist social movements since the 1960s (de la Torre 2017; 2018). By not accepting the 2020 election results, Trump questioned the legitimacy not only of his opponent but of US democracy *tout court*. Most dangerously, the leadership of the GOP did not break with the president, and a large proportion of Republicans argued that Joe Biden stole the elections. Trump went so far as to encourage his most radical followers to occupy Congress by force to stop the legislative certification of Joe Biden as the new president in January 2020. Incited by Trump's 'Stop the Steal' speech, hundreds of enraged insurgents stormed into the Capitol building. They waved confederate flags, displayed numerous symbols of white supremacy, and attacked journalists and security personnel. Following their *caudillo*, who referred to them as patriots, they argued that they were defending the integrity of democracy against fraud. After Trump's failed coup attempt, several prominent Republicans took distance from the president, while others continue to argue that the elections were stolen. A few days after, the Democratic-controlled House of Representatives also impeached Trump for inciting insurrection and provoking the attack on the Capitol, making him the first president to ever be impeached twice.

Conclusions

Trump's election brought populism from the margins to the centre and showed that the US was not immune to populism. His variety of right-wing xenophobic populism was a reaction to the democratisation of the 1960s and 70s. His victory was possible because, for years, the Republican Party had become a white and Christian social movement-like party that imagined the US national identity to be white, Christian and based on the traditional family. When Trump came to power, US politics were polarised. The GOP used gerrymandering ‘to concentrate and thereby dilute “urban” (read Democratic) vote, while distributing the rural and suburban (read Republican) vote to maximize electoral effects’ (McAdam 2018, 47). State legislatures controlled by the GOP also passed restrictive state voting laws that target non-white democratic constituencies such as blacks, Hispanics, elderly people on a low income and students, making it more difficult for them to exercise their right to vote (McAdam 2018, 48). Washington DC became the new centre of global populist diffusion and Trump’s example influenced Jair Bolsonaro’s strategy in getting to power and ruling in Brazil. Trump has thrived, polarising American society to the extent that even wearing a mask in the COVID-19 pandemic is linked to one’s political preferences. Like their leader, his supporters do not wear masks or observe social distancing rules. His 2020 re-election campaign promises law and order against those whom he labels the radical left, and appeals to white fears of African-American violence. Trump brought together a coalition of all those who were fed up with his style, rhetoric, and policies. His defeat however did not mean the end of populism in the US He has secured the control of the Republican Party, and would attempt to thrive on polarization. The US is divided into two halves that distrust each other, and Biden’s challenges are to transform enemies into democratic rivals and to reconstruct democratic conviviality and trust in democratic institutions and procedures.

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CHAPTER 18:

POPULISM IN THE UNITED STATES AND THE 2016 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Sandra Vergari

Introduction

The term 'populism' appears frequently in discussions on the 2016 United States presidential election campaigns. Was Democratic Party candidate Senator Bernie Sanders a populist? Was the Republican Party presidential nominee Donald J. Trump Jr. a populist? What about the Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton? Journalists and pundits casually toss the term 'populism' around, while scholars disagree on how to define populism, whether particular politicians qualify for the label and the implications of populism for democracy. Some scholars view populism as a negative force that appeals primarily to ignorant, uneducated populations and threatens democracy. However, there is no singular form of populism. The research literature on populism focuses largely (but not exclusively) on right-wing and authoritarian variants of populism, yet populism can also be moderate and left-wing. The nature and consequences of populism vary depending on the economic, social and political contexts in which it occurs. This chapter examines contemporary populism in the United States and the 2016 election of a populist candidate as president. First, I review populism definitions in the research literature and present the conceptualisation used in this chapter. Second, I discuss the historical context of US populism. Third, I examine factors that made populism a viable force in 2016. I argue that a crisis of political representation created a window of opportunity for populist appeals. Fourth, I discuss populism and the 2016 presidential campaigns of Sanders, Trump and Clinton. Finally, I present my conclusions and suggestions for future research.

Defining Populism

There are three main approaches to populism research: populism as a political ideology, a discursive political style and a political strategy (Gidron and Bonikowski 2013). First, according to Mudde (2004), populism is 'a thin-centred ideology' that views society as divided into two homogeneous, antagonistic groups of the 'pure people' and the 'corrupt elite'. Mudde (2014, 433) argues that populism is 'fundamentally anti-pluralist' and therefore contrary to liberal democracy. Müller (2016) agrees, asserting that populists not only criticise elites but also claim that they are the only legitimate representatives of the people. During his nomination acceptance speech at the 2016 Republican National Convention, populist candidate Trump declared: 'Nobody knows the system better than me, which is why I alone can fix it.' Rovira Kaltwasser (2014) also offers arguments in favour of Mudde's approach. Consistent with Mudde's framework, Inglehart and Norris (2016) maintain that three key features of populism are anti-establishment sentiment, authoritarianism and nativism. They observe ‘anti-establishment populist challenges to the legitimacy of liberal democracy’ and potential disruptions to long-established patterns of party competition (ibid., 31). They characterise populism in sweeping terms as a ‘syndrome’ that ‘favours mono-culturalism over multiculturalism, national self-interest over international cooperation and development aid, closed borders over the free flow of peoples, ideas, labour and capital, and traditionalism over progressive and liberal social values’ (ibid., 7). Inglehart and Norris (ivi) suggest that populism might be described as ‘xenophobic authoritarianism’.

In contrast to Mudde’s framework, a second approach to populism focuses on discursive style. Aslanidis (2016), for example, rejects populism as an ideology, proposing instead that populism is best viewed as a discursive frame. According to the populist frame, ‘corrupt elites’ have unjustly usurped the sovereign authority of the ‘noble People’ and this problem can be solved when the people are mobilised in order to regain power (Aslanidis 2016, 99). Bonikowski and Gidron (2016) also reject conceptualisations of populism as a stable ideological property of political actors. Instead, they view populism as an attribute of political claims, asserting that it is ‘a discursive strategy that juxtaposes the virtuous populace with a corrupt elite and views the former as the sole legitimate source of political power’ (Aslandis 2016, 1593). They argue that political challengers, especially those with legitimate claims as outsiders, are most likely to rely on populism as a strategic tool. Moffitt and Tormey (2014) and Moffitt (2016) view populism as a political style with three key features: appeals to the people versus the elite, culturally defined ‘bad manners’ in the rhetoric of populist actors and the perception of a crisis or threat requiring decisive, urgent action.

The third approach is populism as a political strategy. Like Moffitt, Roberts (2014) emphasises the notion of crisis but views populism as ‘a specific type of response to crises of political representation’ (2014, 141). Rather than focusing on discursive criteria, Roberts argues that populism is a ‘political strategy for appealing to mass constituencies where representative institutions are weak or discredited, and where various forms of social exclusion or political marginalisation leave citizens alienated from such institutions’ (ivi.). Jansen (2014) combines elements of the second and third approaches, viewing populist mobilisation as a sustained political project that blends populist rhetoric and popular mobilisation. He argues that populism is a form of political practice that ‘mobilises ordinarily marginalised social sectors into publicly visible and contentious political action, while articulating an anti-elite, nationalist rhetoric that valorises ordinary people’ (ibid., 167).

‘There is no set of features that exclusively defines movements, parties, and people that are called populist’ (Judis 2016, 13). Judis characterises populism as a form of logic or way of thinking about politics rather than an ideology. He distinguishes between left-wing and right-wing populism. Left-wing populism emphasises the people versus the elite establishment, whereby the bottom and middle are aligned against the top. Left-wing populism differs from socialism and is not necessarily opposed to capitalism. According to Judis, right-wing populism focuses on the people versus the elite, but right-wing populists also accuse the elite of supporting an ‘out-group’, such as immigrants. Both forms of populism embrace democratic competition for power. Conflict between the people and the elite is at the heart of populism. Populists advance particular demands that define this conflict and do not think that those currently in power will address the demands. Populist candidates and parties ‘signal that the prevailing political ideology isn't working and needs repair, and the standard worldview is breaking down' (ibid., 17). Next, I discuss the approach to populism used in this chapter.

In the United States context, it is useful to view populism as a political strategy employed by outsider candidates for elective office. Pundits and the electorate view the outsider as having credibility, as someone who exists outside of the dominant, elite political establishment. The candidate enjoys credibility as having operated in the past and/or as operating now outside the control of the elite establishment. Outsider candidates may rely on populist claims partly because such claims demonstrate a strong contrast to establishment candidates and are likely to be viewed as more credible when uttered by an outsider than by an establishment insider (Bonikowski and Gidron 2016). The outsider candidate characterises members of the elite political establishment as corrupt and mobilises voters to challenge establishment power. Voters are mobilised to reclaim the power they previously delegated to incumbent elites and to delegate that power to the outsider candidate and, possibly, to candidates for other offices endorsed by the outsider. Advocates of policy change often assert the existence of a crisis that demands action (Kingdon 2010). The outsider populist often promotes the notion of a crisis in the economic, social and/or political arenas. Examples from the 2016 US presidential campaigns include candidate declared crises in campaign finance, trade, employment and wages, healthcare, opioid drug addiction, national security, immigration, crime, police shootings, programmes for military veterans and post-secondary education finance. The outsider populist candidate uses the mass media and social media (for example, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube) strategies to gain attention and mobilise support. Social media enable populists to communicate directly with supporters rather than having messages mediated by the traditional mass media. The outsider also encourages small dollar donations from millions of contributors. In doing so, the candidate demonstrates broad support and challenges the power of elite establishment money in the political system.

Historical Context of Populism in the United States

A type of populist politics that began in the US in the 1800s has since reappeared periodically (Judis 2016).[1] While US populism can be traced back to the American Revolution, the People's Party of the early 1890s established a new precedent. The populist farmers' alliances and People's Party had 'a profound effect' on US politics between 1885 and 1894 and were 'an early sign of the inadequacy of the two parties' view of government and the economy' (ibid., 28). Later, many populist proposals, such as a graduated income tax, were included in Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal. William Jennings Bryan ran for president in 1896, 1900 and 1908. During the 1896 Democratic Party Convention, Bryan delivered his famous Cross of Gold speech, in which he challenged the gold standard and promoted silver as part of a bimetallic monetary standard favoured by silver miners and some farmers. The People's Party endorsed Bryan in 1896.

Louisiana Democrat Huey Long campaigned for governor with populist policies and was elected in 1928. He was governor until 1932 and subsequently served as a US Senator. In 1934, Long delivered a radio address promoting his 'Share our Wealth' plan, whereby no family would live in poverty. Local political organisations called ‘Share our Wealth’ clubs proliferated. Long’s most active supporters were members of the middle class ‘who feared that they would be cast down by the Depression into the ranks of the very poor’ (ibid., 31). Roosevelt and his fellow Democrats were concerned about Long running on a third party ticket and tilting the 1936 election in favour of the Republicans. Long pushed those in power to address public concerns about unequal wealth and power and create programmes that became long-standing ‘pillars of American policy’ (ibid., 32). In 1935, Congress began to adopt the ‘Second New Deal’, a series of policies and programmes that addressed inequality and were more liberal than the original New Deal. These included the Social Security Act, the National Labour Relations Act and a major national public works project to provide jobs for the unemployed. Long announced his candidacy for US president in August 1935 and was assassinated in September 1935.

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[1] This section of the chapter draws heavily from Judis's (2016) concise history of US populism.

In the 1960s and 1970s, Governor George Wallace of Alabama was a populist who held a mixture of left-wing and right-wing positions. He ran for president four times between 1964 and 1976 and served four terms as Alabama governor. His initial base was among voters who identified themselves as middle class and perceived a conflict with those above and below. Wallace and his followers had New Deal liberal positions on many issues but not on racial issues. In his 1963 inaugural address, Wallace declared ‘segregation forever’. While campaigning for president in 1972, Wallace was shot, causing him to be paralysed from the waist down. Wallace’s racial views later changed dramatically. In his 1982 gubernatorial election, he received strong support from Alabama’s black voters. In 1985, Wallace was awarded an honorary degree from Tuskegee University, a historically black university.

More recent populists, including presidential candidates Ross Perot, Pat Buchanan, Bernie Sanders and Donald J. Trump, have challenged the US conception of neo-liberalism and its implications. As noted by Judis (2016), US neo-liberalism entails revisions to New Deal liberalism rather than its complete elimination. US neo-liberalism preserves the New Deal safety net yet emphasises market-based forces in government and society, such as privatisation and deregulation. In 1992, Texas businessman Ross Perot ran for president as a populist Independent, portraying himself as an ‘unpaid servant of the people against a corrupt government and inept corporate hierarchy’ (ibid., 47). Like populists that followed, Perot argued that the US should stop shipping jobs out of the country. During the 1992 campaign, he famously declared that the controversial North American Free Trade Agreement (later adopted in 1994) would result in ‘a giant sucking sound’ of manufacturing jobs transferred from the US to Mexico. Perot received an impressive 19 per cent of the popular vote in 1992 (despite having dropped out and returned to the race) and ran again in 1996. Similarly, Pat Buchanan, who campaigned for the Republican nomination in 1992 and 1996, criticised the political and financial establishment, the North American Free Trade Agreement and illegal immigration. Perot and Buchanan gained attention and support because Democratic and Republican leaders ‘were ignoring popular concerns’ about US manufacturing, immigration and government lobbying (ibid., 46).

The Tea Party movement in the Republican Party and the short-lived Occupy Wall Street movement in 2011 on the left also challenged elements of neo-liberalism with populist ideas. Both were decentralised movements that nonetheless influenced US political discourse. Tea Party rhetoric included concerns about people who had worked hard and ‘played by the rules’ yet were compelled to pay for entitlements for others perceived as less deserving, including people who had entered bad home mortgage deals and illegal immigrants. Occupy Wall Street emphasised 'the 99 per cent' battling against the greed and corruption of the elite one per cent. The 2016 presidential campaign rhetoric of Sanders and Trump shared similarities with that of Perot, Buchanan, the Tea Party, Occupy Wall Street and earlier populists. For example, both Sanders and Trump criticised the North American Free Trade Agreement and promised new trade policies which would benefit US workers. Sanders railed against Wall Street and 'the billionaire class' for profiting from a 'rigged' system. Trump proposed a five-year ban on congressional and White House officials becoming lobbyists after leaving government service and restrictions on foreign lobbying.

Economic and Political Context of Contemporary US Populism

Numerous economic and political factors, including globalisation and a crisis of representation, make the contemporary US a hospitable context for populist candidates. In a poll of registered voters from June 2016, 84 per cent said that the economy was 'very important' to their vote in 2016. Terrorism was second at 80 per cent, followed by foreign policy (75 per cent), healthcare (74 per cent), gun policy (72 per cent) and immigration (70 per cent) (Pew Research Center 2016). Globalisation has contributed to significant underemployment and wage stagnation in the US labour force. For example, some people who earned bachelor's degrees are saddled with debt from student loans and cannot secure good jobs with good salaries. Some of these degree holders now sit in Chemistry 101 courses at two-year community colleges, pursuing new career paths in the healthcare sector.[2]

The United States lost 5.7 million manufacturing jobs from 1998 to 2013. These losses were caused by trade deficits with low-wage nations, such as China and Mexico, the Great Recession and a weak recovery (Scott 2015). Large US companies, including Disney and Toys 'R' Us, have replaced long-time, skilled US workers in accounting, computer technology and project management with foreign workers. Both Disney and Toys 'R' Us pressured US workers to train their own foreign replacements. The largest mutual life insurer in the US, New York Life, also had its long-time US workers train their foreign replacements as the company moved work to India (Preston 2015a; 2015b; 2016). Even the public sector is not immune to this dynamic. In 2016, the University of California, San Francisco announced plans to lay off 17 per cent of its Information Technology staff, but not before this staff had trained their foreign replacements from India (Thibodeau 2016). In 2016, air conditioner company Carrier announced that it was moving more than 2,000 jobs from Indiana to Mexico. Union leaders said Carrier would pay Mexican workers about $3 per hour compared to an average of more than $20 per hour for the company's US workers (Carey 2016). Also in 2016, the Ford Motor Company announced plans to shift all of its North American small car production to Mexico. Candy makers including Hershey and Brach's have shifted production from the US to Mexico due to cheaper labour (Hawley 2009). Critics have also blamed establishment elites for allegedly widespread abuses of the H-1B visa programme that have led to foreign workers displacing US workers.

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[2] Thanks to Colin Henck, adjunct chemistry professor, Hudson Valley Community College, NY for this vignette.

The preceding cases are sample illustrations of how globalisation has affected US workers across the labour force. Long-time workers in their 50s replaced by cheaper workers may find it especially difficult to secure new jobs with wages and benefits comparable to what they had before being replaced. In addition, analysts estimate that there are between 10.5 million and 12 million illegal immigrants in the US (United States Office of Immigration Statistics 2018; Passel 2019). Critics of the elite establishment, including some legal immigrants who dutifully met the requirements to become US residents and citizens, have questioned why US immigration laws have not been enforced in an equitable manner. In summary, US voters who have 'played by the rules' yet are suffering due to job loss, wage stagnation, high healthcare costs and grim prospects for a better standard of living may assign responsibility for their plight to a greedy, unresponsive establishment elite. This creates a window of opportunity for a populist candidate to convince such voters that someone cares and will act on their behalf to improve things.

In addition to formidable economic challenges, there is evidence of a crisis of political representation in the US. While Congress has received low approval ratings for decades, recent ratings of Congress from Americans across the political spectrum rank close to historic lows (McCarthy 2016). Political polarisation has also reached historic levels. Recent public opinion data indicate that 'Republicans and Democrats are more divided along ideological lines — and partisan antipathy is deeper and more extensive — than at any point in the last two decades' (Pew Research Center 2014, 6). Political polarisation is strongest among the most politically active, while many with mixed ideological views are relatively uninvolved in politics. For example, 39 per cent of those with a mix of liberal and conservative views report that they vote regularly, compared to 78 per cent for consistent conservatives and 58 per cent for consistent liberals. Moreover, eight per cent of those with mixed ideological views report donating to a candidate or campaign group in recent years compared to 26 per cent for consistent conservatives and 31 per cent for consistent liberals (Pew Research Center 2014).

Establishment Barriers to Outsider Candidates

As discussed later, Trump, and to a lesser extent Sanders, can be characterised as outsiders in the 2016 presidential campaign. However, both chose to run campaigns within the two-party system. The institutionalised two-party system in the US makes it extremely difficult for independents and third party candidates to gain attention and win office. Most states have strict requirements for ballot access and winner-takes-all systems that favour the two major parties. In 2016, Libertarian Party presidential candidate Gary Johnson was the first third party candidate in two decades to secure ballot access in all 50 states and the District of Columbia (DC). Green Party nominee Jill Stein secured ballot access in 44 states and DC[3] In most states, write-in candidates must file 'declaration of intent' paperwork days or months prior to the election, and some states do not permit write-in candidates (National Association of Secretaries of State 2016). The mass media focus almost exclusively on candidates aligned with the two establishment parties. While social media technologies can help outsiders to mobilise support, institutionalised obstacles confronting independent and third party candidates remain formidable. In order to qualify for participation in the presidential debates in the autumn of 2016, candidates had to achieve a minimum 15 per cent level of support in a polling average across several major national polls. On 16th September 2016, polling averages for the Democratic, Republican, Libertarian and Green Party candidates were: Hillary Clinton (43 per cent), Donald Trump (40.4 per cent), Gary Johnson (8.4 per cent) and Jill Stein (3.2 per cent). Thus, only Clinton, Trump and their vice-presidential running mates were permitted to participate in the presidential and vice-presidential debates, respectively (Commission on Presidential Debates 2016).

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[3] Stein was an eligible write-in candidate in three additional states.

The 2016 Campaign: Will the Real Populist Please Stand Up?[4]

During a press conference in summer 2016 following a summit with the leaders of Mexico and Canada, US president Barack Obama received many Trump-related questions. Near the end of the conference, Obama said that he wanted to address 'this whole issue of populism' and proceeded to deliver a self-described, six-minute 'rant'. Casting populism in a favourable light, the president asserted that he was a populist, Bernie Sanders qualified for the title and that Donald Trump was not a populist (though Obama did not cite Trump by name). Obama remarked:

> I'm not prepared to concede the notion that some of the rhetoric that's been popping up is populist… Now, somebody else who has never shown any regard for workers…doesn't suddenly become a populist because they say something controversial in order to win votes. That's not the measure of populism. That's nativism, or xenophobia, or worse. Or it's just cynicism. So, I would just advise everybody to be careful about somebody attributing to whoever pops up at a time of economic anxiety the label that they're populist.

Obama asserted that Sanders 'genuinely deserves the title' of populism because he has been 'in the vineyards fighting' on economic issues. He added: 'Somebody who labels "us versus them" or engages in rhetoric about how we're going to look after ourselves and take it to the other guy, that's not the definition of populism' (White House 2016).

Consistent with Roberts' (2014) concept of crisis of political representation, Oliver and Rahn (2016) argue that the Trump phenomenon is the result of a representation crisis. As in the case of earlier populists, voter concerns are not well reflected in the positions and actions of the two major parties. Thus, 'the opportunity for a Donald Trump presidency is ultimately rooted in a failure of the Republican Party to incorporate a wide range of constituencies' (ibid., 202). The results of the 2016 General Election, in which Clinton ostensibly enjoyed numerous advantages as an establishment insider, also suggest a failure of the Democratic Party. At its core, populism is anti the elite establishment, and populist candidates have credibility as outsiders. Focusing on outsider status as a central element of the definition of a populist, Trump is a populist, Sanders qualified for the label during the 2016 nomination process and Clinton was not a populist. While Trump has enjoyed lifelong membership in the country's economically elite class, he was not a politician prior to the 2016 presidential campaign. Moreover, many establishment Republicans charged that Trump was a 'Republican in Name Only' (RINO) and not a true conservative.

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[4] US television game show *To Tell The Truth* features three people claiming to be the same person with a special skill or job; two are imposters and one is sworn to tell the truth. At the end of the game, the host says, 'Will the real [truth teller's name] please stand up?'.

Operating within the two-party establishment system, Sanders received more than 12 million votes in the caucus and primary elections for the Democratic presidential nomination and is a long-time US senator. However, Sanders is also the longest serving Independent in US Senate history and was one of only two Independents in Congress in 2016. In the eyes of many observers, Sanders lost much of his credibility as an outsider when he endorsed Clinton during the 2016 Democratic National Convention and campaigned for her the following September. Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton is a long-time member of the establishment and does not have a history of operating outside establishment power. Establishment elites facilitated Clinton's run for US Senator in New York even though Clinton was neither a native resident nor a long-time resident of the state. She was elected US Senator of New York in 2000, was re-elected in 2006 and first ran for president in 2008. In 2009, Clinton left the US Senate to become US Secretary of State in the Obama Administration, serving in that role until 2013. Thus, while some of Clinton's campaign rhetoric embodied populist themes, she lacked credibility in attempting to pose as a populist. During the 2016 presidential nomination and election campaigns, Clinton was criticised for not being more accessible to the press. In contrast, Trump was highly accessible to the press, holding 'news conferences' and participating in many interviews with the mass media. A 'showman' with years of experience hosting his former reality television series, *The Apprentice* and *The Celebrity Apprentice*, Trump strategically attracted plentiful free publicity from the mass media during the campaign. One of Clinton's main campaign slogans was 'I'm with her'. The Trump campaign, seeking to portray him as the populist candidate aligned with the people, subsequently adopted the slogan: 'I'm with you'.

Clinton's campaign appearances were often tightly scripted affairs as she read from teleprompters and 'stayed on script'. In contrast, for many months of his campaign, Trump was known for speaking off script.[5] While this was a risky practice with numerous negative consequences, it also likely made Trump more authentic in the eyes of his supporters. This dynamic is related to the concept of 'bad manners' discussed by Moffitt and Tormey (2014) and Moffitt (2016). Throughout the nomination and election campaigns, Trump delivered rhetoric that displayed culturally defined 'bad manners'. Portraying himself as a champion in the fight against political correctness, Trump engaged in name-calling, mocked people's physical features, questioned the hero status of Vietnam prisoner of war Senator John McCain, proposed a temporary ban on Muslims entering the US, implied that his own 'sacrifices' were comparable to that of a Muslim veteran who died in the Iraq War, made references to gun violence against Clinton and more.

Both Trump and Sanders secured substantial campaign donations from small dollar donors. A Republican who led digital fundraising under George W. Bush noted that, due to Trump's ability to both self-finance his campaign and secure tens of millions of dollars in small donations, the establishment elite could not use the threat of withholding funds as leverage over Trump. Trump's fundraising from small dollar donors far exceeded small donations to the 2012 Republican nominee Mitt Romney, who relied more heavily on large contributions (Confesorre and Corasaniti 2016). During the Democratic nomination process, about two-thirds of donations to the Sanders campaign were from small dollar donors compared to one-fifth of the donations Clinton received (Mehta et al. 2016). The Sanders campaign emphasised populist themes. He criticised Clinton's support from the Wall Street establishment and charged that Clinton should release transcripts of paid speeches she had delivered in closed-door appearances before elite establishment audiences.

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[5] During later stages of the campaign, Trump began to read from a teleprompter more often.

Establishment powers within the Democratic Party strongly favoured nominating Clinton over Sanders. Shortly before the Democratic National Convention, Democratic National Committee (DNC) emails publicised by the hacking website WikiLeaks revealed DNC bias against Sanders. While DNC officials and the Clinton campaign had asserted that the Democratic primary and caucus processes were open and fair, DNC emails revealed official efforts to help Clinton and hamper Sanders. Following these revelations, DNC head Debbie Wasserman Schultz resigned, and there were additional firings and resignations among DNC officials. Winning the Democratic nomination required 2,382 delegates. Clinton secured 2,807 delegate votes, while Sanders secured 1,894. Clinton received 602 of 712 superdelegate votes, while Sanders received only 48 superdelegate votes. The superdelegates were establishment party leaders and elected officials who could vote however they wanted at the Democratic Party Convention. Sanders argued that the superdelegate system gave too much power to establishment elites and pushed successfully for reform of the system. As of 2020, two-thirds of Democratic superdelegates had to vote the way their respective states voted. In the popular vote for the Democratic nomination, Clinton received about 16 million votes and Sanders received about 12 million votes. On the Republican side, Trump beat a large group of 16 mostly establishment Republican Party candidates for the nomination. He received more than 13 million votes.[6] Winning the Republican nomination required 1,237 delegate votes and Trump secured 1,543 delegates.[7]

At 8:00 p.m. on Election Day, 8th November 2016, the *New York Times'* live election forecast web page predicted that Clinton had an 80 per cent chance of winning the election. A few hours later, Trump prevailed in a victory that caught many pollsters and pundits by surprise. A candidate must secure 270 votes in the Electoral College to win. Trump secured 306 electors who pledged to vote for him in the Electoral College and almost 63 million (46 per cent) in the popular vote. Clinton secured 232 electors who pledged to vote for her in the Electoral College and almost 66 million (48 per cent) popular votes. While Clinton won the popular vote, the 538 electors of the Electoral College determine the winner. Some analysts speculated that voter education level was a key factor in the election. Exit poll data suggested that the vote among the college educated was closer than some had predicted: 49 per cent of college graduates voted for Clinton and 45 per cent for Trump. Trump received 49 per cent of the vote among white college graduates compared to 45 per cent for Clinton. Among whites with lower education levels, 67 per cent voted for Trump and 28 per cent for Clinton. Both Clinton and Trump had high unfavourability levels. About 11 per cent of voters thought Trump was unfavourable but still voted for him (Supiano 2016). Clinton received strong support from blacks and Latinos but at lower levels than Barack Obama received in 2012; Trump received slightly stronger support from these two groups compared to Mitt Romney in 2012 (Luhby 2016). Trump's 2016 victory demonstrated that many voters wanted major change rather than the *status quo* establishment represented by Clinton.

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[6] Ted Cruz received 7.6 million votes, John Kasich, 4.2 million and Marco Rubio received 3.5 million votes.

[7] Cruz received 559 delegates, Rubio 165 and Kasich 161.

Conclusions and Future Research

During the 2016 campaign, Trump criticised the Carrier air conditioning company for plans to move Indiana jobs to Mexico and the Ford Motor Company for plans to build a new plant in Mexico for small car production. Shortly following the 2016 election and before Trump took office, he took credit for major announcements from both companies. In late November 2016, president-elect Trump, vice president-elect and Indiana governor Mike Pence, and Carrier announced a deal to keep about 1,000 jobs in Indiana rather than moving them to Mexico. As part of the deal, Indiana provided $7 million in tax breaks and Carrier would invest $16 million in its Indiana facilities. Carrier's parent company, United Technologies, earns about ten per cent of its revenue from the US federal government, especially from military contracts (Schwartz 2016a; 2016b). Some observers suggested that Carrier was motivated by concerns about these contracts. In January 2017, the Ford Motor Company announced that it had cancelled plans to build a $1.6 billion plant in Mexico and would instead invest $700 million in an existing Michigan plant, including the creation of 700 new jobs. Ford CEO, Mark Fields, framed the decision as 'a vote of confidence for president-elect Trump and some of the policies that they [sic] may be pursuing'. Fields added that the 'primary reason' for the decision was reduced consumer demand for small cars (Snavely and Gardner 2017). The Carrier and Ford announcements were scrutinised by critics and did not represent holistic national economic, workforce and trade policies. However, the two cases received national attention and held huge symbolic value for Trump. They offered hope to many that positive change might be possible under a Trump presidency.

Populism is a political strategy employed by outsider candidates for elective office. Economic and political conditions in the US made it a favourable setting for the populist political strategies of Sanders and Trump. The economic impacts of globalisation, combined with political polarisation and a crisis of political representation, led to historic support for both candidates. The fact that Libertarian candidate Gary Johnson secured nationwide ballot access and garnered support in opinion polls approaching ten per cent offers further evidence of voter dissatisfaction with establishment elites. In future research on populism in the US, it would be useful to examine the extent to which candidates for Congress, governor, state lawmaker and mayor adopt populist strategies. Second, there is a need for additional studies of how populists approach the traditional mass media and use social media. Trump's frequent use of Twitter enabled him to control his message and speak directly to the public. Third, researchers might assess whether populist political dynamics convince the two establishment parties to address the crisis of political representation in tangible, productive ways. Fourth, populism scholars might take care to manage researcher bias. It is important to avoid sitting atop one's own comfortable, elitist perch while casting disparaging glances down upon 'ignorant masses' who support diverse populist candidates. In assessing concerns about immigration voiced by politicians and voters, for example, some analysts frame these concerns as unquestionably rooted in nativist, xenophobic dispositions. The research literature on populism would benefit from more nuanced examinations of immigration and other issues in a given context. Finally, candidates employing populist strategies do not comprise a neatly homogeneous class of political actors. Political dynamics and the implications of populist strategies differ across economic, social and political contexts. The research literature would benefit from additional analyses of the positive and negative implications of populism for democracy.

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CHAPTER 19:

POPULIST AND PROGRAMMATIC PARTIES IN LATIN AMERICAN PARTY SYSTEMS

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Populism and Stable Party Systems: Can They Coexist? The Latin American Experience

Populism is often said to be antithetical to a stable democratic system (Weyland 2013). Populism is based on personalistic rule and charismatic authority, whereas a well-functioning democracy should be based on solid programmatic parties. Moreover, populist leaders compete for votes on the basis of emotional appeals (Kitschelt et al. 2010, 3), whereas political parties should compete by putting forward comprehensive programmes that clearly articulate public policy preferences in universalistic terms.[1] In particular, populism is often considered something akin to a form of political pathology that is especially prevalent in the semi-peripheral parts of the globe (Habermas 1989, 370), particularly – but not only – in Latin America. The normative-theoretical distinction between populism and an emphasis on programmes is often discussed in connection with a complex historical narrative about modernisation and globalisation: Populism, it is said, is the norm in those areas of the globe that have yet to complete the transition from pre-modern forms of political organisation to fully rational ones; it is said that, in time, all countries will advance towards a party democracy, which is the endpoint of the global process of political convergence into political modernity (Kitschelt et al. 2010).

The more frequent accounts of the prevalence of populism in semi-peripheral countries such as Argentina, Brazil, Ecuador, Turkey and India emphasise that in these countries the slow 'normal' trajectory towards political modernity was derailed by rapid state-led industrialisation in the early or mid-twentieth century. The sudden proliferation of factories caused urbanisation, which brought the displacement of rural workers into newly created metropolitan areas in search of higher-paying industrial jobs. These migrant workers, cut off from their traditional political, cultural and even religious affiliations in the countryside, became 'available' masses that could be mobilised by smooth-talking demagogues. These rabble-rousers were carried to power by the waves of popular activism but were completely uninterested in advancing democracy. The personalistic and authoritarian appeal of these demagogues was said to preclude the consolidation of programmatic party systems in those countries. Though simplified here, this account was in fact the predominant explanation for the rise of mid-twentieth century populism for two decades (Lipset 1960; Di Tella 1965; Germani 1968; Cardoso and Faletto 1976; Hurtado 1977; Baykan 2016). However, the clear-cut normative and historical distinction between populism and liberal democracy came under criticism as the twentieth century ended and democracy expanded around the globe.

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[1] It is commonly believed that voters who choose within the constraints of programmatic party systems can do so based on rational expectations about what each party will do if elected to office because policy preferences are explained in the relevant party platforms; however, voters that are forced to choose between non-programmatic parties lack these ideological indicators, so party elites have to replace them with something else: charismatic leaders and/or clientelistic appeals. 'Various Latin American party systems are noted for having powerful political machines, [**sic.**] that enforce discipline, [**sic.**] through clientelistic rather than programmatic means; likewise, Latin American politicians working at the behest of feared or revered charismatic leaders show considerable unanimity' (Kitschelt et al. 2010, 66).

This has become even more evident in the last three decades after the so-called Third Wave of transitions from authoritarian to democratic rule took place in Southern and Eastern Europe, Latin America and Asia. With the successful extrication of Spain from authoritarian rule in 1974 (Linz 1989), countries as diverse as Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil, Chile, Bolivia and all of post-Communist Eastern Europe, plus many others, adopted multiparty political systems. They have been remarkably stable in their adherence to (at least formal) democratic stability. However, the expected withering away of populism in the semi-peripheral areas of the world that was supposed to take place as more and more countries adopted capitalism and democracy has not happened yet, and it is doubtful that this will ever happen. Rather, it seems as if in these new democracies populist and programmatic parties coexist (Cavarozzi and Casullo 2002) and that populism is one of the 'normal' ways in which political competition is conducted. The second factor causing the re-evaluation of populism today is the fact that populist leaders and movements are enjoying great political success in the global core countries as well. A surge of populism appears to be taking place in Eastern and Western Europe as well as in the United States. The political importance of Geert Wilder, Marine Le Pen, Nikolaos Michaloliakos, Pablo Iglesias, Nigel Farage, Donald Trump, and the success of populist right-wing parties in Austria and the Netherlands call into question the supposed immunity of advanced democratic systems to the temptation of populist leadership (Freidenberg 2007; Mudde 2007).

It is only natural that a well-deserved re-evaluation of global populist politics is taking place in political science in this new context (Moffitt 2016). For instance, some authors argue that populism is a reaction to the crisis in institutionalised parties, which gives way to alternative forms of representation and parties (Roberts 1999; Weyland et al. 2010). Others go beyond this notion and push for the recognition that populism is not an antithetical response to democracy but a by-product of democracy itself, which coexists and competes with other modes of political identification in any democratic system (Canovan 1999; Panizza 2005). The objective of this chapter is to answer the question of whether populism is a threat to the stability of party systems in Latin America (Zanatta 2008) or constitutes a political tradition that can coexist with democratic stability (de la Torre 2004) from a theoretical point of view. The chapter will argue that populism can, in fact, coexist with stable party systems. The argumentation then moves onto the second question: If we assume that populist parties and leaders compete and coexist with programmatic parties on a daily basis, how can this interaction be described and theorised? The main answer to this query is that populist and programmatic parties coexist in an ordinal relationship with each other with the result that the difference between the two types is largely a matter of degree and not of 'nature' or 'essence'. The fact that a party is 'more populist' or 'more programmatic' depends on strategic choices and the style of leadership; parties can and do fluctuate between the two poles in different historical times as well. The goal here is also to show that populist movements routinely evolve into populist parties in this region and that, moreover, these parties are as resilient and as effective in winning elections and governing as any other type of parties. Sometimes they succeed in performing these tasks and sometimes they fail, but they do not seem to be *a priori* condemned to do one thing or the other.

The Current State of Research into Populism and Political Representation

The first explanation about the emergence of populist movements and governments in the twentieth century emphasised the degree of modernisation of a given society (Di Tella 1965; Germani 1968). In this seminal approach, dubbed Modernisation Theory, populism was explained as an answer to the problems created by stunted or incomplete modernisation and was thus viewed as an 'abnormal' transition from traditional to modern politics in underdeveloped countries. Most mid-twentieth century scholars of populism viewed it as 'deviant' political behaviour that would have to be necessarily superseded in the course of the 'normal' historical evolution towards a more modern and ideological form of politics.[2] Populism was thus regarded as a deviant alternative to more modern forms of representation. The US and especially Europe were considered the templates for the progressive realisation of democratic institutional development around the globe (Lerner 1958). In Europe, the process of political modernisation supposedly involved what Gino Germani called 'the model of integration' (Germani 1963, 421; authors' translation), meaning that the newly mobilised working classes were incorporated into the political system through a process characterised by widespread respect for political norms and institutions. In Europe, the mass public secured their inclusion in politics step by step by participating in liberal or working-class parties. The whole process helped to consolidate rather than undermine representative democracy.[3] But Latin America followed a different path that led to 'disintegrated' forms of political action, of which populism was the main type. In the twentieth century, the new industrial classes began pushing for democratic incorporation in Latin America. Because the proper political instruments for such incorporation (the liberal or working-class parties of Europe and the US) were in short supply, the 'available masses' were recruited and manipulated by intra-elite factions or personalistic leaders that hoped to gain power based solely on their support. Thus, the incorporation of the masses into political life was achieved largely through informal and non-institutional means.[4]

The dominant narrative that identified populism with demagoguery and anti-democratic backwardness was promptly criticised. Defining the behaviour of the popular classes as being simply the unreflective expression of an amorphous, homogeneous whole went against the mere possibility of conducting an empirical analysis of populism centred on methodological individualism. Moreover, modernisation theories (both from the left and the right) simply did not leave room either for the comprehension of the political and economic contexts within which such mobilisation happened or for understanding the contingent factors crucial in each particular case. The self-evidently elitist and even reactionary undertones when equating the popular sectors with undifferentiated 'irrational masses' became the basis for criticising this view of populism (Altamirano 2001). In the 1960s, an alternative explanation of the origins of populism was introduced in the context of the emergence of Dependency Theory (O'Donnell 1972; Ianni 1975; Cardoso and Faletto 1976). Although Dependency Theory shared the identification of populism as one particular historical phase with the preceding Modernisation Theory, it parted ways with the latter in that it did not regard underdevelopment in teleological terms but rather viewed it in a more deterministic fashion as a historically necessary by-product of the relations of dependency that connect the centre (the industrialised nations) with the periphery (Latin America). Linear progress was impossible, they argued, and real modernisation would require the systemic change of the global relations of power. Dependency Theory explained the adoption of import substitution policies as an effect of the favourable conditions brought about by the Great Depression and the Second World War. The implosion of the global trade networks allowed for higher degrees of economic autarchy as Latin American countries were forced to turn to their internal markets for economic growth. Imports-substitution industries bloomed, creating a new economic elite and a working class, in what Ianni has called 'a class society' (1975). The rapid social changes caused the sudden destabilisation of the oligarchic systems of governance, which were intimately connected with the old capitalist order based on the exportation of commodities. In turn, this development disrupted the pre-existing social and political structures and gave way to the active mobilisation of groups that were previously passive (Germani 1963, 412). The mobilisation of these groups became a constitutive element of state formation in Latin America in the first half of the twentieth century. Populist leaders rose in response to the demands of the newly mobilised classes. Born out of mass activism, the new populist governments logically sought to strengthen the hand of the working classes by creating a new development model based on internal market-oriented industrialisation, the nationalisation of resources and increased economic state interventionism.

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[2] For a critique of such a mode of thinking, see Chatterjee (2004, 48).

[3] In contrast, Charles Tilly makes the case that there were multiple trajectories to democracy within Europe itself, and that some European countries came to liberal democracy via a more contentious path than others. The prime example of the contentious path is France, of course (Tilly 2003).

[4] With the notable exceptions of Costa Rica and Uruguay (Cavarozzi and Casullo 2002).

The populist governments that emerged during this period of relative economic autonomy were characterised by redistributive politics that channelled resources to the popular sectors in the hope that state intervention would act as an effective mechanism for their social and political inclusion. It was thought the enhanced economic redistribution would prop up internal demand, which would spur economic investment in turn. The whole project was planned as an inter-class alliance between the working classes, the middle classes and the newly formed industrial bourgeoisies against the dominant factions of the previous oligarchic regimes. Nonetheless, the plan had its own major weakness. Sustaining the process required that the interests of the 'national industrial bourgeoisie' and the emergent urban working classes were, if not identical, at least complementary. Such complementarity, however, was far from natural since the bourgeoisie was supposed to retain economic control, the popular classes were expected to subordinate themselves willingly and the state was supposed to control all decisions. These premises were always doubtful, to say the least. This model of development required a high degree of anti-elite mobilisation on the part of the working class and, at the same time, that same mobilisation had to be kept within the limits that a strong state deemed compatible with capitalist development. In this vision, the 'populist state' was the sole agent of development: a supreme entity acting simultaneously as the engine behind capitalist accumulation and guarantor of its social and political viability by activating and controlling the popular bases of support. One hardly needs to emphasise that this Herculean task proved almost impossible once the stabilisation of the global order after World War II brought the prices of commodities down. Moreover, the old and new economic elites were, in the end, never fully supportive of the new political order, even though it arguably benefited them (Sidicaro 2002).

Although Dependency Theory was crucial in the development of a more nuanced and historicised understanding of populism, it was flawed in that it associated political populism with one particular development model, industrialisation through import substitution (ISI) (Viguera 1993, 61). Dependency theorists on populism did not take into account that there is no essential connection between populism and industrialisation or working-class strength, or even with heightened state intervention. There have been agrarian populist movements along with leftist and rightist populist leaders, not to mention neo-liberal populist governments, which decreased rather than increased the size of the state.[5] One of the earlier proponents of unlatching the study of populism from economics and development theories was Ernesto Laclau (1986), as he noted that populism was by no means unique to the underdeveloped world but had existed in core countries such as Italy (fascism and *qualunquismo*) and the US and Russia (agrarian populism). Laclau centred his critique on the developmentalist division between 'traditional' and 'modern' societies and on the deterministic understanding of social change that, explicitly or implicitly, underpins political functionalism (2005). A theory that attaches populism to one predetermined phase of historical evolution and restricts progress to economic growth simply cannot explain why there have been populist governments in countries that simply never had import substitution industrialisation (such as, for instance, José María Velasco Ibarra in Ecuador), or why populist governments sometimes pursue politics that generate deindustrialisation, as was the case with Brazil, Peru, Ecuador and Argentina in the nineties (Knight 1998; Roberts 1999). The criticisms of the economic and sociological theories of populism opened a way for a radical rethinking of the theories of populism, which resulted in an open-ended political discussion that is still taking place. More and more voices began calling for the recognition of populism as a proper political phenomenon not wedded to one particular mode of economic development but used for advancing a variety of ideological agendas. These theories run the gamut from viewing populism as a socio-cultural phenomenon (Ostiguy 1997; 2014), to defining it as a mode of identification (Panizza 2005), a practice for mobilisation (Jansen 2011) and a thin ideology (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2012), among others.

Populism and Parties

If populist mobilisation is neither to be understood as a predetermined phase in a teleological process of modernisation nor as the political correlate of a certain model of economic development, the question still remains as *to what it is*. The next section will focus on two of the main contemporary theoretical answers to this question. They are the definition of populism as a political strategy based on the works of Kurt Weyland and the discursive theory of populism of Ernesto Laclau. They have been chosen because it is instructive to see how two definitions that operate with widely different epistemological and methodological foundations end up nonetheless at the same blind spot: They both construct a dichotomy between *populism* as a whole and *institutionalised party politics as* a more specific phenomenon – a theoretical assertion that is difficult to maintain without further qualification in the context of Latin American politics.

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[5] The governments of Alberto Fujimori, Carlos Menem, Abdalá Bucaram Ortíz or Fernando Collor de Mello combined populist appeals with neoliberal policies that included deindustrialisation, the shrinking of the state, trade liberalisation and de-unionisation.) Conversely, state bureaucracies grew larger and unions grew stronger in many countries after 1930, as did protectionism, without the intervention of populist governments (Luebbert 1991).

The first paradigm views populism as a *political strategy* that becomes more salient in times of representational crises. This recent explanation affirms that populist movements, parties and leaders emerge when the traditional parties become unable to represent the interests and preferences of the citizenry adequately. A crisis of representation can happen due to a variety of reasons, such as the inadequacy of electoral designs and regulations. It can also be due to parties becoming functionally unable to perceive or articulate what the citizenry demands for improving their lives' conditions at a particular time, which can itself be caused by demographic changes, rapid social mobility or other factors (Weyland 2001; Weyland et al. 2010). Populism is directly connected with internal or external shocks that lead to institutional weakening and a breakdown of representation (Roberts 1999; 2003). The systemic loss of representation is defined as a crisis brought forth by the inability of a party system to adapt itself to new social and economic realities and in which politicians no longer respond adequately to social demands under one particular set of game rules (Paramio 2006, 67). In a crisis of representation, traditional parties lose votes rapidly because their own voters become disenchanted and their fealty becomes unmoored. This erosion of traditional loyalties is, at the same time, a cause and effect of the crisis. Voters feel that their demands are not being heard. If the demands of the citizenry go unanswered for an extended period of time, people will rally behind outsider political figures that promise to punish the traditional party elites (*partidocracia* or 'partitocracy') that have betrayed them. In such a context, populist leaders will deploy an anti-political discourse that promises a radical refoundation of the political system which alters both the rules of political competence and the social configuration of the elites themselves. From this perspective, the macroeconomic agenda of a government becomes secondary to the methods and instruments that a leader uses to accumulate and deploy power (Vilas 2003). According to Kurt Weyland, populism can be thought to happen when a personalistic individual leader is able to obtain the support of a large mass of the population and relies on it as the only source of legitimacy for their political project. Weyland defines populism as 'a political strategy through which a personalistic leader seeks or exercises government power based on direct, unmediated, non-institutionalised support from large numbers of mostly unorganised followers' (Weyland 2001, 14). Charisma is an important component of populist leadership (Weyland 2001, 13; Freidenberg 2007, 35) because the leader's authority is based on the deeply held popular conviction about his or her supernatural political ability. Such leaders are thought to govern in the name of the people, with whom they share some characteristics of 'the common folk'. The particular bond between populist leaders and their followers is constructed in a top-down, paternalistic or plebiscitary manner without the mediation of formal institutions and organisations.

However, this definition of populism as an instrumental strategy can be scrutinised as well. Criticisms might be directed towards its reductionism: Its exclusive focus on the type of bond established between followers and their leader obfuscates the importance of other dimensions. This, in turn, may cause observers to mistake superficial similarities between disparate cases for conceptual identity. The excessive interest in the figure of the leader renders the expectations, demands and political culture of their followers largely invisible and of lesser importance, when in truth the followers of populist movements retain the ability to put pressure on and negotiate with their leadership (James 1990; Levitsky 2001). Even more relevant to the goals of this chapter is that the data do not seem to support the notion that populist authority is always antithetical to institutions. The relationship between populist leaders and political institutions is much more complicated than previously thought. Some populist governments created fundamental state institutions in their respective countries; some of these arrangements exist even to this day (New Deal institutions in the US, labour regulations and the public hospital system in Argentina, and national and state bureaucracies in Turkey).[6] Populist leaders usually create their own parties as soon as they achieve power or immediately beforehand. While populist leaders do try to maintain control over their movement, many were explicitly interested in merging populist power with institutional forms, also including the creation of political parties. Such was the case, for instance, with Víctor Haya de La Torre and the Peruvian APRA, with Lázaro Cárdenas and the Mexican PRI, and with Juan Domingo Perón in Argentina (Knight 1998).

Along with the strategic approach to populism, there has also been the so-called *discursive* approach. The main figure of this school of thought was Ernesto Laclau, who gave ontological primacy to discourse, affirming that 'discourse is the primary terrain of the constitution of objectivity as such' (Laclau 2005, 68). His expansive definition of populism viewed it 'not as a type of movement […] but a political logic'; that is, a certain political productive dynamic (ibid., 117). Laclau does not see populism as a form of anti-democratic pathology but rather as the inevitable by-product of the processes of political institutionalisation, and a positive by-product at that. Political and bureaucratic institutions are, by definition, unable to process all social demands at once because their standard operating mode is to particularise the demands so that they can be dealt with one at a time. However, under certain conditions demands accumulate at the margins of the political system to such an extent that 'an equivalential relation is established between them' (ibid., 73). According to Laclau, a populist movement is created when the impersonal dynamics of discursive identity-formation processes unify the demands of seemingly disparate groups of people with the figure of a leader in a single chain of meaning (this is the 'equivalential chain').[7] This process of identification creates a powerful political identity that can serve as the foundation and legitimation of transformative political praxis (Laclau 2005; Barros 2014). In populism, 'the people' itself is a political creation and is, at the same time, the cause and the effect of the dichotomisation of the political space into two antagonistic camps:[8] an 'us' (the people) that is identified as the heroic underdog (Panizza 2005, 3) and a 'them' which is defined as the *anti-people*, the elite. The leader's very existence *becomes* (there is a degree of impersonality to the process) the unifying symbol that makes the coalescence of a political identity possible. For Laclau, populism is the main source of democratic innovation because it exists in direct contrast with the institutional day-to-day problem-solving that he regards not as politics but as administration.[9] In his view, the dichotomisation of society into two antagonistically-related camps means that the people is defined (much like Ferdinand De Saussure's idea of oppositional value) as that which it is not; or as Pierre Ostiguy says: 'For Laclau the people is, by definition, on the oppositional side of the antagonistic frontier, antagonistically confronting empowered institutionality and its administration [of demands] […]. *By definition, this model or conceptualisation logically implies that cases of populism being institutionally in power cannot exist.*' (Ostiguy 2014, 346; authors' translation, emphasis added). As a consequence, Laclau arrives at a position that is strikingly similar to that of the strategic theory of populism, even if he does so via a different path. Both Weyland and Laclau argue that populism, whether defined as a personal strategy or as a collective identity, can only exist *in opposition to* institutional forms of representation.

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[6] For Francis Delano Roosevelt as a populist, see Kazin (1998).

[7] '[T]he symbolic unification of the group around an individuality […] is inherent to the formation of a people' (Laclau 2005, 101).

[8] In Laclau's words: 'So we have the formation of an internal frontier, a dichotomisation of the local political spectrum through the emergence of an equivalential chain of unsatisfied demands' (2005, 74).

[9] Following Jacques Rancière's distinction between politics and 'the police', which in English resonates with the distinction between politics and policy (Rancière 1996, 43).

The definitions of populism as a strategy or as a performative discourse theory could not be more diverse in terms of their epistemological premises and normative orientation; Weyland (2001) is much more critical of populist mobilisation, whereas Laclau was much more sympathetic, even going so far as to equate populism simply with democratic politics. However, both theories share a blind spot because a prominent feature of both Weyland's and Laclau's theorisations is that they both leave no room for the contingent business of day-to-day politics. There is manipulation on the one hand and the impersonal pull of logic equivalence on the other. In Laclau's case, the popular base of a populist movement does not seem to have much agency. On the contrary, populism is a personal *strategy*, but the question remains as to why that particular leader chose that particular strategy at that particular time, or why such strategies succeed or fail. They both pit populist mobilisation (anti-systemic, reactive and antagonistic) against political institutionality, which is thought to be programmatic and rule-oriented. For both of them, populism exists to challenge established forms of representation and, as such, it is the *opposite* of political parties. However, this logically coherent theoretical premise simply does not square with empirical evidence. The relations and connections between populist mobilisation, however defined, and programmatic parties are much more nuanced. Populist leaders create parties that are able to participate in and win elections all the time. These parties can, at times, challenge the leader and are even able to carry on after the founder's death (Mustapic 2002). What is more, it is not only the case that a populist party can transform itself into a programmatic party but that programmatic parties can become vessels for populist leaders as well. Moreover, forms of populism have proven to be surprisingly resilient once they come to power. In the last decade and a half, South American left-wing populist movements have been remarkably successful in electoral terms, and they have shown themselves to be surprisingly *adept in the art of not only enduring but also achieving political and social change*. Latin American populist presidents have been able to reform the constitutions of their countries (Hugo Chávez in Venezuela, Rafael Correa in Ecuador and Evo Morales in Bolivia) and pass relevant legislation (such as the nationalisation of oil and gas in Bolivia, the nationalisation of the largest oil company and of the private pension funds, and the legalisation of egalitarian marriage in Argentina). These populist governments also deployed a panoply of expansive social policies that, backed by the revenue from a boom in commodity exports, reduced poverty and, even in some cases, inequality.[10]

The longest-running populist government of South America, Venezuelan Chavismo, came to power in 1998. It has managed to govern Venezuela for 18 years and continues to do so even after Chávez's passing. Even in its present and highly problematic state, Chavismo has proven to be much more resilient than most observers would have expected. It has been able to reinvent itself over and over again and has surprised many observers by its ability to survive in the face of internal and external problems (including those of its own making) that have ranged from a dramatic drop in the price of oil, enormous economic problems including shortfalls in food supply, the unexpected death of a charismatic leader and increasing opposition pressure. Evo Morales has governed Bolivia since 2005; Rafael Correa was elected in November of 2006. Néstor Kirchner and Cristina de Kirchner governed Argentina for twelve consecutive years, surpassing the mark of both Juan Domingo Perón (1946-1955, 1973-1974) and Carlos Menem (1989-1999) (who were, of course, also populists). In fact, one might say that in Argentina it has proven to be much more difficult for non-populists to govern effectively, if by 'effectively' we mean the ability to finish one's term in office. Álvaro Uribe, a right-wing populist, must be counted among the effective South American populist presidents (Fraschini 2014).[11] Far from being incapable or unwilling to create their own form of institutionality, movements and leaders in South America have shown that 'populist institutionality' is far from being an oxymoron. It is also not the case that this resilience is always or even often constructed *without or outside political parties*. In South America, the situation is often the reverse: Populist leaders invest a substantial number of resources and amount of effort in party-building. Evo Morales is a charismatic leader, but there is no denying that his rise to the Bolivian presidency could hardly be comprehended without understanding the role played by the thick network of social movements, unions, *cocaleros* and indigenous organisations that propelled his candidacy forwards (Sivak 2009; Cyr 2012; Durand Ochoa 2014). In the case of Chavismo, the mere survival of Nicolas Maduro's dysfunctional government rests partially upon the grassroots groups it created (Velasco 2015). The party Movement for Socialism (Movimiento al Socialismo, MAS) has proven to be equally dominant in Bolivia. Very much like Rafael Correa's PAIS Alliance (Alianza País), the Bolivian MAS has evolved from a loose network of anti-systemic social movements into a multi-linkage party that combines linkages with unions, movements, clientelistic networks, state bureaucracies, and even middle-class and business organisations.

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[10] A key factor in poverty reduction were the innovative conditional cash transfer policies, such as the Bono Juancito Pinto in Bolivia, the AUH in Argentina and other forms of transfers to women in Ecuador. For evidence of the impact of state policies on poverty reduction, see the 2016 Human Development Report published by the UNDP (PNUD 2016).

For instance, if, according to Sartori's minimalistic definition, a political party is 'any political group that presents at elections, and is capable of placing through elections, candidates for public office' (1976, 64), then there is simply no question that Peronism must be thought of as a very successful political party. Peronism has competed in every national election in Argentina since 1946 (except for the eighteen years when it was legally proscribed, between 1955 and 1973). From 1983 to today, Peronist candidates have won the presidency through the electoral votes several times: in 1989, 1995, 2003, 2007 and 2011.[12] Peronism has held a majority in the Senate since 1983 and has been in the majority in the lower house of Congress in most election cycles as well. Peronists also govern most of the Argentine provinces.[13] In Ecuador, Rafael Correa's Alianza País has proven to be an electoral juggernaut as well: His new party won the 2006, 2009 and 2013 national elections, the 2014 subnational elections, the popular consultation plebiscites and the Constitutional Convention election of 2007. He managed to do all that by coordinating many of the territorial bosses connected with territorial clientelistic networks called *caciques*, the indigenous movement (at least originally) and the *forajidos* (or 'outlaws', as the groups that protested against former president Gutiérrez were called), who were unhappy with the previous government.

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[11] This is true of other regions: populist governments have proven to be resilient in Turkey (Baikan 2016), Italy and Poland.

[12] Before 1983, Peronism won the presidential elections of 1946, 1951 and 1973.

[13] Non programmatic parties can participate in free elections, command votes in an impressive manner and be, in short, both resilient and successful; however, they achieve these things in a somewhat 'premodern' manner that does not advance the collective rational discussion of important common issues and is not anchored by consistent policy preferences; populist-clientelistic parties are personalistic and have only weak ideological principles. To quote Kitschelt et al: 'Recent studies of Latin American legislatures find extremely high levels of party disci-

It is time to reject the notion that populist mobilisation is incompatible with party politics; reality shows us every day that this is not the case. As Carlos de la Torre, Kurt Weyland, and Pierre Ostiguy have shown, the appeal of populism is not only compatible with party politics; it is an ever-present tool in the toolbox of aspiring politicians. According to Weber, modern political parties function as organisations that 'provide themselves with a following through free recruitment, present themselves or their protégés as candidates for election, collect the financial means, and go out for vote-grabbing' (Weber 2009, 99). Political parties function as instruments for power and as forms of socialisation. Thus, both populist and programmatic parties can and do perform those functions in an effective manner. They seek power for their leaders, place some of their members in office and socialise their followers. They achieve these goals through different means. Populist parties build their day-to-day operations on the direct connection between their leader and their followers; the former determines the party's goals, chooses its strategic course, and prioritises relationships based on personal, direct clientelistic relations with the lower-level party officials and voters. Programmatic parties, by contrast, employ formal procedures to select candidates and set up party priorities. In our analysis, we propose differentiating between *populist parties* and *programmatic parties*. To quote a relatively straightforward definition of programmatic parties: 'A political system is programmatic when the parties within it predominantly generate policy, mobilise support, and govern, on the basis of a consistent and coherent ideological position' (IDEA 2011, 7). Programmatic parties have a structured and stable set of political positions that constitutes its political programme and through which it is publicly recognisable. They possess a certain degree of coherence and internal consensus about that shared programme and have a joint commitment to fulfilling at least some of those programmatic promises if and when the party finds itself in elected office. They pursue recruitment in such a way as to emphasise programmatic allegiance over other incentives. Populist parties are constructed around the authority and appeal of a charismatic leader, have a much weaker and fluctuating ideological programme, use clientelism and patronage to obtain votes, and can rely on a personalised mechanism for recruitment that is largely based on the leader's vertical connections. The differences between programmatic and populist parties are summarised in Table 19.1.

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pline in countries such as Argentina, Mexico and Venezuela that equal or rival those in advanced industrial democracies with parliamentary regimes, yet the attitudinal indicators explored in this volume show that these countries have only moderate levels of programmatic structure.' (Kitschelt et al. 2010, 65).

Table 19.1: Populist and Programmatic Models of Party Institutionalisation in Latin America

	Populist party institutionalization	**Programmatic party institutionalization**
Leadership	Open to charismatic outsiders	Favors insiders
Mediation	No organizational mediation between leader and followers	The organization mediates and coordinates between leader and followers
Relative autonomy of organization vis a vis the leader	No autonomy	Autonomy
Level of organizational systematicity	No systematicity Informal party organization	Systematicity and routinization of party procedures
Established recognizable repertoire of symbols and ideas	No repertoire except the exaltation of the leader	Core repertoire of symbols and narratives
Strategies for winning votes	Clientelism, patronage	Programmatic

Source: authors' elaboration.

In programmatic parties, the source of the linkages between the party and its followers is grounded in the common allegiance to the organisation and its programmes. In populist parties, however, the organisational mediation is weaker and the ideological enunciations are shallower, or they might not even exist. By comparison, populist parties are based on 'emotional appeals to symbols, group identification or the charisma of the candidate' (Kitschelt et al. 2010, 3; emphasis added) and they are usually formed as the electoral vehicle for a leader or a movement (Levitsky and Roberts 2013, 13). These are ideal typologies that very rarely exist in a pure form in reality. Political parties – even the more institutionalised ones – must combine their programmatic dimension with the element of mobilisation and vice versa.[14] However, in times of social upheaval and rapid political change, new political identities and parties are indeed created, and old ones die. Such a juncture happened in Latin America in the decade after the turn of the century, when many, if not most, of the political systems in the region underwent systemic change.

Conclusions

Whether populist or programmatic, at the end of the day almost all parties are in it to win and have similar goals: to enhance their respective share of power (in terms of votes, executive offices and/or seats in parliament). Therefore, they must adapt their organisation to the conditions presented by the environment in which the party is situated, to the preferences of the voters, to the party's organisational capacities and to history. Under the conditions of electoral democracy, populist parties will strengthen their internal organisation so as to obtain votes for their leader. Even in the context of a widespread political crisis that might even include the breakdown of the established political parties, political movements do not come to power in a vacuum and they seldom reshape the political map entirely. A populist government will have to come up with an electoral strategy to compete in elections or it will fail. One aspect that is often overlooked is that new populist parties usually end up recruiting officials and leaders from the 'old' parties, who are then presented as 'politicians without a party'. If and when a populist movement is able to institutionalise itself into a populist party, a paradoxical reversion occurs: the former anti-systemic movement becomes the *status quo* and the former 'establishment' parties and politicians morph into the new challengers.[15]

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[14] Panebianco (1990) bases his definition of party institutionalisation on the notions of the autonomy and systematicity of a party. However, autonomy and systematicity are two different dimensions which might operate in tandem or directly act against one another, depending on the context. In some cases, a lower degree of systematicity might actually increase the party's autonomy if the party operates within a largely informal party system (Freidenberg 2007). In other cases, a party can be systematically organised but operate with a low degree of autonomy, as has been the case with the Argentine far left parties.

When a populist leader is successful in establishing a new hegemony, opposition parties will reconstruct themselves and challenge the new order. Alternatively, some new party or parties will be created to fill that role. Populist parties have to perform a difficult balancing act, however, because even though they function better when they are more institutionalised, they cannot afford to completely lose their antagonistic edge. It is for this reason that populist parties have to try to retain their 'novelty' and freshness by continuing to denounce the old 'partitocracy' even though they are, in fact, 'the new old'. The relevant question must then be reframed from *how* populism *is* antithetical to parties to which factors allow a populist movement to transform itself into a populist party. This is not to say that there are no differences between programmatic and populist parties, but these two categories are not dichotomous but rather differ by degree. A populist movement can transform into a populist party and then into a programmatic one[16] or, in turn, a programmatic party can give rise to populist leadership.[17] There is, in sum, nothing essential or fixed about the nature of a party: the strategic choices made to occupy one place or another in the spectrum have to do with internal and external factors, the demands of society and the relative positions of the other parties. These theoretical contentions are explored further and applied to empirical cases in chapter 20 in this Handbook.

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[15] The category of 'anti-systemic parties' is not chosen to refer to an implicit normative judgement. On the contrary, it is based on Sartori's suggestion that 'a party is anti-systemic if it seeks to erode the legitimacy of the regime that it opposes' and if its opposition 'is not derived from petty issues but based on principle'. Thus, 'anti-systemic opposition is guided by a belief system that does not share the values of the political order within which it is acting' (Sartori 1976, 166).

[16] It can be argued that the Argentine Union Civica Radical party followed such a path.

[17] This is probably happening right now with the US Republican Party.

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CHAPTER 20:

POPULIST PARTIES OF LATIN AMERICA: THE CASES OF ARGENTINA AND ECUADOR

María Esperanza Casullo and Flavia Freidenberg

Stable Populist Parties in Latin America: Peronism in Argentina and Alianza País in Ecuador

In Chapter 19 in this Handbook titled ‘Populist and Programmatic Parties in Latin American Party Systems’, we presented the argument that populism was compatible with party-building and stable party systems in Latin America. This chapter will present empirical evidence to sustain that theoretical claim. The rest of the chapter analyses two successful examples of populist party institutionalisation: Peronism in Argentina and PAIS Alliance (Alianza País) in Ecuador. The statement about the institutionalisation of these two parties might seem counterintuitive, given the defeat of Peronism in 2015 and the fact that Rafael Correa’s successor, his vice-president Lenin Moreno, has publicly repudiated his former mentor. However, as we will show, even out of power these two populist parties are more resilient than previously thought: Peronism went on to win its way back to power in 2019; Rafael Correa continues to be the most popular opposition figure in Ecuador and the polls place him as the presumptive winner if he was allowed to compete and, unlike previous presidents, his political coalition did not vanish as soon as he left power. The efforts that these populist leaders have made at party-building, *sui generis* as they are, have paid off for them.

We have tried to balance the synchronic and diachronic dimensions in this respect; that is, we have treated Peronism and Alianza País as something more than data points that can be neatly classified into ‘programmatic’ or ‘populist’, as many scholars tend to do.[1] However, the dichotomous and synchronic distribution of cases is likely to mask two relevant phenomena. First, they might prioritise differences between the cases, thereby deemphasising or overlooking similarities. Second, they obscure diachronic transformations in the parties themselves. Programmatic parties, movement parties and populist machine parties are not immovable entities but modes of linkage-building that evolve and change over time. As Michael Coppedge suggests: ‘Most Latin American party-systems are changing, and changing often, in several dimensions at once, all on staggered timetables’ (Coppedge 1998, 550). A party that starts as more programmatically oriented can evolve into a more pragmatic, machine-like one, and vice versa – in fact, political parties more often than not fluctuate between these two poles. Moreover, as Kurt Weyland and Carlos de la Torre argue, a populist ‘style’ of leadership and domination is part of ‘normal’ politics worldwide. Neo-populist leaders such as Carlos Menem in Argentina, Álvaro Uribe in Colombia and Silvio Berlusconi in Italy have utilised a variety of populist strategies without permanently eroding the democratic system (Weyland 2001; de la Torre 2004; Freidenberg 2007).

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[1] For instance, Steven Levitsky and Kenneth Roberts created a set of four ‘boxes’. Governments can belong to ‘established party organisations’ or ‘new political movements’ on one dimension; on the other dimension, they can have a centralised or diffused locus of power (Levitsky and Roberts 2013, 13).

Any serious study of populism must be historical since there is not one form of populism but many different ‘populisms’. Political parties are not static institutions but organic entities that are born, adapt, thrive and might also wither and die. The dichotomous classification of cases must be complemented by a more cyclical, Weberian, general vision. As was discussed in our theoretical analysis of party-based populism (see Chapter 19), populist movements originally generate political energy by feeding off latent anti-party resentment: They rise *against* the established order and against established modes of representation. However, once a populist movement wins power – as they will often do, since a populist movement propelled by a charismatic leader is usually politically very effective – , it has two choices: to transition into a legal-bureaucratic regime or to devolve back into society.[2] There is an element of contingency in the institutionalisation of charisma (and of populism itself) and it is incorrect to assume there is one prescribed and uniform path in all cases. The analysis should therefore switch from a focus on a dichotomous distinction between populism and parties (and the subsequent effort to classify all the empirical cases neatly into one or the other category) to the effort to better comprehend the ‘cycle of institutionalisation’ of populist movements and the conditions under which their transformation into political parties become more or less feasible.

However, the institutionalisation of a populist movement into a party presents unique challenges. A modern political party is a stable entity, structured around a common identity, with a well-defined programme, and a set of norms and procedures of internal organisation (be they written down or simply a set of guiding principles organically developed through history). A modern political party must be autonomous from its environment, according to Panebianco (1990), and it also must have some form of systematic internal procedures. By contrast, a populist movement is a much more amorphous entity, in which a disparate set of social groups with diverse, even contradictory, claims are united, but which lacks a well-defined identity and ideology (Kitschelt et al. 2010). In a modern party, the loyalty of the partisans is – ideally at least – directed towards the ideology and history of that particular party, but the populist partisans lack such shared history and thus their emotions – their aspirations and hopes – are directed towards the personality of the leader, who symbolises them. In a populist movement, the leader is the embodiment and sole signifier of the movement’s unity. Yet to stabilise their rule, many populist leaders eventually seek to ‘routinise their charisma’ – that is, to transfer some of the almost supernatural appeal of the leader into the symbols and images of the party. Also, ‘they often seek to consolidate a mass following by introducing elements of party organization or clientelism’ (Weyland 2001, 14). According to Weyland: ‘where party organization congeals and constrains the leader’s latitude, turning him into a party functionary, or where proliferating clientelism transforms the relationship of leader and followers into a purely pragmatic exchange, political rule based on command over large numbers of followers eventually loses its populist character. Political success thus transforms populism into a different type of rule that rests on non-populist strategies. *Populist leadership therefore tends to be transitory. It either fails or, if successful, transcends itself*’ (ivi; emphasis added).

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[2] The later occurrence is the most likely outcome according to Max Weber, given the non-transferable nature of the leader’s charisma and the anti-institutional drive of the charismatic mobilisation. In fact, there have been a good number of populist movements that devolved back into society – the Russian populist movement and the American agrarian populism of late nineteenth century come to mind (Goodwyn 1978; Kitching 1989).

There are examples of strong populist movements that have successfully transitioned into programmatic political parties (for instance, Peronism in Argentina and APRA in Perú). In the case of populist parties, the collective decision-making bodies (such as conventions, party councils and such) do little more than put the leader's decision up for a plebiscite vote. The leader has ample leeway in choosing the political strategy, selecting down-ballot candidates and designating his or her representatives for party positions. The party convention or higher council will seldom challenge those decisions but will function as a legitimating performative act, without dissidence. The organisation, thus, cannot be said to be autonomous from the leader's designs. This does not equal saying that the organisation is not institutionalised – populist parties such as Peronismo have a resilient, if *sui generis*, form of institutionalisation. Populist parties have their own form of institutionality that is indeed recognised and respected by their followers: it is based on the routinisation of *informal*, charismatic and hierarchical norms, rules and repertories for action. Populist parties do undergo processes of routinisation and institutionalisation that allow them to withstand time and to acquire value as something that transcends the figure of the leader – one of Panebianco's key elements for defining party institutionalisation.

Populist parties rely on personalistic appeals, clientelism and informal networks for constructing linkages with voters. Their leaders present themselves as the embodiment of the people itself and, acting in the people's name, define the symbolic universe, demarcate the adversary, and determine friends and allies. The leader will often clash with established institutions that are seen as limiting her autonomy; however, trust in the providential wisdom of the leader can only go so far in a competitive democratic party system. Most voters, even those that put great value in the figure of the leader, are bound to ask 'what is in it for me?' sooner or later. For this reason, even populist parties tend to complement the charismatic linkage with political clientelism and patronage. The bond of friendship and affection is underpinned by a stable set of ideas based on a myth of assistance, but it must be externalised in concrete practices (Freidenberg 2003). The leader's centrality is predicated on her unique position at the very centre of the territorial and clientelistic networks; the leader is the only node that binds all the different kinds of linkages together.

Peronism: The Transformation of a Charismatic Party

Argentine Peronism is the premier example of a populist movement that was able to transition into a populist party. The Peronist movement was born in 1945 as the expression of popular devotion for one of the most charismatic leaders that Latin America has ever produced: Juan Domingo Perón. Argentina was one of the South American countries in which import-substitution development had caused the most profound social changes. Industrialisation based on domestic consumption and the production of durable goods was relatively successful during the 1930s, and the newly built textile and metallurgical factories clustered around the outskirts of the city of Buenos Aires acted as magnets for immigrants from the interior provinces. Once relocated in the metropolitan areas, the new industrial working class rapidly came into contact with the already strong networks of union and political activism.[3] Nonetheless, the new industrial workers faced seemingly insurmountable obstacles in their aspiration to achieve effective political inclusion. The workers' demands for inclusion were not new, but they had been blocked by the authoritarian regime instituted by the coup of 1930. In 1943 there was another *coup* and Perón became a prominent figure in the new government. He became popular for his work as Secretary of Labour as he passed decrees that substantially expanded labour and social rights. Perón's popularity was deemed a threat by the upper echelons of his own government. He was subsequently deposed by force and put into jail. On 17th October 1945, Buenos Aires was shocked when one million workers marched into the streets to demand Perón's release. He was freed and was elected president in February 1946.

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[3] As Juan Carlos Portantiero and Miguel Murmis have shown, those industrial workers were not 'available masses' but belonged to manifold union organisations (Portantiero and Murmis 1971).

Perón's first government has always been considered a textbook case of classical populism. While seeking to expand industrialisation through nationalisation, state investment and central planning, he shored up the internal market through various redistributive measures. In the process, he created the very foundations of the Argentine welfare state, which was the most generous in the region for decades. He strengthened the position of labour *vis-à-vis* the business elite by legalising union activism, passing pro-labour legislation and mandating tri-partite mandatory bargaining for wages (Sidicaro 2002). Politically, Perón may certainly be viewed as a classical populist leader, who was deeply suspicious of political parties as he was fond of pointing out that his Justicialist Party (Partido Justicialista, PJ) was little more than the 'electoral tool' (*herramienta electoral*) of his movement, whose real 'vertebral spine' (*columna vertebral*) was the labour movement. Perón always retained ample leeway in selecting down ballot candidates, and the party itself was loosely institutionalised. Its internal Council and Convention certainly acted as a stamp of approval for the leader's decisions (Mustapic 2002). However, the resilience of Peronism, after Perón was ousted from power by a *coup d'état* in 1955, must caution us not to dismiss even the first wave of Peronism as just a personal vehicle. The Peronist party was legally banned from 1955 to 1972, the leader of the movement placed in exile all those years, and yet Peronism as a political identity became stronger. Daniel James and Ana María Mustapic, among others, draw attention to the fact that the political institutions the Peronist regime created were the elements upon which the resilience of Peronist identity was predicated. Whereas James (1990) focuses on lower-level operatives and grassroots unions as the core agents of the party's survival, Mustapic (2002) emphasises the simultaneous loyalty and autonomy of union leaders. Provincial elites (governors, mayors) were another key element in Peronism's survival. As is typical of populist parties, 'old' leaders from local and provincial parties were incorporated into the 'new' party and some of them were able to bypass the proscription by founding 'neo Peronist' parties that went on to win office when Peronism could not do so officially (Casullo and Pasetto 2017).

In the years when the party was banned, Peronism depended on its own form of hybrid institutionality to leverage different sources of power, combining more formal organisations such as unions or local governments with a flexible and extensive informal network of grassroots militants and brokers. Levitsky has called this mixture 'organized disorganization' (2001) and Ostiguy talks about 'dirty institutionality' (2014). Eventually, these loose structures became powerful enough, however, to challenge the leader during his exile.[4] After the return to democracy in 1983, even deeper institutionalisation of the Peronist party was set in motion. After

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[4] The most salient case of a Peronist challenging Perón was the sixties union leader Augusto Timoteo Vandor, who went as far as proposing 'Peronismo sin Perón'. (He was murdered in suspicious circumstances.) Another important case was the neo-Peronist Southern governor Felipe Sapag, who in 1973 flatly refused to step down from his

Raúl Alfonsín's victory in 1983 had discredited the Peronist 'old guard' of union leaders, they were pushed aside and professional vote-seekers with governing experience such as Antonio Cafiero, Carlos Menem, Eduardo Duhalde and José Manuel De La Sota became the central players in the new game. Popular outsiders such as the car racer Carlos Reutemann and the singer Ramón 'Palito' Ortega were also welcome. Reinvigorated, Peronism was able to win the presidential elections in 1989 and 1995. It was defeated in 1999 only to transform itself once more. This time it shed its neoliberal identity and a new, more left-wing form of leadership came to power with Néstor and Cristina Kirchner. Once again, the flexible institutionalisation of Peronism allowed for the inclusion of social movements and organisations created during the crisis of neoliberalism, such as *piqueteros* (unemployed workers).

It has been argued that populist parties may have an ideology but that it does not, per se, constitute a programme since the parties are long on emotional appeals (Weyland 2001, Laclau 2005) and antagonistic in their public performance (Ostiguy 2014), but are short on clear, detailed policy proposals. However, Peronism continues to have a powerful symbolic core in the form of Juan Doming Perón and his wife, Evita, their *descamisados* (the 'shirtless', or industrial workers and peasants) and the 'martyr generation' of the 70s *desaparecidos* ('disappeared' by the Military Dictatorship), along with the idea that only Peronism can govern the turbulent Argentina. It was developmentalist and nationalist under Perón, recognisably and coherently neoliberal under Menem; it was nationalist-popular under the Kirchners. Rather than having no ideology, it can be said to have *serial ideologies*. The ideological component is important for constructing linkages with some key sectors in society, mainly youth groups typically from the urban and middle class (Natanson 2012; Vazquez and Vommaro 2012). This coexists with and complements the territorial and clientelistic linkages (Brusco, Nazareno and Stokes 2004, 83).

The flexibility of Peronism and the way in which different ideological strands coexist within it showed themselves after the Peronist candidate, Daniel Scioli, was defeated in 2015 by Mauricio Macri. The repudiation of Peronism amidst denunciations of corruption, the election of the first Argentine president that did not belong to one of the two established political parties, the electoral endorsement of a centre-right, pro-business party that promised a 'new' form of politics, and the popularity of the first-ever millionaire president (who is a member of the economic élite in a country in which politics has long been a middle-class monopoly) were read by many as signs of the 'death of Peronism'. In 2017, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner herself ran for a Senate seat in the province of Buenos Aires, long heralded as the bastion of Peronism. Many were shocked when she lost. Peronism seemed to be in disarray, with lots of internal bickering and candidates running on three different tickets. Analysts foresaw the withering away of Kirchner's brand of leftist Peronism, the division of the party into two or three irreconcilable groups, and Mauricio Macri cruising to re-election as sure things. In January 2019, Macri's strategists were convinced that his re-election was a done deal and that Cambiemos would win over half of the governorships. However, in May 2019 the old national-populist party surprised everybody once again. Cristina Fernández de Kirchner announced that she would not run for president but would cede the candidacy to Alberto Fernández (who had been Néstor Kirchner's and her Chief of Cabinet until 2008, but had since been a fierce critic

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candidacy when Perón asked him to. He went on to win the election, and the party that he founded still rules the Patagonian province of Neuquén 60 years later.

of her administration). She ran as Alberto Fernández's vice president and undertook the task of unifying the warring factions of Peronism. The supposedly irreconcilable rift between the leftist faction and those of the 'moderate' Peronists was quickly healed. In just over three months, bitter enemies morphed into allies, a unified ticket was hammered in place and Peronism came back from defeat to win the presidential election in the first round, 48 per cent to 40 per cent, and to retain a majority of the governorships, including winning back the strategic province of Buenos Aires. Once again, the old Peronist movement-party had proved its resilience and adaptability.

The Alianza País: From a Movement of 'Outlaws' to a Hegemonic Party

Rafael Correa's style of leadership was forged in direct confrontation with the political class and in the positions that his *movimiento forajido* ('outlaw movement', as those that mobilised against the previous president Lucio Gutiérrez called themselves) ended up adopting in 2005. Correa, an economist and academic had acquired a certain notoriety by being one of the leaders in the protests against the then president Gutiérrez. La Luna, a popular radio station which acted as the de facto speaker for the *forajidos* movement, gave ample airtime to Correa, and he became a vocal critic of the government. Correa was one of the first public voices to ask for Gutiérrez's dismissal. When the time came, Correa used the radio to rouse the anti-Gutiérrez sectors and call on them to protest publicly after the local governments and provincial councils had failed in their attempt to remove the president. After the ousting of Lucio Gutiérrez in 2005, Rafael Correa was a minister in Alfredo Palacio's cabinet for four months. Rallying people behind the slogan *Que se vayan todos* ('Throw the Bums Out'), Correa became a candidate and the leader of the electoral campaign against partitocracy (*partidocracia*) (Freidenberg 2015). Correa, an academic with little political experience, decided to run for president. He campaigned with an ambitious platform for a 'citizen's revolution' that sought to combine his position as a radical outsider and his closeness to Bolivarian Chavismo (Chavismo also had an ideological affinity with the social doctrine of Roman Catholicism). Correa sought to present himself as a person without a political past and a proponent of political change uncontaminated by political immobility. He even went so far as to run for president on his own, without assembling a congressional ballot. This act of defiance allowed him to position himself as somebody who was radically different from 'the same old politicians', even though his new party welcomed people from the same partitocracy that Correa was running against. His intention was to radically transform the Ecuadorian political landscape, where 'floating politicians' – politicians who did not feel compelled to fulfil campaign promises – coexisted with floating voters – electors who were unable to control them – and anything goes was the rule (Conaghan 1996).

However, Correa's calls for a 'citizen's revolution' became more tempered during the second-round election. In the campaign before the vote, Correa's discourse became ever more similar to that of his opponent, Álvaro Noboa, who ran on concrete promises such as affordable housing and jobs. Correa unveiled a housing proposal (called Bono País) and he insisted that he would reform but not abandon the use of the US dollar as the national currency, which Noboa had hinted at leaving behind. Efforts were made to 'polish up' the candidate's image: His family was included in his TV ads and they were presented on the stage, and he counter-acted Noboa's charge that he was a communist by publicly going to church and reminding people that he was a practising Catholic (Freidenberg 2015). Correa's Alianza País party was born as a loose articulation of social and political movements, traditional politicians and intellectuals. It was organised with the sole goal of propelling Correa to the presidency. Groups such as Movimiento País, Jubileo 2002, Iniciativa Ciudadana, Movimiento Bolivariano Alfarista and Acción Democrática Nacional participated in the original alliance, along with many provincial movements, human rights activists and intellectuals, as well as territorial bosses with electoral power. Thanks to the rebranding, Correa won the second round and thus became Ecuador's new president in 2006. He then had to govern in a country that had become famous for its presidential crises, reformed its constitution over twenty times in its history and had a chaotic and inefficient electoral system[5].

Once Correa was elected, the transition of Alianza País from a collection of parts into a populist machine party began. It had significant clientelistic and electoral capacity and created a clear vertical hierarchy whose cohesion rested on Rafael Correa's charismatic leadership. He had run as somebody untarnished by established party politics but, once in power, Correa began strengthening his Alianza País party – which he had created in an *ad hoc* fashion to run for office. He began threading together mobilisation networks, slowly building up the institutions of the party. Family committees were created, each of them ten members strong, in line with the model of the Bolivarian Circles of Venezuelan Chavismo. The goal was to organise 50,000 thousand committees before the next election. As he created his machine party, however, Correa did carry on with his moralistic, Manichean discourse, which emphasised the unique role of the people in the social change necessary to supersede the corrupt technocratic oligarchy (even if he usually referred to 'citizens' and not to the *el pueblo* (the people), in a break with classical forms of populism. Once at the helm of government, Correa made decisive choices like abandoning the neoliberal consensus and bringing back the state as the central actor in the development model. Social expenditure was expanded to reduce social disparities. He sought to come across as an ordinary citizen with extraordinary qualities. He surrounded himself with a mixture of left-wing technocrats and people plucked from the parties and movements of the old 'partitocracy', even though Correa was fond of railing against it. Rafael Correa presented himself as the one and only decision maker and the one and only communicator, liberally using his *sabatinas* (televised Saturday talks) to disseminate information.

Like Peronism, Rafael Correa's Alianza País party is a good example of the ways in which populist leaders strive to walk down both sides of the road. On the one hand his party has become the hegemonic power in Ecuador, and he controls the levers of the state. On the other hand, as a survival strategy Correa seeks to keep alive his antagonistic struggle with the 'partitocracy' (and the opposition) through use of the media. The members of his party, which functions as an aggregation of factions that are kept together by his charismatic leadership, actually promote antagonising the others as part of their political strategy, even as the opposition remains weak and fragmented. Even though PAÍS lost some key municipalities in the 2013 elections (like the capital, Quito), President Correa and his electoral machine still control the media agenda, the public's access to state institutions and the wider public debate. The populist current in Ecuador, which had lost its leadership, reinvented itself with different expressions and nuances, moving from Abdalá Bucaram to Álvaro Noboa then to Gutiérrez, and finally in a different manner to Correa. In 2017, the institutionalisation of Alianza País seemed to be complete when Correa's vice president, Lenin Moreno, was elected as his successor. At the time, it looked as if Correa had been one of the very few South American presidents to find a way out of the conundrum of the transference of charisma. However, Moreno quickly renounced his former mentor and abandoned most of Alianza País's policies. He embraced neoliberal pro-business policies and moved to become a closer ally to the US. He dismantled UNASUR, the South American multilateral alliance that Hugo Chávez, Lula da Silva, Evo Morales and Néstor Kirchner had devised. Not long after Moreno's swearing in, Ecuadorian judges activated anti-corruption trials against Correa and members of his party.

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[5] Between 1997 and 2005 three presidents were forced to step down by mixtures of popular protests and pressure, and bargains between members of the political elite and the military.

In 2020, Correa announced that he would run as vice-presidential candidate – probably taking a page from Cristina Fernández de Kirchner's book. Andrés Arauz, a former minister of Alianza País, was to be the presidential candidate. Correa does not have an easy path to power. He no longer 'owns' the Alianza País brand after the split with Moreno; he and Arauz have been nominated by a coalition of parties which they do not fully control. However, it must be remarked that his movement is the main opposition to President Moreno, and Correa its main voice. More crucially, members of congress and territorially elected officials continue to proclaim their loyalty to the former president even though they can pay steep political penalties for doing so – even prison. When people were expecting Correa's movement to evaporate just as soon as he was out of power and he was out of the country (as previous movements had done), it has shown to be much more resilient than expected. In fact, by looking at Argentina and Ecuador, one might state that party-building is the best investment that a populist leader can make with a view to long-term political survival.

Reconceptualising Populist Parties

There are many examples of populist movements from Latin America and elsewhere capable of transforming themselves into populist parties that could have been discussed here. However, the two cases analysed in this chapter are probably sufficient to demonstrate that the relationship between populist strategy and a populist discourse is far from being dichotomous. It thus becomes necessary to view the relation between populism and party institutionalisation not in terms of an either/or structure but in terms of degrees and levels.[6] In writing specifically about Rafael Correa's style of leadership, Carlos de la Torre stated that: 'I conceptualise populism as a Manichean discourse that presents the struggle between people and oligarchy as an ethical and moral struggle between right and wrong. But because these categories are profoundly ambiguous, it is necessary to study who is included in them as well as the level of polarisation produced by these discourses' (de la Torre 2012, 1; authors' translation). By speaking of 'levels' of polarisation, de La Torre seems to imply that while the discourse is indeed Manichean, the way it is translated into actual practices can be more or less inclusive, more or less institutionalised, and that these different choices can produce different levels of polarisation. It might be even more suitable to speak of degrees of 'populistness' as Pierre Ostiguy (2001) proposes.

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[6] 'There is absolutely nothing, following Bollen, that would prevent us from building a similar type of continuous scale for the attributes defining (operationalizing) any other type of regime. I will suggest that such type of continuous, ordinal-unidimensional scale can indeed be constructed for another type of regime, such as populism, or more accurately here, level of "populistness"'. (Ostiguy 2001, 7)

The acknowledgment of the existence of populist parties as parties that operate with their own form of 'dirty institutionality' (Ostiguy 2014) has important practical consequences for the study of politics in Latin America. For a long time, the literature on Latin American party systems has suffered from the conceptual stretching caused by trying to define political parties based on characteristics extrapolated from other contexts (mainly from Europe); another problem has been the general knowledge epistemological obstacle that has impeded particularised study of the parties of the region. Because 'political party' is a commonly used conceptual label, it is easy to think that 'everybody knows' what a party is and that common-sense general ideas can be translated into the study of empirical examples irrespective of their specific attributes. If the difference between programmatic and populist parties is indeed ordinal and not dichotomous (which is the approach maintained in this chapter), then the research agenda should be revised accordingly in future research, even if that were to create a break with the tradition. To begin with, the idea of 'populist parties' would be accepted as phenomenally valid and the theoretical categorisation of any group that competes in elections as a political party would be accepted.

Thus, the distinction between populist parties and programmatic ones boils down to a matter of strategic choices instead of a difference in nature. Both are organisations created by groups of people that seek to win elections. Populist parties deploy different strategies, resources and discourses than programmatic parties. Populist parties distribute benefits to shore up loyalty, besides leadership and discourse. Yet they are parties nonetheless. Ideology and programmatic positions are the main source of loyalty in one case, while personal leadership and discourse bring followers in in the other. Yet populist parties are not necessarily less institutionalised or have fewer solid linkages to social sectors. Populist parties routinise and institutionalise those linkages on the basis of their leader's charisma; they mobilise voters through territorial clientelistic networks, emphasise direct communication of their leader's voice through media and social networks, and rely on an antagonistic style over a deliberative one. Parties thus replicate some traditional forms of discourse even though the format is different (Welp, Freidenberg and Capra 2018). Yet, these practices are indeed compatible with forms of political institutionalisation and are able to function as the foundations of political organisations that are, at the same time, operative, lasting, resilient and able to achieve their goals. Populist parties have weak internal democracy in their decision-making processes. Their resources, members' careers and candidacies are decided in an informal, *ad hoc* manner that is based on personal networks and patronage. Public and private spaces become merged in the party's life.[7] Party funds usually come from private sources and, the internal collective decision-making institutions only assemble to rubberstamp the leader's decisions. Territorial work depends on brokers that mobilise potential voters based on their personal connections.

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[7] It is important to note that not all informally organised parties are populist and that not all informal organisations are dependent on charismatic leaders, but that populist parties usually share both characteristics (informality and charismatic leadership).

Table 20.1 Populist Parties of Latin America: The Cases of Alianza País and Peronism

	Alianza PAIS	**Peronism**
Leadership	Founded by a charismatic insider Populist *Caudillo*	Founder: charismatic outsider. Subsequent elected peronist presidents: two governors (insiders) from peripheral provinces (outsiders)
Mediation	No organizational mediation between leader and followers	Peronism has a high density of mediation organizations that rank from the formal to the informal (unions, 'corrientes internas' (internal suborganizations), governors and mayors, youth groups, social movements, brokers)
Relative autonomy of organization vis a vis the leader	No autonomy. Verticalism. All decisions are made by the leader and a small cadre of advisers	'Serial verticalism': full acceptance of each president's authority only while he or she is in power.
Level of organizational systematicity	No systematicity. The party is still young and it is completely dependent of the charismatic leader informal organization.	Low systematicity. There are actors within the organization that can constrain the leader (union leaders, governors, senators), but the negotiation are mostly conducted through informal and direct means.
Established recognizable repertoire of symbols and ideas	No repertoire except the exaltation of the leader. The 'other' is constructed as antagonistic to the Citizen's Revolution.	There is a core repertoire of symbols and narratives and a strong dispute about its meaning
Strategies for winning votes	Clientelism, patronage. citizen's circles ('círculos ciudadanos')	Multiple linkages: some programmatic appeals (more to middle classes) depending on the leader's preferences (neoliberal, nacional-popular), clientelism and patronage

Source: authors' elaboration.

Populist parties are non-programmatic, but they are still parties. They structure collective identities, mobilise votes and recruit party officials. They coexist with other parties, participate in elections and, in more general terms, behave in somewhat acceptable democratic terms.

They can be resilient and successful, both as electoral machines and at sustaining their leader's position in government to the end of his or her constitutional term in office. Populist parties can, of course, also fail in both tasks. But then again, almost any kind of party seems to be able fail in Latin America today. There seems to be an intimate relationship between the transformation from a populist movement to a populist party and the capacity and responsibilities of actual government. Populist parties, like all parties that govern, are forced to evolve, as they must react to the experiences and challenges of holding on to power. In the complex and challenging environment of Latin American politics, almost all parties must be able and willing to build electoral success and governmental resilience by creating, nurturing and mobilising multiple kinds of linkages: charismatic, clientelistic, territorial and programmatic. The ability to mix and match charismatic, clientelistic, programmatic and territorial linkages performs two critical functions: to diversify the coalition of support for the government and to expand the regional and territorial reach of the party. These are no small tasks for populist parties in a region whose civil and political societies are fragmented, heterogeneous, mobilised and demanding. In Ecuador, Rafael Correa was able to blend disparate elements into a recognisable whole, like a series of classically leftist ideas, statist policies and a strongly anti-political discourse. This mishmash operated as an ideological umbrella for a personalistic party structure that has won elections repeatedly from 2005 to today. With it, he was able to transform a polarised multiparty system into a hegemonic one.

Conclusion

As a well-known journalist from Ecuador once said, 'in this country without parties, that has never had them and never will, history has been made by parties' (Freidenberg 2003). This idea also applies to Argentina, a country whose political history for the last century was written by two populist movement parties, the UCR first and later Peronism. It turns out that parties were where things happened, but analysts refused to see them. Those who claimed that there could not be parties because the country was awash with populist practices could not see that there actually were populist parties, which admittedly were clearly different from programmatic parties, but they were parties nonetheless. The claim that populism could not be party-based impeded empirical research on the internal functioning of these parties. The belief that populist leaders do not want to or cannot create parties was at the root of the relative absence of research on the institutional organisations of the parties of post-transition Latin America. Only at the end the 1990s and at the beginning of the 2000s is it possible to identify (Coppedge 1997, Alcántara Sáez and Freidenberg 2001, Levitsky 2003, Freidenberg 2003) a greater interest in undertaking actual research on the functions that party organisations actually perform (Heinisch and Mazzoleni in this volume). These researchers focus on the informal connections, the unwritten rules, the practices that condition the inner workings of a party and that, even though they might not be written down in the by-laws and regulations, are effective in the regulation of the central activities of the organisation and must be considered a crucial part of it (Casullo 2015). The acknowledgment of the existence of populist parties, which are organised as 'informal party organisations', allowed the broadening of the research scope to encompass the actual functioning of the parties (Freidenberg and Levitsky 2007). Many non-programmatic parties are able to survive, even thrive, in a competitive environment by combining a formal apparatus of programme, rules and regulations with an informal practice that responds to an underground logic, which is in turn connected to a specific political culture. This fundamental logic might be different from the explicit legal rules and programmatic positions, yet it is operative and has the ability to shape and coordinate collective action. The only plausible conclusion is that it is possible to have a consolidated party system that is, however, based on informally institutionalised parties (Freidenberg 2003; Freidenberg and Levitsky 2007; Casullo 2015).

As for the wider issue of the relation between populism and democracy, there is no question that their relationship is contradictory and even tortuous. The broader conclusion will depend on which cases are chosen, and how they are evaluated. Some argue that populism itself is an attack against democracy while others argue that populist leadership has proven to be instrumental in bringing about change, including marginalised populations by broadening their access to rights. There are relevant popular actors, intellectuals and new elite groups that perceive that the populist way of engaging in politics has allowed for the incorporation of common people into institutions from which they were previously excluded (Aboy Carlés 2001; Panizza 2001; Casullo 2013). Some go as far as stating that populism is a constitutive dimension of democracy (Worsley 1970; Casullo 2014) and that populist leadership might actually expand democracy. However, even though populist leadership might push for the expansion of polyarchic structures and practices, populist leaders might also choose to pursue a direction whose final outcome is a regime that limits the rights of citizens and that excludes those who do not agree with the government. In this type of regime, populism arguably has a negative effect on democratic institutionality and inclusion, because the party and even the broader institutions will become subordinate to the whims of the leader (Zanatta 2008; Weyland 2013; Zanatta 2014).

There are no simple answers or predetermined trajectories. There is not one form of 'populism' but many different 'populisms'. Likewise, it is always necessary to remember that populist leaders are never alone. They come to power propelled by the votes of their followers, who have chosen to invest their loyalty in a bond with the leader and who are consumed by distrust towards traditional parties and representative institutions. These voters simply do not believe that traditional parties are capable of addressing their daily concerns and needs. As there are many underlying reasons, a more nuanced analysis of the ways in which leaders are able to bring about political change and how this affects voters' lives would be one of the most important tasks of further scholarship. Finding the reasons why citizens willingly submit to a personalistic project is one key to understanding Latin American politics today.

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CHAPTER 21:
POPULISM AND DEMOCRATIC REPRESENTATION IN LATIN AMERICA

Saskia P. Ruth and Kirk A. Hawkins

Introduction

> *'The concept of representation […] is a continuing tension between ideal and achievement. This tension should lead us neither to abandon the ideal, retreating to an operational definition that accepts whatever those usually designated as representatives do; not to abandon its institutionalization and withdraw from political reality.' (Pitkin 1967, 240)*

What is the relationship between populism and what political scientists refer to as democratic representation? At first glance, the question seems redundant since the study of populism and democracy already has a rich tradition. For over two decades, political scientists have studied the mixed effects of populism on democracy, as well as the origins of populism in the principle of popular sovereignty (Urbinati 1998; Canovan 1999; Mair 2002; Mény and Surel 2002; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2012a). However, most of this literature considers only the relationship between populism and *liberal democracy*, the latter defined in procedural terms as contestation, participation and a set of supporting institutions designed to uphold individual liberties and minority rights. The study of democratic representation gets at something broader, although there are clear points of intersection with the institutions of liberal democracy. If we take as our starting point Dahl's definition of democracy as 'the quality of being completely or almost completely responsive to its citizens' (Dahl 1971, 2), then democratic representation refers to the relationship between the inputs and outputs of democratic institutions, liberal or otherwise, and whether or not they embody this responsiveness. Although this responsiveness can mean several things, which we outline below, most scholars see it as a core characteristic of modern democracies (Manin et al. 1999b). Democracy, in Hannah Pitkin's words, 're-presents' citizens and their aspirations (1967). In saying this, we accept the fundamental distinction enshrined by Dahl and others between democratic procedure and policy outcomes, and we sympathise with the claim that liberal procedures are most likely to achieve congruence between policy outcomes and popular inputs (Schumpeter 1950; Collier and Levitsky 1997). But democratic representation and liberal institutions are not the same, and liberalism's claim to superior representation must be defended.

One of the challengers to liberalism's claim is populism. Populist parties and movements assert that political elites have failed in their duty to represent the people and that they have done so systematically, protected by liberal institutions. Populists do not so much claim that liberal institutions are inherently bad – who is against freedom? – as they argue that they are insufficient in the task of representation. Only by removing elites and transforming institutions to ensure broad representation can freedoms be fully enjoyed. Thus, populism claims to remedy the lack of correspondence between government outputs and citizens' preferences. In this chapter, we assess the scholarly literature on populism and democratic representation and develop a clearer theory on their relationship, based on the ideational approach to populism. This theory draws on the work of others, especially Pitkin (1967) and her framework of representation. We argue that populism's impact on democratic representation is more ambiguous than some of the literature suggests and than populists themselves claim. Populist ideas do remedy some of liberalism's representational failures; where these failures are greatest, populism is most likely to be electorally successful and have its maximum impact. But populist ideas in practice also have strong tendencies towards exclusion that make any project on building democratic representation difficult. The impact of these ideas depends much less on the ideological flavour of populism (left or right), as some of the literature on populism asserts, than it does on the size of populist coalitions and the strength of their opponents. We study the relationship between populism and representation with a specific focus on Latin America. We do so for two reasons. First, the region has been prominent in the scholarly literature on populism and informs much of our thinking on the association between populism and representation; it seems fitting to start here. But second and more importantly, left-wing populists in the region are thought to be important examples of democratic inclusiveness, and thus provide the 'most likely' cases for testing our argument. Our descriptive analysis shows that left-wing populists do not always achieve their lofty goals, and that they are more capable of providing some types of representation than others. At the end of the chapter, we suggest some ways forward as scholars apply these insights from Latin America to Europe and elsewhere.

The Poorly Studied Relationship between Populism and Democratic Representation

What is democratic representation? In this chapter, we draw from the classic framework laid out by Pitkin (1967) in *The Concept of Representation*. Pitkin sees representation as a possible function of any government, but a crucial one for democracy. This function can be conceptualised in four different ways. The first refers to a merely formalistic view on representation, which alludes to procedural definitions of democracy, seeing elections as instruments that enable citizens to authorise elected officials and hold them accountable for their actions (see also Manin et al. 1999a; Powell 2000). The other three views on representation, on the other hand, focus on the content of the representative link between citizens and their representatives: descriptive, symbolic and substantive representation. Pitkin argues that, from a descriptive view of representation, the link between a citizen and its representative is based on resemblance (see also Mansbridge 1999); for instance, 'it depends on the representative's characteristics, on what he *is* or is *like*, on being something rather than doing something' (Pitkin 1967, 61, italics original). Relatedly, symbolic representation is also referred to as an act of *standing for* something; however, in this view the representative does not have to be a person or resemble who or what is represented (as in the type of descriptive representation). Instead, those represented may be a group or a whole nation who are represented via a symbol, for example a political leader or a flag (ibid., 92ff). The idea is that the group is dignified or recognised in a normatively positive way as helping to constitute the democratic sovereign. Finally, substantive representation is defined as 'the nature of the activity itself, what goes on during representing, the substance or content of acting for others, as distinct from its external and formal trappings' (ibid., 114). While the former two views on representation centre on representing through mirroring either the different parts of society based on identity or class markers or through symbolising society as a whole, the latter centres on representation as acting in the interest of citizens (see also Saward 2008). This latter view lies at the heart of most theories on democracy, although it is envisioned institutionally in many different ways (Riker and Ordeshook 1968; Dahl 1971; Schmitter and Karl 1991; Manin et al. 1999b). Underlying this is the broader claim that democracy can be conceived of in part as an institutionalised attempt at representation. We return to these views below when we flesh out our theory on populism and representation.

What is populism? In line with what we and others call an ideational approach (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2017; Hawkins and Rovira Kaltwasser 2019), or what is elsewhere referred to in this volume as a frame based on ambivalent claims, we define populism as *a political discourse that posits a struggle between a unified will of the common people and a conspiring elite*. Whether referring to populism as a discourse, discursive frame or thin-centred ideology, all scholars using this approach see populist ideas as the main driving force behind the (un)democratic behaviour of populist leaders and followers, providing the motivating force for their policy choices (Rooduijn 2014; Heinisch and Mazzoleni in this volume). But whether expressed in these minimal terms or in the other ways mentioned in this Handbook, nearly all definitions see populist discourse as a crucial component of the parties and movements that we think of as populist. And the important point is that these political actors ultimately make an argument not for any particular set of institutions but for the ideal of democratic representation (see also Caramani 2017). For populist actors, citizens are the rightful sovereign, and the government should reflect their interests and identities. As such, the rise of populism is closely related to a perceived 'crisis of representation' (Mair 2002; Taggart 2002; Kriesi 2014), for instance, the claim that governments have ceased to be representative: citizens' interests are consistently harmed (substantive representation), and their views and voices are suppressed, fragmented and delegitimated (descriptive and symbolic representation). This lack of representation is the result of selfish machinations by the very elite that was supposed to represent the people; hence, a drastic response is required; one that can restore a rightful representative government. Liberal institutions, such as nominally competitive elections, are still important for registering the voice of the people (formal representation), but they may be temporarily compromised as the people struggle against the domination of powerful elites who have manipulated these rules. Ultimately, the function of democratic government is to represent the people, and liberal institutions (or any other set of policies – note this, economists!) are means to this end.

Over the past two centuries, actual populist parties and movements have won elective office in many countries, both as principled opposition parties as well as to the highest government positions. Naturally, the question is whether these populists are effective at improving representation and, furthermore, whether we should have expected them to be so. One answer to these questions comes from Latin Americanists, who have historically taken a positive view of populism and representation. If we ignore the voice of some early naysayers who saw populism as a sham that ultimately failed to deliver on its promises (Di Tella 1965; Ianni 1975;

Germani 1978; Weffort 1978; Dornbusch and Edwards 1991), we find a number of scholars who see populist forces in a positive light precisely because those forces increased not just formal representation (especially through extension of the franchise and the legalisation of civil society organisations created by middle and lower sectors) but descriptive, symbolic and ultimately substantive representation. According to this view, populist forces have brought excluded racial, socio-economic and gender-based groups into elected positions, while redistributing important state benefits; all while rhetorically dignifying popular voices and acknowledging them as part of 'the people'. The products of these governments – in the early twentieth century, *radicalism;* in the mid-twentieth century, Peronismo, Varguismo and Velasquismo*;* and in recent decades, Chavismo and its Bolivarian allies – have supposedly brought profound changes that reduced inequality and heralded critical junctures in these countries' democratic institutional histories (Drake 1978; Stein 1980; Collier and Collier 1991; Chalmers et al. 1997; Laclau 2006). However, many of these studies on Latin America have not focused primarily on populism, and those that do often use older, structuralist definitions of populism, which make it hard to pinpoint whether it was populism that brought about these changes or some traditional ideological component of a leader's programmatic vision. Furthermore, most of these studies have selected on the dependent variable, identifying and analysing cases of populism that brought about successful change, while ignoring other populist movements that failed in these attempts, or non-populist movements that brought about the same improvements through pluralist means.

In contrast, many contemporary European scholars use ideational or political-institutional definitions that, at least in theory, would allow them to analyse these connections. Most of their work studies the relationship of populism to democracy's liberal elements, especially contestation and occasionally participation. As Huber and Schimpf outline (in this volume), this literature either sees populism as an entirely negative force (Urbinati 1998; Abts and Rummens 2007) or as both a threat to and a corrective for liberal democracy (Arditi 2004; Panizza 2005; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2012a). On the one hand, populism's presumption of a unified popular will closes off the space required for opposition, and its faith in popular know-how, together with the assumption of charismatic leadership, encourages the elimination of independent government institutions; thus, contestation declines (Panizza 2005; Albertazzi and McDonnell 2008; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2012a; Huber and Schimpf 2015; Allred et al. 2015; Houle and Kenny 2018). On the other hand, populism can have a beneficial effect on democratic participation, insofar as it incorporates the views of previously ignored segments of the electorate or mobilises their vote. Furthermore, the negative impact of populism on contestation is not always a given; it is more likely when populists are in government and have the ability to capture and control institutions, while populist challengers may force incumbent traditional parties to become more attentive without having a direct, negative impact on the political system (Heinisch 2003; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2012a; Otjes 2012; Ruth and Welp 2014; Allred et al. 2015; Ruth 2018). Although these more recent arguments have obvious implications for democratic representation, the scholars who make them avoid framing their claims in these terms. Instead, they focus on the procedural elements of liberal definitions, or what Mény and Surel (2002) call the 'constitutional' pillar of liberal democracy. The focus on liberal democracy is valuable, and we contribute to this conversation in some of our own work elsewhere (Allred et al. 2015; Ruth 2018). But it struggles to address questions about democratic representation, because liberal arguments frequently leave untested the assumption that liberal institutions achieve the goal of connecting popular inputs with outputs or outcomes.

One exception to this trend is the work of Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser (2013).[1] Although their book (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2012b) conceives of this impact in liberal terms, in a later article they reconceive of this impact more broadly in terms of democratic *inclusion* and *exclusion*. Their focus on material, political and symbolic inclusion (or exclusion) roughly parallels Pitkin's notions of substantive, descriptive and symbolic representation. Specifically, an inclusive regime represents the material interests of citizens (substantive representation), accords them political participation in a way that ensures they have a real voice in how government is constituted (formal representation and descriptive representation), and dignifies them symbolically by making clear that they are part of 'the people' (symbolic representation). Through a rough comparison of four countries, Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser (2013) show that populist regimes in Latin America (Hugo Chávez's Bolivarian movement in Venezuela and Evo Morales' MAS in Bolivia) are much more inclusive than populists in Europe (the Rassemblement National, previously Front National, in France and the Freedom Party in Austria). This behaviour reflects the ideology of these actors (left versus right), which in turn derives from the different situations of these countries in terms of class stratification and the relative sizes of the lower strata. Although Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser's work is a clear step forwards in the study of populism and representation, they do not engage Pitkin's framework directly. In particular, they stop short of providing an explanation for populism's effects in each of these three areas of inclusiveness. Furthermore, they consider a small number of cases and compare only cases of populism to each other and not against non-populist governments in these regions. Consequently, they struggle to explain whether left-wing populism is the decisive factor in explaining the impact of these actors on representation.

A Theory of Populism and Democratic Representation

Our argument is that populist ideas *per se* matter for representation. Although these ideas interact with other features of the political environment, the ideas themselves have significant, traceable effects that are at least partially independent of populists' left-wing or right-wing ideologies. Hence, to explain the impact of populism on democratic representation, we build on the *ideational* approach defined earlier. This approach does not discard the impact of material constraints but sees those constraints as moderators of populist ideas (Hawkins and Rovira Kaltwasser 2014). And while it does not claim that politicians always use the discourse sincerely, it assumes that the support of voters generally forces politicians who do use the discourse to act as if they were sincere. Using the ideational approach, we start, more or less as other scholars have, with an appreciation of the likely *positive* effects of populism on representation. Populism is essentially based on an argument that traditional political actors are undermining democratic representation and that populist actors are making some effort to rectify this gap in the link between representatives and citizens. We can identify two aspects of populist ideas and their connection to the material environment that – irrespective of the region or host ideology – should influence populism's relationship to representation. The first is that – as the literature on populism and liberal democracy already argues – populism is never an entirely benign force. While the literature on populism and liberalism frequently emphasises the impact of charismatic leadership and populist ideas on horizontal accountability and the quality of electoral contestation, here we draw attention to its impact on civil liberties and minority rights. Populism may champion unrepresented sectors of citizens, but it also vilifies what it perceives as the elite and their cronies. Once in power, populists promise to systematically exclude them, to 'unrepresent' them in all four ways: formally (by circumventing legal rights, especially the vote or the right to form political associations and run for office), descriptively (by removing them and 'their kind' from office), symbolically (through rhetoric that dehumanises them) and substantively (by imposing conditionality on government benefits or rewriting policy to systematically disadvantage former insiders). Thus, populism is good for democratic representation of 'the people' but bad for that of 'the elite'.

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[1] See also Caramani (2017) for a theoretical demarcation between populism, technocracy and party government.

This leads to a second aspect of populism's impact on democratic representation: size. Actual populist movements rarely represent a majority, and they certainly do not represent all of the citizenry. It matters how large 'the people' and 'the elite' are. Smaller, niche populist parties such as radical right-wing populists in Western Europe are more likely to alienate large segments of the citizenry, while larger majoritarian movements that win office with supermajorities, such as those in Latin America or Southern Europe, may in fact improve representation for much of the population. Thus, the benefits of populism for democratic representation should be greater (but still incomplete) where populists win complete control of government through free and fair elections, because it is in these countries where their constituency is larger and the representational gap greatest. Although this provides our background argument, we also expect populism to have distinct, specific consequences for different types of representation. Starting with *formal representation*, or the way in which institutional arrangements provide authorisation and accountability, we expect populism to be somewhat negative – but not entirely. As some critics have argued, populism has a difficult relationship with formal representative institutions, seeing elections as imperfect means of knowing the popular will, and discounting the importance of institutions that enshrine minority rights or enforce the separation of powers (see, for example, Caramani 2017). Relatedly, Taggart points out that populists 'challenge the functioning of representative democracy […] while at the same time championing the virtues of representation' (2004, 269). However, we disagree with arguments which claim populism leads inexorably to fully autocratic or even totalitarian regimes that eschew competitive elections in favour of purely plebiscitary, symbolic experiences (Urbinati 1998; Abts and Rummens 2007). Populist actors mainly argue against horizontal accountability mechanisms – which are a core principle of liberal constitutionalism – and in favour of expanding vertical accountability mechanisms, especially majoritarian ones (Taggart 2004; Ruth and Welp 2014; Ruth 2018). They value the seal of popular approval that only a formally open, competitive election can provide, and they frequently champion direct participatory mechanisms such as recall, initiative and referenda – including those that can be initiated by citizens (Ruth and Welp 2014). Thus, we see ambivalence among populists towards formal democratic institutions. The quality of electoral competition may decline (as defenders of the liberal perspective have empirically demonstrated), but committed populists should support regular elections in which there is still some possibility of the populist incumbent losing, and they are likely to champion instruments of direct democracy. The result is hybrid democracy rather than outright autocracy or totalitarianism (Levitsky and Loxton 2013; Allred et al. 2015).

In terms of *descriptive* and *symbolic representation* – the ways in which representatives 'stand for' the represented either as a person that resembles them or as a signifier – we expect populists to do unambiguously well. This is not because populism is really all that inclusive (again, even highly popular populists vilify a sizeable subset of the population) but a matter of demographics. Most of the traditional political class comes from an intellectual and economic elite that embodies a small segment of society. There are few secretaries or plumbers who win public office, and when race or identity-based categories overlap with economic ones, whole segments of the population may go unseen in government. The populist emphasis on the virtues of ordinary citizens and their know-how, together with its tendency to exclude the most privileged sectors, means that a populist movement in power may bring a more diverse cross-section of the population into office and celebrate their democratic virtues in its rhetoric (see also Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2013; Caramani 2017). This is not to say that the size of a coalition is unimportant. Populist niche parties will naturally draw on a smaller cross-section of the population than a majoritarian populist party, and their definition of 'the people' will shrink accordingly. But trading a few Ivy League lawyers for members of the middle class, even if they are white and male, may represent a dramatic improvement for a population craving leaders that look more like them.

Finally, we expect populist parties and movements to have very mixed consequences for *substantive representation* – the actions taken by representatives in the interest of the represented. On the one hand, populist parties and movements raise high expectations about the performance of democratic systems, since populist actors usually campaign for complex and extensive policy change (see Ruth 2018). In line with the inclusive way of defining 'the people' in Latin America, this should lead to increased welfare spending on the poor, while the same logic applies to welfare chauvinism by the rather exclusivist populist parties in Europe (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2013; 2015). However, the success of these programmes depends not only on the reallocation of public resources but on the efficient and impartial implementation of these funds, for instance their distributive impact. Governing populist parties in Latin America often behave like clientelistic systems of representation, distributing goods and services conditionally, based on partisan rather than universalistic criteria (Kitschelt et al. 2010; Ruth 2012). The result can be negative for groups that oppose the government in elections, at least some of which are not from the wealthiest sectors. While we expect majoritarian populist coalitions like those in Latin America to be better than niche parties at redistributing wealth or changing the policy agenda to address broadly felt needs, the conditional, partisan logic of their policymaking makes them unlikely to fully offer public goods, and any gains in equality may be offset by other policy failures in the longer term.

Empirical Analysis: Patterns of Populism and Representation in Latin America

To subject these arguments to a first empirical test, we now turn to the descriptive analysis of contemporary representative governments (both populist and non-populist) in contemporary Latin America (1999-2019). We focus on Latin America not only because this is traditionally one of the most widely studied regions in terms of populism, but because it offers a number of contemporary populists in power, almost all of which are leftist. These are majoritarian movements that represent ‘easy’ cases for competing arguments that see these as inclusive. In contrast, our expectation is that the impact of these mostly leftist populists will be much more varied. Our analysis examines bivariate correlations of populism and our indicators of representation, although we check the robustness of these correlations against outliers in the data. We also ran simple OLS regressions with starting (t_0) values included as a control, but in every instance these failed to alter the basic correlations.[2]

To measure the degree of populism, we rely on the Global Populism Database, a unique polity-level data set that captures the populist discourse of chief executives (see Hawkins et al. 2019). This data set covers 66 Latin American leaders in 18 countries primarily from 1998 until 2019.[3] Thus, it captures much of the current variation of populist and non-populist regimes in Latin America. The indicator measures populist discourse through human-coded content analysis of political speeches, using the ideational definition mentioned above as its point of comparison. The score for each leader is an average of four speeches using a quota sample to ensure comparability across chief executives; sampling techniques and the coding procedure (including the rubric and anchor texts) can be found in Hawkins et al. (2019). The interval scale runs from 0 (no populism) to 2 (intense populism). By way of note, intercoder reliability for the codes is high,[4] as are correlations with other data from scholarly literature (Hawkins and Castanho Silva 2015). The measurement of populist discourse has a mean of 0.32 and a standard deviation of 0.41 in our sample.

To measure the different types of political representation discussed above, we build on several other sources. To capture formal and descriptive representation, we use expert-coded data from the Varieties of Democracy project (V-Dem, Coppedge et al. 2020). This project provides panel data (countries and years) capturing different principles and functions of democracy, including several aspects of representation, and is available for all 18 of our countries. Hence, it covers all the chief executives included in our populist discourse data set. More specifically, we use the following indicators from the data set, which most closely resemble the democratic aspects theorised above: First, we measure *formal representation* through two aggregated indices of the structural opportunities for the direct inclusion of citizen preferences into the political process (the Direct Popular Vote Index, v2xdd_dd, and a composite indicator of the legal provision of Initiatives, v2ddlexci, Referendums, v2ddlexrf, Obligatory Referendums, v2ddlexor, and Plebiscites, v2ddlexpl), capturing both the use and legal provisions of direct democratic mechanisms in each country (see Altman 2017). To capture the formal, but indirect inclusion of citizens’ preferences, we complement the V-Dem data with an average district magnitude measurement (i.e. the total number of seats allocated in national lower house elections divided by the total number of districts) from the Democratic Electoral Systems Around the World database (Bormann and Golder 2013). Second, we measure *descriptive representation* through four composite indicators of exclusion, defined as the denial of ‘access to services or participation in governed spaces based on … identity or belonging to a particular group’ (Coppedge et al. 2020, 197). We focus on the exclusion of economic groups (based on wealth, occupation or property, v2xpe_exlecon), gender (v2xpe_exlgender), social groups (based on ethnicity, language, race, region, religion, or migration status, v2xpe_exlsocgr) and political groups (based on party affiliation, v2xpe_exlpol).[5]

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[2] Results are available on request from the authors.

[3] The analysis includes Carlos Menem, president of Argentina from 1989-1998, but all other presidents are from 1998 on.

[4] The 2011 Latin American update has at least 89 per cent agreement, a Cohen’s kappa of between 0.66 and 0.72, and a Krippendorff’s alpha of 0.75 to 0.82, depending on the coders (Hawkins 2012). All of these are moderate to high levels of reliability (Landis and Koch 1977; Krippendorff 2013, 241–242).

To capture *substantive representation*, we analyse the change in political output and outcome measurements with respect to political issues that rank highest among the policy priorities of Latin American citizens. According to the AmericasBarometer regional report from 2004 until 2014, three issues have constantly figured among the top policy priorities of Latin American citizens: the role of the state in tackling economic problems (including unemployment, poverty and shortages of basic services), the prevention of crime and violence, and the problem of political and economic corruption (Zechmeister 2014). To capture government performance in these areas, we use the Gini index of inequality in equalised (square root scale) household market – pre-tax, pre-transfer – income from the Standardized World Income Inequality Database (SWIID, Solt 2019), the infant mortality rate (per 1000 live births) and the rate of intentional homicides (per 100,000 people) from the World Development Indicators database (The World Bank 2016)[6], and the control of corruption from the Worldwide Governance Indicators project (Kaufmann and Kraay 2016). For all of these indicators, we calculate the change over time for each chief executive's first term (as well as completed consecutive terms, if applicable). We use the year before an incumbent assumed office and their last year in office as reference points[7]. Note that, to the best of our knowledge, we are not aware of any data set that captures the degree of *symbolic representation*. We suspect that the populist discourse data set we use captures at least some aspects of symbolic representation. Many of these political leaders become symbols of the popular will themselves, and their rhetoric typically identifies previously excluded groups as part of that will (Hawkins 2009). However, describing this rhetorical effort and measuring its impact requires a more systematic textual analysis than we can provide here.

Formal Representation

Figure 21.1 shows the bivariate correlations for the degree of populism and three indicators capturing vertical accountability mechanisms: the proportionality of electoral institutions (left panel) and the legal provision and use of direct democratic institutions (middle and right panel). While we initially find a weak positive correlation between populism and these three measures of formal representation, the direction and significance of each correlation is highly dependent on outliers. Ultimately, the relationship persists for only one indicator: the use of direct democracy provisions. We see this as generally supportive of the ideational argument, which predicts mixed or negative effects except for direct democracy.

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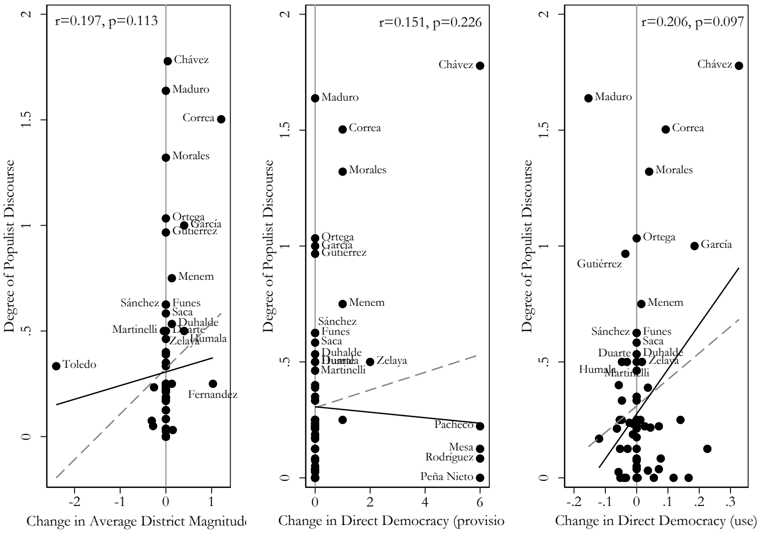
[5] For a detailed description of the indicators included and their construction, see (Coppedge et al. 2020).

[6] Note that data on homicides was not available for the whole period under study, which results in missing data for the following five cases: all Argentinean presidents, Sánches de Lozada and Mesa in Bolivia, Lagos in Chile, as well as Toledo, García and Humala in Peru.

[7] In case an incumbent assumed office after 30th June, we use the same year as the reference point. Likewise, we use the previous year as a reference point if an incumbent left office before 1st July.

Figure 21.1: The Impact of Populism on Formal Representation



Source: Change in the Average District Magnitude (Bormann and Golder 2013). Change in Direct Democracy (provision) as well as Direct Democracy (use) (Coppedge et al. 2020). See Table 21.1 in the appendix for more information on the individual cases. Note that dashed correlation lines are based on all cases, while the solid line in the left panel excludes the case of Correa, the solid line in the middle panel excludes the case of Chávez, and the solid line in the right panel excludes the case of Maduro.

To begin with, the overall correlation between populist discourse and change in average district magnitude falls short of conventional significance levels. The one populist case that stands out is that of Rafael Correa in Ecuador, who oversees a considerable increase in proportionality. The Ecuadorian electoral system reform introduced through the new constitution in 2009 increased both the number of seats in the legislature and introduced the election of some legislators in a nationwide district through proportional representation (Bowen 2010). Paradoxically this increase in the proportionality of the electoral system led to the continued majority control of the president's party (Alianza País) in the unicameral congress, a situation unprecedented in the highly fragmented and polarised Ecuadorian party system before 2009 (Mejía Acosta 2006; Mejía Acosta and Polga-Hecimovich 2011). While other countries in the region experienced electoral reforms as well, these did not lead to a considerable increase in the proportionality of electoral rules. Moreover, many reforms rather strengthened majoritarian vertical electoral accountability through the abolition of presidential re-election bans, a trend that took place under both populist and non-populist rule and was related to the popularity of presidents rather than their populist discourse (Corrales 2016).

The middle and right panels in Figure 21.1 highlight the relationship between populist discourse and the change in both the legal provision as well as the use of direct democratic mechanisms. A vibrant set of literature indicates the affinity of populist ideas for mechanisms of direct citizen participation (see Canovan 1999; Mény and Surel 2000; Bowler et al. 2007). As can be seen in Figure 21.1 (middle panel), with respect to the provision of direct democratic mechanisms, the correlation (dashed line) is highly dependent on the case of Hugo Chávez in

Venezuela, who introduced several direct democratic mechanisms through the writing of a new constitution in 2000, shortly after his rise to power. If we exclude this influential observation, the relationship changes sign and becomes insignificant (r=-0.058, p=0.638). This highlights the importance of being cautious with respect to generalisations based on only a few cases and the need to compare populists to non-populist cases as well. For example, we find that several non-populist presidents also increased the legal provision of direct democratic mechanisms in their countries, e.g. Carlos Mesa in Bolivia (Altman 2011). However, the legal provision of direct democratic mechanisms does not necessarily mean that these instruments are actively used later on. Therefore, we have to turn towards the right panel in Figure 21.1, which shows the change in the use of direct democratic mechanisms throughout a presidential term. Here we find a more robust relationship. The overall correlation (dashed line) between populist discourse and the change in the use of direct democratic mechanisms just passes conventional significance levels (r=0.201, p=0.098). Moreover, if we account for the outlier case of Nicolás Maduro in Venezuela, who has backtracked on the mechanisms of direct democracy established by his predecessor, this correlation becomes stronger and highly significant (r=0.332, p=0.006). Note that these associations hold even if we control for the level of use of direct democratic mechanisms before each presidential term as well as the left-right ideologies of presidents.[8]

Thus, the impact of left-wing populism on formal democratic representation is at best mixed. Populists in the region do seem more likely to use tools of direct democracy, but they are no more likely to create those tools than non-populists, and with exception of Correa in Ecuador, they have largely avoided changes in electoral rules that normally enhance representation. The case of Venezuela highlights this mixed effect. While Chávez was an extreme advocate of direct democracy provisions, primarily through the constitution created in 1999, his successor Maduro is equally noteworthy for backtracking on these provisions, in particular by using dubious legal means to prevent the opposition from holding a presidential recall election in 2016 (see Sullivan 2017). Indeed, Maduro's government has undone most formal democratic procedures. None of this proves that populists in the past have not been responsible for important changes to fundamental aspects of formal representation, such as the extension of the franchise, and we cannot rule out other contemporary increases in formal representation that can be captured through minute country studies. But contemporary left-wing populists in Latin America appear to have a limited impact on this aspect of representation.

Descriptive Representation

In this section, we focus on changes in the degree of exclusive access to public services and governed spaces based on four different descriptive group markers, i.e. economic, gender, social and political (see Sigman and Lindberg 2018; Coppedge et al. 2020). These measures closely mirror the material and symbolic dimension of exclusion/inclusion discussed in Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser's (2013) seminal article on exclusionary vs. inclusionary populism.[9] Overall, our findings here do not support our theory *or* that of Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser – the distinct impact of populists on descriptive representation is actually null or negative.

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[8] Based on OLS regression analyses with standard errors clustered by country, including the level of use of direct democracy at t-1, the degree of populist discourse as well as the ideological leaning of presidents – measured in the three categories left, centre, right – the degree of populist discourse is positively associated with a change in the use of direct democracy either at a 95 per cent confidence level (including the case of Maduro) or at a 90 per cent confidence level (excluding the case of Maduro). Results are available on request from the authors.

The upper left panel in Figure 21.2 shows the bivariate association between the degree of populism and the change in the exclusion of economic groups from public services and governed spaces at the end of a president's term in office (combined consecutive). No clear pattern arises. Compared to the spread of non-populist presidential terms, no significant correlation between the degree of populist discourse and the exclusion of economic groups can be found (r=0.102, p=0.412). Moreover, the exemplary cases highlighted by Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser (2013) as inclusionary populists – Evo Morales in Bolivia and Hugo Chávez in Venezuela – end up on opposite sides of the zero line. While we can confirm the improvements made with respect to decreasing economic exclusion throughout Morales' three consecutive terms, Chávez, on average, ends up increasing material exclusion by 2013, a trend that worsens under Maduro. A similar picture arises with respect to the exclusion of citizens based on ethnicity, race or language (lower left panel, Figure 21.2). Again, a closer look at key cases helps clarify this null finding. While Morales and Correa are associated with improvements in social inclusion, the two Venezuelan presidents, Chávez and Maduro, are associated with an overall deterioration throughout their terms. Overall, the correlation between populism and social exclusion does not reach conventional significance levels (r=0.184, p=0.140).

The upper right panel in Figure 21.2 highlights another aspect of symbolic inclusion/exclusion, that of gender. With the exception of Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua (whose government has long been criticised by feminist scholars and progressive activists; see Kampwirth 2010), most moderately and strongly populist presidents improved the symbolic exclusion of women in their respective countries throughout their terms, most importantly Morales in Bolivia (Htun and Ossa 2013). However, as can be seen, this is not a pattern unique to populist presidents. On average, most Latin American presidents have improved the inclusion of women throughout the last two decades. Many parliaments in the region outrank European parliaments with respect to their share of women representatives, and several Latin American countries had female presidents elected into office, e.g. Christina Fernández de Kirchner in Argentina or Michelle Bachelet in Chile (see Franceschet, Piscopo and Thomas 2016).

Unfortunately, where populist presidents seem to stand out compared to their non-populist counterparts is with respect to the *exclusion* of individuals based on their political affiliation. The lower right panel in Figure 21.2 shows a strong, significant correlation between populism and increasing political exclusion (beyond formal representation), in the sense that certain partisan groups have their civil liberties restricted and are excluded from public services, state jobs and government contracts. The greatest reductions in political exclusion come under non-populist presidents. However, when the main outlier (Chávez) is removed, the correlation falls below conventional significance levels (r=0.177, p=0.158). In retrospect, this result is not surprising. A number of studies document the partisan conditionality of government services and employment under the Chávez government (Penford-Becerra and Corrales 2007; Hawkins, Rosas and Johnson 2011; Handlin 2016).

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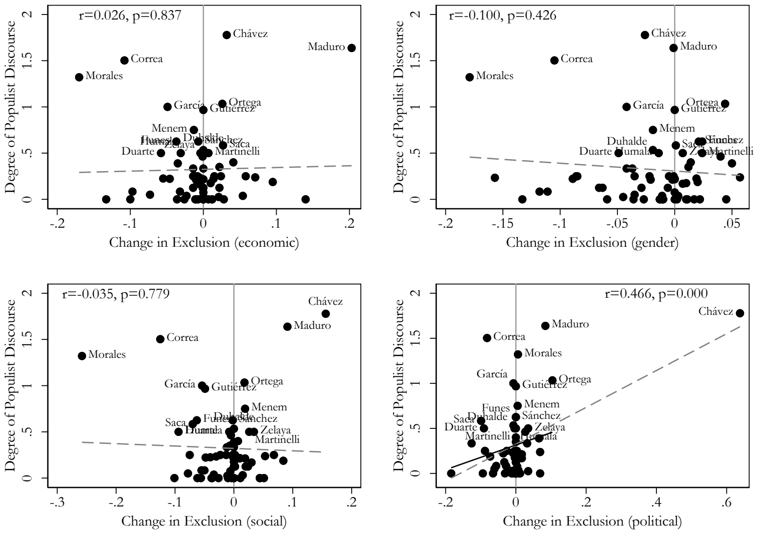
[9] Note that what Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser (2013) refer to with the political dimension of exclusion/inclusion refers more to the patterns discussed above on formal representation and participation, i.e. the structures available for citizens to insert their preferences into the political arena and to exert vertical democratic accountability.

Figure 21.2: The Impact of Populism on Descriptive Representation



Source: Change in economic, gender, social and political exclusion (see Coppedge et al. 2020). See Table 21.1 in the appendix for more information on the individual cases. Note that dashed correlation lines are based on all cases, while the solid line in the lower right panel excludes the case of Chávez.

Substantive Representation

With respect to substantive representation, we find a mixed pattern more in line with our expectations concerning short-term and long-term consequences. To begin with, Figure 21.3 (left panel) shows that presidents with a strong populist discourse tend to considerably decrease economic inequality (measured by the Gini, household market income). Note that this relationship holds even if we control for the level of inequality before a presidential term and their left-right ideology.[10] In contrast, the impact of populism on other policy areas is largely null. To be clear, it is not that populists entirely fail in their performance; they are simply no better than their counterparts. For example, the infant mortality rate is often used as a proxy for the quality of a welfare state, since it is 'typically concentrated in the lowest income quintile [… and…] also a sensitive measure of many other conditions – including access to clean water and sanitation, indoor air quality, female education and literacy, prenatal and neonatal health services, caloric intake, disease, and of course income' (Ross 2006, 861). Although the region on average shows a positive trend with respect to the rate of infant mortality, we do not find that populist presidents are generally associated with a greater decrease in that rate in their countries than non-populists (Figure 21.3, upper right panel, r=-0.110, p=.370). Likewise, populists are not associated with a reduction in violent crime. While the results initially suggest that populists actually increase violent crime (Figure 21.3, lower left panel, r=.231, p=,090), this reflects the impact of the Chávez government, which has witnessed soaring crime rates that have made Venezuela one of the most dangerous countries in the hemisphere; when we remove this outlier, the remaining populist governments manifest only slight increases or decreases. Finally, we find a highly mixed pattern with respect to the control of corruption (Figure 21.3, right panel); indeed, both populist and non-populist presidents show improvements and setbacks.

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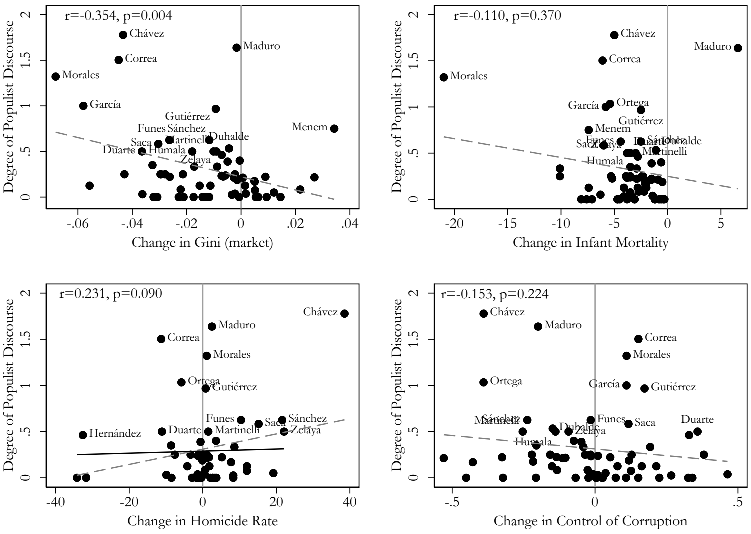
[10] Based on OLS regression analyses with standard errors clustered by country, including the level of inequality at t-1, the degree of populist discourse as well as the ideological leaning of presidents – measured in the three categories left, centre, right – the degree of populist discourse is negatively associated with a change in inequality at a 95 per cent confidence level. Results are available on request from the authors.

Figure 21.3: The Impact of Populism on Substantive Representation



Source: Change in Gini (market) (SWIID, Solt 2019), change in Infant Mortality (per 1000 live births) and (intentional) Homicides (per 100,000 inhabitants) (The World Bank 2016), change in Control of Corruption (WGI, Kaufmann and Kraay 2016). See Table 21.1 in the appendix for more information on the individual cases. Note that dashed correlation lines are based on all cases, while the solid line in the lower left panel excludes the case of Chávez.

Thus, populists' gains in redistributing income are not matched by gains in relation to other salient issues. These quantitative findings are echoed in the case study literature on populism in power. For example, while Correa introduced redistributive social policies that benefited the poor, these still fell short of tackling the highly unequal distribution of income and property in the country (de la Torre and Ortiz Lemos 2016). Moreover, his top-down style of governing sidelined large groups in society that contested his leadership, such as indigenous social movements and conservative subnational movements (Eaton 2011; de la Torre 2013; Eaton 2014). In a similar fashion, the Morales administration has considerably increased spending on the poor as part of a progressive economic policy agenda (Gray Molina 2010). Nevertheless, Morales also increased the nationalisation of natural resources to finance social spending, which was a highly contested issue between his government and its opposition (Eaton 2014). Both of these substantive changes took place in a highly conflictive and polarised political context, in which both sides denied their opponents the right to make legitimate, representative claims (Gray Molina 2010; Schilling-Vacaflor 2011). Perhaps the case that best highlights these ambiguities is that of Chávez in Venezuela. His government redirected billions of dollars in oil revenue to a series of social programmes and community development projects designed to advance participatory democracy. Although these programmes had palpable effects on poverty levels, reducing them by over 50 per cent in only a few years (Weisbrot 2008), the ultimate impact of these programmes on key outcomes such as literacy rates is highly disputed (Ortega and Rodríguez 2008), and weak management of funds contributed to decreasing control of corruption during this period, as is evident in the data point for Chávez in Figure 21.3 (right panel). Ultimately, many of these gains were erased during the economic decline in Chávez's final years and the catastrophe overseen by Maduro.

Discussion and Conclusion

The scholarly literature on Latin America has often seen populism as a benign force for democratic representation, a view that has carried over into cross-regional arguments about the inclusive qualities of radical leftist populism. However, we argue and find otherwise. Drawing from the concept of representation proposed by Pitkin (1967) and more careful reading of the ideational approach, we theorise that the relationship of populism to democratic representation is more ambiguous and depends much more on the strength of populist discourses and the size of the coalitions that embody them. Our descriptive analysis of a broad array of data shows that leftist populism in this region is primarily only helpful for formal representation (through the use of direct democracy tools), and that populists otherwise have mixed records when it comes to promoting descriptive or substantive representation. Indeed, this mixed record fails to support one of our own, more hopeful predictions about the potentially positive impact of populism on the descriptive representation of disadvantaged gender, social and economic groups. To be clear, our results do not indicate that populists perform universally worse in these areas than non-populist governments. They merely perform as well, with similar variation. Thus, while populists in Venezuela and Nicaragua have reversed almost all of their gains as regards several indicators and ultimately present a negative picture of democratic representation, those in Bolivia and Ecuador registered impressive gains in terms of the proportionality of elections, the representation of women and ethnic minorities, and/or reductions in child mortality. One of the only really consistent associations of leftist populism in Latin America relates to a decrease in income inequality.

However, our goal in exploring the relationship of populism to democratic representation empirically is to do more than present another data set; we want to provide future directions for research. We see three such avenues. First, while our analysis forms a first step in understanding the empirical connection between these concepts, we still lack adequate measurements for all types of democratic representation, especially symbolic. Future research needs to tackle this data availability problem and generate indicators that can effectively capture all of the theoretical concepts. Second, while we concentrated our analysis on a most-likely region – Latin America – scholars need to test these arguments across regions and time. Contemporary Latin America has a number of unique features that might confound our results, such as presidentialism, and represents a narrow band of variation for testing crucial causal factors (indeed, we never test coalition size). And while a region of left-wing populists represents an important set of cases for testing older arguments, which tend to see populism in a uniform light, minoritarian right-wing populists represent an equally important set of cases for testing our own theory with its mixed predictions. Obvious possibilities are to include European and US cases of populist parties (in government and in opposition) and to compare contemporary cases of populism with historical ones. In the end, it may be that right-wing populists are still *relatively* more exclusionary. Finally, taking Pitkin's (1967) own suggestion seriously, future research has to highlight how different types of representation are related to each other in order to identify the overall effect of populism on democratic representation. For example, how do different formal representative procedures increase or constrain the potential positive and negative effects of populist government on descriptive and substantive representation? Are descriptive and substantive representation interrelated? And does symbolic representation increase the legitimacy of substantive outputs of the democratic process?

Appendix

Table 21.1: Sample of Latin American Presidents

Country	Presidents (years in office)
Argentina	Carlos Saúl Menem (1989–1999), Fernando de la Rúa (1999–2001), Eduardo Duhalde (2002–2003), Néstor Kirchner (2003–2007), Cristina Fernández de Kirchner (2007–2015), Mauricio Macri (2016–2019)
Bolivia	Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada (2002–2003), Carlos Mesa, (2003–2005), Evo Morales (2006–2019)
Brazil	Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1999–2002), Luiz Lula da Silva (2003–2010), Dilma Rousseff (2011–2016), Michel Temer (2016–2018)
Chile	Ricardo Froilán Lagos (2000–2006), Michelle Bachelet (2006–2010), Sebastián Piñera (2010–2014), Michelle Bachelet (2014–2018)
Colombia	Andrés Pastrana (1998–2002), Álvaro Uribe (2002–2010), Manuel Santos (2010–2018)
Costa Rica	Miguel Ángel Rodríguez (1998–2002), Abel Pacheco (2002–2006), Óscar Arias (2006–2010), Laura Chinchilla Miranda (2010–2014), Luis Guillermo Solis (2014–2018)
Dominican Republic	Hipólito Mejía (2000–2004), Leonel Fernández (2004–2012)
Ecuador	Gustavo Noboa (2000–2002), Lucio Gutiérrez (2003–2005), Alfredo Palacio (2005–2007), Rafael Correa (2007–2017), Lenín Moreno (2017–2019)
El Salvador	Francisco Flores (1999–2004), Antonio Saca (2004–2009), Mauricio Funes (2009–2014), Salvador Sánchez Cerén (2014–2019)
Guatemala	Óscar Berger (2004–2008), Álvaro Colom Caballero (2008–2011), Otto Pérez Molina (2012–2015)
Honduras	Carlos Flores (1998–2002), Ricardo Maduro (2002–2006), Manuel Zelaya (2006–2009), Porfirio Lobo Sosa (2010–2013), Juan Orlando Hernández (2014–2019)
Mexico	Vicente Fox (2001–2006), Felipe Calderón (2006–2012), Enrique Peña Nieto (2013–2018)
Nicaragua	Enrique Bolaños (2002–2007), Daniel Ortega (2007–2019)
Panama	Martín Torrijos (2004–2009), Ricardo Martinelli (2009–2014), Juan Carlos Varela (2014–2019)
Paraguay	Nicanor Duarte (2003–2008), Fernando Lugo (2008–2012), Federico Franco (2012–2013), Horacio Cartes (2013–2018)
Peru	Alejandro Toledo (2001–2006), Alan García (2006–2011), Ollanta Humala (2011–2016), Pedro Pablo Kuczunski (2016–2018)
Uruguay	Tabaré Vásquez (2005–2010), José Mujica (2010–2015), Tabaré Vásquez (2015–2019)
Venezuela	Hugo Chávez (1999–2013), Nicolás Maduro (2013–2019)

Source: Hawkins (2019).

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PART III:
Populism and Communication

CHAPTER 22:

THE SYMBIOSIS BETWEEN MEDIA AND POPULISM: CONCEPTS, ISSUES, EVIDENCE

Lone Sorensen

Introduction: Overall Context

The media are playing an unprecedented and crucial role in the success of the wave of populism currently sweeping the globe. Modern populism is facilitated by conditions of what Keane (2013, 1) calls 'a revolutionary age of communicative abundance … [that is] structured by a new world system of overlapping and interlinked media devices'. Fundamental changes to media regulation coupled with innovations in media technologies, not least the internet, mean that media have become embedded in all aspects of everyday life. New media technologies have opened up a profusion of communicative spaces for a variety of political and media actors and citizens. At the same time, the traditional party system is in decline, or perhaps renewing itself (Chadwick and Stromer-Galley 2016). Many citizens are becoming increasingly disillusioned with the lack of authenticity in mainstream politics and are seeking out marginal and less institutional political voices. Worldwide, populists have been able to capitalise on these conditions.

In media and communication studies, the changing media environment has created at least three concurrent preoccupations. First, the increasing intrusion and power of the traditional mass media – chiefly television, radio and the press – in relation to politics have fostered a focus on the media's ability to define reality. Political institutions are increasingly adapting their operations to the norms and practices of the media to maximise their chances of getting their message across to audiences unscathed (Strömbäck and Esser 2014). The media, in turn, scrutinise this practice, and the cycle of mutual influence between the media and politics is serving to engender mistrust of politicians' authenticity (Coleman 2011).

Second, developments in new media technologies – especially web 2.0 and social media platforms – have fomented questioning of the role of technology in disseminating political content. Research in this area queries the way online technologies privilege certain actors according to different criteria from those of traditional mass media. Such dynamics have, in turn, raised interest in a third area of study connected to the role of audiences[1] *vis-à-vis* new media technologies. This includes audiences' susceptibility to misinformation, especially in the face of algorithms that filter content so that users are largely exposed to information which reinforces

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[1] To avoid confusion about the terms 'reception' and 'consumption', Thumim (2012, 63–69) argues for the use of the term 'audiences' in both new and traditional media in the context of the mediation process, even where audience engagement goes beyond active involvement with the media in processes of interpretation to include content production, circulation and recontextualisation.

or polarises existing views. Yet audiences are conversely seen as increasingly active in interpreting, shaping and creating political content. All three areas of study are concerned with changing aspects of the otherwise well-established process of 'mediation' whereby the media substantively intervene in the problematic process of communicating 'reality'. They hinge on processes that reside in the *institutions* of the mass media, media and communication *technologies*, and *audiences* (Silverstone 2005, 189).

A key position in the emerging body of literature on populism's relationship to the media maintains that recent changes in media systems and technologies, and in the media's relationship to politics, may be contributing to populist success (Aalberg and de Vreese 2016; Esser et al. 2016). Populists, it is argued, have a certain affinity with the media despite their well-known antipathy towards the mass media and mediation in general. Only recently have comparative studies and more comprehensive theoretical frameworks begun to place populism in the context of broader changes in the media environment. What general trends can we identify in populism's ability to negotiate the treacherous process of mediation so successfully and to retain an aura of authenticity where mainstream parties and politicians often fail?

This chapter takes a communication-centred approach to populism as its starting point. It first outlines this perspective. While it touches on populism by the media and among citizens, its primary focus is populist politicians and their efforts in negotiating the mediation process. The chapter therefore goes on to discuss one of the most influential recent general theories in communication studies, mediation, as a framework for conceptualising the link between populist politicians and the media. Finally, it inspects a substantial body of research literature for its conceptual abundance, divergences in approach and gaps needing attention. The review maps the literature to the aforementioned sites of mediation – media institutions, technologies and audiences – to specifically consider how close we are to answering the question of how populists negotiate the process of mediation.

A Communications Approach to Populism

The criteria and dynamics of mediation that shape populist meaning relate to its communicative dimension. Approaching populism from a communications perspective implies a shift in focus from *what populism is* to *what it does* and *how it does it*. In other words, the concern is less with issues of definition and classification of the phenomenon, which I only briefly engage with here (for a detailed discussion, see Heinisch and Mazzoleni in this volume), and more with questions of process and practice. Such an approach investigates how populist ideology is naturalised, the role the media play in this, the extent to which the undertaking succeeds and the conditions under which it does so.

Classifying Populism

Given the concept's contested nature, the definitional problem nevertheless has to be considered. A brief consideration of the dualism between stylistic and ideational classifications of populism may illuminate the perspective of populist communication. While most scholars see definitions of populism as an ideology and a style[2] as mutually exclusive, ideational and stylistic definitions largely home in on the same core characteristics. Populists identify *the people* as a morally decent 'silent majority' (Canovan 1999) that constitutes the totality of the community but reduces their multiplicity of disparate demands and interests (Mudde 2004; Laclau 2005; Moffitt 2016). They portray *the elite* as immoral and opposed to the people (e.g. Jägers and Walgrave 2007; Mudde 2007; Aalberg et al. 2016) and themselves as *one of the people* and as able to restore *sovereignty* to the people through their enlightenment (Canovan 2005; Abts and Rummens 2007). In addition, populists signal their outsider status and the illegitimacy of institutional or elite-driven norms through *disruptive performances* (Moffitt 2016; Bucy et al. 2020; Sorensen 2021; 2018) that *evoke a crisis* (Moffitt 2016; Taggart 2000).

The classification as an ideology or style differs chiefly with respect to the types of phenomena in which these characteristics are observed and the importance ascribed to style or ideology in political mobilisation more generally. Ideological approaches contend that populism's ideational content inspires action and resides in populist actors. The morally informed and binary relationship between the people and the elite is central to populism's ability to mobilise latent constituent attitudes. The types of people designated by the ideas of the people and the elite vary across different political and cultural contexts. Yet minimal definitions suggest that populist actors fill these core ideas with meaning by adapting them to a given culture and host ideology (see e.g. Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2013).

Stylistic and performative approaches hone in on the same characteristics but are more concerned with their form of articulation, such as the use of informal language to denote an ordinary people (Ostiguy 2020), or with the constitutive nature of performances that bring that which they denote into being (Moffitt 2016). Performance here involves a process of symbolic meaning-formation (Alexander 2006; Moffitt 2016, 38) that becomes the object of study. Such perspectives on populism see performance and style as the means through which populism gains traction and mobilises its constituents, and as an important factor in not only the transmission of ideas but also in shaping their meaning.

Populism as a Communicative Process

From a communications perspective, both classifications have merit as both ideology and style are integral parts of the communicative process (see also Engesser et al. 2017; de Vreese et al. 2018; Sorensen 2021, chapter 3). Empirically, the core characteristics of populism clearly manifest themselves in both stylistic expression and ideas, in the content of a communicated message. Communication science dictates that ideas cannot be communicated without a discursive style. And style in and of itself contributes to the formation of meaning; it is not a neutral vehicle in the transmission of an ideological message. Putting the communicative process at the forefront of our investigations explains why both classifications have resulted in almost identical definitions. It queries what part each of these dimensions plays in the manifestation of populist meaning. It has two further advantages: to explain populism's contextualism and to understand its relationship to the media.

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[2] Other approaches include the categorisation of populism as a discourse, a strategy and a form of political logic.

Contextualism has proven to be a stumbling block in comparative studies of populism. The ideas of a given instance of populism and the manifestation of its style often differ from those of other instances of populism. This has complicated the definitional debate. Yet a certain communicative process of meaning-making is shared across very different contextual manifestations, from left-wing to right-wing forms of populism in both established and transitional democracies (Sorensen 2021, chapters 3 and 6). This is the process through which ideas attain manifest form through stylised articulation. It involves the construction of meaning on the basis of a given set of cultural resources and in response to particular conditions of social power. Common perceptions of, attitudes to and feelings about politics in a given political culture form the resources that give meaning to populist ideas. These ideas are then performed through the disruption of a given set of institutional norms in a morally essentialist fashion. On the basis of this communicative process, different forms of populism emerge from the nuances of contextual conditions. These forms of populism share the practices of delegitimising elite representation and, in the course of disrupting the established order, making a claim to disintermediation. In response to allusive relations between citizens and elite representatives in democracies around the world, the communicative process of populism makes the path between citizens and populist representatives appear more direct.

From this perspective, populism is fundamentally opposed to all forms of mediation, both political and media-related. A communication perspective on populism therefore highlights the role of the media and that of mediation more generally in establishing a seemingly direct connection to citizens. But even 'direct' media mediate. Different media technologies invite different communicative styles and norms, but they also have an affinity with certain ideas and imaginaries, as do different media institutions, audiences and contexts of reception, all of which, in turn, shape meaning. These aspects all form part of the process of mediation that populist communication must inevitably undergo. How does it do so whilst upholding its claim to directness? The following section discusses the concept of mediation as a theoretical framework for reviewing the literature on populism's relationship to mediation.

Mediation

In everyday English, 'mediation' means getting in between, negotiating or resolving disputes, and generating mutual understanding and agreement instead of conflict. However, in the field of media and communication studies, it points to a much more problematic process (Livingstone 2009, 4–5). Here, the term is often concerned with questions of the media's power to shape representations of 'reality'. Rather than a process of clarification, it denotes a more substantive intervention, where what is being dealt with is itself changed by that intervention. This includes how reality is depicted and understood. In the words of Hepp and Krotz (2014, 3), 'communication has to be grasped as a process of mediating meaning construction'.

The concept of mediatisation goes further by emphasising change over time and denotes an increase in mediation that is taking place with new developments in and of the media (Strömbäck 2008; Livingstone 2009, 7; Hepp and Krotz 2014, 3). In the field of political communication, mediatisation is a process whereby the media become more and more of a political actor in their own right. Increasingly, the 'logic' of the media – understood as the norms and routines that govern the media's operations (Altheide and Snow 1979) – is adopted by, and thereby transforms, political institutions (Strömbäck 2008; Strömbäck and Esser 2014). Mediatisation is thus a more specific process than mediation. However, analysis of the process of mediation is key to determining how the relationship between 'reality' and political communication is changing as part of the process of mediatisation (Hepp and Krotz 2014, 3–4).

Swanson (1992, 29) breaks down the media's depiction of reality into three distinct aspects, which are here adopted with reference to the overall process of mediation:

> 'objective' political reality (the actual events and conditions that are the referents of journalists' and politicians' representations in campaign messages); 'constructed' political reality (the content of the representations offered by journalists and political leaders); and 'subjective' political reality (citizens' perceptions of political reality, including political attitudes, beliefs, impressions of political leaders, and so on).

These areas of analysis in turn direct attention towards the relationships between them, which are open to investigation through different theoretical approaches and objects of study. For example, the relationship between objective and constructed political realities may be investigated from an institutionalist or a materialist perspective (these are elaborated in the following sections), depending on whether the media as an institution or as material technology is conceived as the more important factor in constructing reality in a given context. Media effects studies, meanwhile, focus on the relationship between constructed political reality and the subjective reality of audiences.

These relationships, then, constitute three sites of mediation: *media institutions* and, for instance, the impact of commercial imperatives on news values and editorial decisions; *media technologies* and the ways in which they shape the production, distribution and recirculation of content; and *media audiences* and their variously active participation, interpretation and interaction with populist content. In new media, the relationships between these actors, institutions and environments are asymmetrical and non-linear: media work 'through a process of environmental transformation which in turn transforms the conditions under which any future media can be produced and understood' (Couldry 2008, 8). The following sections go on to review extant literature on populist political communication and its relationship to the media through the lens of these three sites of mediation.

Media Institutions as Sites of Mediation

The role of institutions in the construction of a populist political reality has been considered in studies of the practices of content selection, gatekeeping and framing that emerge from the norms and routines of journalists and other key media workers. Institutional studies have, unsurprisingly, exclusively focused on traditional media. However, recent interventions by social media platform owners in relation to populist content suggest that this is an area of study that is now ripe for expansion. The institutionalist perspective adopted by studies of populism and the traditional mass media see institutional practices, norms and routines as shared by the news media collectively as a single institution (Cook 2006; Asp 2014). This institution is seen as wielding collective power in relation to the sphere of politics through media logic. Research literature has investigated populism's affinity with media logic and its concurrent and somewhat conflicting criticism of the media.

Media Logic

Traditional media institutions' mediation of populist content is usually explained by media news values and media logic (Mazzoleni 2008). A number of European studies find that coverage of populism is related to three specific aspects of media logic: the media portraying immigrants in conflict with local culture (conflict framing), presenting elections as strategic games (strategic framing) and focusing on leaders and their personalities rather than policies (personalisation) (Esser et al. 2016, 372). These aspects of media logic all relate to the media's coverage of populist political parties and leaders. A second strand of the media logic argument concerns 'media populism' (Krämer 2014), that is, media actors as the intentional originators of populist messages. In the literature on populism, both arguments tend to be tied to distinctions between media types and formats.

Running through the literature on media coverage of populism is a strong suggestion that the commercial logic of some media types has an affinity with 'populist logic'. Mazzoleni et al.'s (2003) comparative research shows that the elite press in a number of countries was more critical and selective in their coverage of populist parties than tabloid formats due to their news value of social importance and closer integration into the elite structure of society (Stewart et al. 2003, 225). The tendency of 'popular' media, such as the tabloid press, talk radio and infotainment TV shows, 'to appeal to mass audiences, to crave sensationalism, scandal, conflict, and to voice social anxieties' meant that they 'were more likely to offer support to subjects involved in, or initiators of, "newsworthy" actions' (Stewart et al. 2003, 233). In the Latin American context, the term telepopulism or *télépopulisme* was coined to account for the easy fit between the news values of television and populism (Schneider 1991; Weyland 2001; for a non-Latin American example, see also Peri 2004). Populist politicians undertake spectacular performances of disrupting established norms (Moffitt 2016, 57; Herkman 2018; Bucy et al. 2020; Sorensen 2021, part III) that chime with commercial media logic.

However, the affinity between populist parties' communicative practices and commercially driven media types like tabloids cannot always be established empirically (Bos et al. 2010; Akkerman 2011; Rooduijn 2014; Wettstein et al. 2018). This can be explained by individual country contexts: first, journalistic gatekeepers implement *cordon sanitaires* established by other parties (Esser et al. 2016); second, a populist party needs to pass a certain threshold of success in the polls before the commercial imperatives of the tabloid press balance out its gatekeeping function (Stewart et al. 2003; Esser et al. 2016, 366). These nuances need further examination through systematic comparative study.

When media institutions do cover populist parties, their interpretive slant is often negative (Wettstein et al. 2018). Yet negative coverage benefits populist parties (Esser et al. 2016, 366), especially where it enables them to push a narrative of 'fake news' or media bias in response (Ernst et al. 2016; Caplan and Boyd 2018, 67). A potential explanation for the complex relationship between populism and elite/tabloid formats may be that the convergence between commercial media and populism is stylistic rather than ideological (Esser et al. 2016, 7); that is, it is based on charisma and rhetorical style such as simplification and polarising drama. In other words, there could be convergence between the media's news values and populist style but not between the norms and self-prescribed roles of journalists and populist ideology. Journalists are not populist as they subscribe to professional norms of objectivity and independence that uphold liberal democracy. However, the news values they conform to leave them wide open to populist communication efforts.

The commercial logic of tabloids (Wettstein et al. 2018) and other popular formats such as television talk shows (Cranmer 2011; Bos and Brants 2014), reality television (Cardo 2014) and talk radio (Stanyer 2007, 126–131; Krämer 2014) also result in 'media populism' (Krämer 2014). This notion denotes the media's practice of pushing populist issues, frames and narratives and expressing populist sentiments, such as aligning themselves with ordinary people against the establishment. They can thereby lay the foundations for populist attitudes. The ideology/style thesis, however, needs modification in the case of fringe media. Alternative media, often online, expound populist messages and cultivate a climate that normalises populist ideas and distrust of the mainstream media on seemingly ideological grounds (Holt 2019; Bhat and Chadha 2020). While the role of media populism in the construction of populist reality has only just emerged as a topic of research from an institutional perspective, these latter analyses also suggest that the technological and audience sites of mediation deserve attention. Audience involvement becomes media populists' means of demonstrating the people's support, and this is, in turn, enabled by technologies such as comments and fora on online alternative news sites and the 'talkback' function of listener phone-ins on radio shows.

Anti-Media Populism

Populist politicians' engagement with media institutions goes beyond the adoption of media logic in two respects that they stand apart from mainstream political parties: vitriolic verbal attacks on mainstream media coverage that complies with the norms and ideals of journalism, and the institutional co-option of the press. Populists often react to lacking or negative media coverage with verbal attacks on mainstream media that fail to foster critical reflection on the media's quality criteria and ideals. Public mistrust of the news media is not a new phenomenon, but there is a sense that populist politicians in recent years have tapped into such mistrust more frequently and aggressively (McNair 2017, chapter 3). No longitudinal studies establish this empirically, however. Fawzi's conceptual framework of media criticism identifies three narratives within the populist perception of the media-politics-citizen relationship: 'that the media are controlled by the political elite and advocate in favour of them, or that the hegemonic media support the interests of the political elite with their coverage, or that both the media and politics actively conspire' (2020, 43; see also Krämer 2018; Fawzi 2019). These narratives are reflected in the very few empirical studies of anti-media populism (Hameleers 2020; Sorensen 2021, part 4). Both these studies establish a connection between anti-media populism and the promotion of non-objective forms of truth. Given the frequent strategic use of anti-media populism in current cases of populism and the potentially severe implications of undermining the media's epistemological role in democracy, further study of anti-media populism across a variety of contextual conditions is urgently called for.

When populists are in power, anti-media populism can go beyond verbal assault. Single-country and regional studies suggest that the media in less established democratic contexts are more vulnerable to populist control (see, for example, Aalberg et al. 2016 for a collection of overviews of east European cases; Mancini 2014 on Berlusconi in Italy; Waisbord 2013 and 2018 and Hawkins 2010 on Latin America). Comparative studies that investigate the nuances of populist governments' influence on press freedom at a generalised level remain scarce (Kenny 2019; Holtz-Bacha 2020, 114–115). Yet a picture is emerging whereby populists discredit the media to lay the groundwork for legal restrictions and control where this is possible. Waisbord (2013; 2018) argues that such practices manifest a populist notion of 'media democracy', whereby journalism as an institution should support popular sovereignty, social rights and government programmes rather than a liberal democratic notion of the public good (Waisbord 2013, 516–517). This analysis highlights the ideological discordance between populism and the institution of the liberal democratic mass media concurrently with the consonance between populist performance and commercial media logic. The tension between the two is consistent with studies which demonstrate that populists rely on the mobilisation of public opinion – for instance, through verbal forms of anti-media populism – in advance of legal changes in order to undermine press freedom (Conaghan and de la Torre 2008, 270). Such a thesis begins to explain populism's conflictual relationship to the media as that which distinguishes it from the mediatisation of mainstream politics and from non-populist forms of authoritarianism.

Media Technologies as Sites of Mediation

Populism is also said to be favoured by the mediation processes of new media technologies. With the advent of web 2.0, the analytical distinction between mass and interpersonal communication dissolved (Castells 2013) and vastly complicated the process of mediation. Before, the gatekeeping function of the traditional mass media was the biggest hindrance to successful mediation of populist content. Populists can now circumvent it online but with much less control of the meaning-making process once content is posted. The, albeit never linear (Silverstone 2005, 191; Couldry 2008, 3), process of mediation becomes far more heterogeneous and hybridised in new media. Networked circulation and recirculation of content (Couldry 2008, 8–10) by a variety of users, their changed role as 'prosumers' (a term that conflates producers with consumers), interaction between traditional and new media formats and institutions in hybrid forms (Chadwick 2013), media usage that can result in highly selective exposure of viewpoints (Klinger and Svensson 2015), and modes of constructing reality that rely on distributing personal and emotional content through personal networks (Klinger and Svensson 2015, 1253) characterise this ubiquitous and interactive form of mediation. An emerging body of literature on populism and new media argues that there is a 'fit' between many of these characteristics and populism. The materiality of media technologies – media artefacts and the social practices they afford – are accompanied by symbolic forms of meaning-making (see, for example, Lievrouw 2014), for instance through association with technological imaginaries and myths that dominate the environment of mediation on social media platforms. This section considers populism and media technologies in these two intertwined dimensions: the symbolic and the material aspects of technology.

Material Technology

Nearly all studies of the online mediation of populism focus on various aspects of the 'affordances' of social media – the opportunities for action that a media technology or platform gives to users – and the advantages they offer populist politicians. A core argument emerging from this research is that the affordances of social media not only facilitate but also augment populist communication. The recent 'performative turn' in populism studies highlights both a stylistic concord with the 'ordinary' language norms on social media platforms and the construction of authentic personas by populist politicians online through strategic amateurism, emotional display and norm transgression (Enli 2017; Moffitt 2018; Baldwin-Philippi 2019; Bucy et al. 2020; Sorensen 2021, chapters 7 and 8). Such performances often accompany those politicians' claims of enabling and foregrounding the agency of ordinary citizens. Yet empirical studies demonstrate that these claims are rarely realised as two-way engagement but rather used strategically to bolster populist self-representation (Enli 2017, 59; Waisbord and Amado 2017, 1342–1343; Sorensen 2021, chapter 11).

Other studies identify an ideological affinity between populism and new media technologies that allows populists to connect with the people by circumventing the gatekeeping function of the traditional mass media (see, for instance, Engesser et al. 2016; van Kessel and Castelein 2016; Bracciale and Martella 2017). Such practices chime with the populist aversion to institutional forms of mediation (Jagers and Walgrave 2007). A related strand of literature concerns web 2.0's interactivity features and the rise of so-called 'techno-populism' or 'populism 2.0'. This is confined to a few select parties such as Podemos and Five Star Movement (Movimento 5 Stelle, M5S). Gerbaudo suggests that populism's demand for direct democracy is translated into a form of digital mass democracy that utilises what such interactivity offers according to the principle of 'one like, one vote' (2014, 80) in digitally savvy forms of populism (see also Casero-Ripollés 2016 and Chadwick and Stromer-Galley 2016 on 'ideologically empty' parties). Such a form of populism thus avoids not only the intermediary institutions of the media but also those of liberal democratic government. In all cases, however, the opportunities, norms, imaginaries and audiences of social media mediate populist content in other ways than gatekeeping and editorial control and in ways which equally affect its meaning.

Yet some studies also attribute excessive causality to the opportunities offered by new media affordances and artefacts in shaping the meaning of mediated populist messages (Moffitt 2018; Hatakka 2019, 15; Krämer 2020, 10). Several comparative studies demonstrate that the implementation of populist communication strategies on social media differ substantially across different national and regional contexts (Groshek and Engelbert 2013; Zulianello et al. 2018) and that social media affordances are appropriated contextually. Moreover, the complexity of the mediation process and the way it changes the very environment that supports it means that studies are in danger of oversimplifying the relationship between specific technologies and populism. New studies of populism and the hybrid media system (see, for instance, de Vreese et al. 2018; Sorensen 2018; Hatakka 2019) highlight that social media are never used in isolation by populist politicians but form part of broader communicative repertoires that blend media types across different sites of mediation.

Symbolic Technology

In our use of and interaction with technology, symbolic configurations become intricately tied to its material form (Silverstone 1999, chapter 3; Boczkowski and Lievrouw 2008). Couldry (2015), for instance, argues that our collective belief in social media platforms as natural sites of social and collective expression constitutes a 'myth of "us"'. In the context of 'populism 2.0', Gerbaudo (2014, 16–17) indicates a correspondence between populist ideology and this 'imaginary' dimension of social media:

> Populism 2.0… incorporates much of the techno-utopianism that dominates current debates about the Internet (see, e.g. Shirky 2008; Mason 2012). It operates with the idea that the Net automatically provides a horizontal infrastructure where democracy can flourish… Crucial to the political deployment of such a participatory imaginary of Web 2.0 is an emphasis on the emancipatory character of disintermediation and directness.

The symbolic message inherent in social media lends credence to and enhances populists' claims to emancipation of the common people, directness and anti-elitist representation. Such myths are also reinforced by institutional forms of mediation. Social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter capitalise on ideas of emancipation, democracy and community as part of their marketing strategy (van Dijck 2013) in a process of mutual cultural shaping between institutions and audiences. Incorporating the role of imaginaries with that of the material aspects of technology and institutional influences on mediated populism would be fruitful in order to theorise the ways in which both populist politicians and audiences interact with populist content in the media ecology.

Audiences as Sites of Mediation

Users and audiences are active interpreters who do not uncritically gobble up mediated content. Rather, they digest information in a contextual and social process (Martín-Barbero 1993) and, using new media technologies, even produce, distribute and recirculate it. Literature on populism and media effects links various opportunity structures and individual predispositions to populist attitudes and support. This is a complex process where we must be wary that 'drawing direct inferences from voter characteristics to the communicative processes underlying the success or failure of populist actors is just not possible' (Reinemann et al. 2016b, 381). In recent years, this otherwise largely untouched field of study has received apt scholarly attention, and detailed models have been developed to map it. A more qualitative understanding of citizens' meaning-making practices and perceptions of the populist content they interact with still deserves attention, however.

Mapping Populist Effects

Hawkins (2010, 137–65) first demonstrated that urban, poorly educated citizens in Venezuela are not simply passive spectators who are fooled by a populist leader's guileful machinations as mass society theories would have it. They actively and rationally evaluate populist leaders' ability to combat issues of their concern, such as corruption. Since this observation, the literature on populist effects has developed at pace. Reinemann and colleagues' (2016a) model of populist media effects distinguishes between the structural and situational context at the macro-level; the communicative practices of politicians, the media and citizens at the meso-level; and the influence of individual citizens' experiences, perceptions and predispositions on their information processing at the micro-level. The model thereby suggests that we can compare perceptions of societal developments such as economic crises, cultural threats and political and media trust as explanatory factors in the favourable reception of populist messages across countries. Yet it also cautions against not taking individual country contexts into account. Such studies have been supplemented by closer examination of the individual-level process. This is most relevant to the audience site of mediation, which considers how audiences contribute to the meaning of mediated content. Hameleers and colleagues (2019) have modelled this level in detail and identify a range of individual-level factors that influence effects: citizens' predispositions, such as the perception of deprivation relative to an outgroup like immigrants; message characteristics, such as blame attribution; and psychological mechanisms. These moderate cognitive/emotional/attitudinal effects, which in turn moderate behavioural effects.

The institutional practices and values and technological affordances and ideas discussed above link macro-level developments and potential populist support moderated by individual-level factors. New work on the intersection between the mediating sites of technology and audiences is beginning to look at trends of misinformation, conspiracy theories and subjective realities. Indications are that the interplay between social identities and populist polarising communications that entrench and enhance existing divides should be the focus of concern (McGregor and Kreiss 2020). Some such research gaps are being addressed, although the intersection between individual-level effects and media technology remains disputed. For instance, there are varying indications as to whether echo chambers are connected to populist attitudes as such (Hameleers et al. 2019) or to a more general rise in polarisation in politics (Dutton and Robertson 2021).

Audience Meaning-Making

The effects studies noted above have gone a long way in mapping the patterns of societal and individual predispositions and their links to populist support. However, they should be complemented by a richer understanding of the meaning-making process occurring in audiences as part of the process of mediating populist content. This demands a constructivist perspective and an interpretivist approach alongside the experimental and quantitative efforts of most existing studies. A recent survey in seven Western countries found populist citizens to be highly politically engaged and active in their online search for information (Dutton and Robertson 2021). Such a finding goes against the grain of existing theoretical expectations of quite passive populist supporters (Krämer 2020, 29). In light of the above-mentioned analyses that found populist politicians' use of the affordances of two-way communication on social media to be primarily symbolic, such active citizens' evaluations, interpretations and interactions with populist content and other information demand deeper understanding. How do people attribute meaning to populist ideas in their given circumstances, and how do they arrive at a subjective representation of reality? How do audiences interact with publics constructed by populist politicians? Citizens' meaning-making processes in the creation and circulation of populist content are similarly understudied. Recent trends of growing media distrust and its connection with new media technologies and alternative notions of truth that fuel misinformation and conspiracy theory among citizens (Haller 2020; Bailey 2020) still need to be connected to populist communication.

Conclusion

The preceding pages have presented an overview of extant research on populist politicians' synergies with the media organised along three sites of mediation – institutions, technologies and audiences. This mapping of the literature on populism and the media has highlighted the interconnectedness of these sites. Yet it has also brought to light a lack of synthesis in approaches to new and traditional media in the literature on populism and a number of gaps in our understanding of how populists negotiate the process of mediation in their construction of reality. Despite the emergence of conceptual frameworks that integrate new and traditional media, a tendency exists in empirical studies to, on the one hand, view traditional media from an institutional perspective in terms of media logic and its fit with populism and, on the other hand, to view new media from a technological perspective of affordances and the way they accentuate populism. Yet in new as well as in traditional media, institutions and technologies cannot be separated as they interconnect and shape each other. Meanwhile, populists strategically use both traditional and new media in their own hybrid communicative repertoire.

Although such a conclusion is based on incomplete and unsystematic evidence, there are indications that the source of populist authenticity is its ability to maintain consistency between style and ideology in all sites of mediation and to utilise different media in hybrid modes. In institutional sites, the professional norms and self-prescribed roles of journalists are in discord with populist ideology, which has a very different idea of what 'media democracy' ought to be. Yet the media's news values find populist style hard to resist. In media types and genres where such news values trump less commercial considerations especially, populist style ensures the relatively unscathed mediation of populist ideology, at least when conditions such as a certain electoral threshold are met. In contrast, we find mainstream politicians laboriously adapting their style to media logic, leaving it ideologically incoherent. It is when the audience finds the performance of style unconvincing, or when they perceive that politicians do not believe their own message, that mistrust develops.

The populist narrative of anti-politics and anti-media taps into this mistrust. It also insulates populists from criticism and explains their outsider status. It thereby boosts their legitimacy even when institutional mediation is not in their immediate favour. It is the hybrid media system's ability to push this narrative that makes it so important to populist success. In their recourse to technological sites of mediation, populists can make symbolic use of the affordances and stylistic norms of new media to make ideological points, such as the accentuation of their direct connection to citizens and their emancipatory ambitions. While a few digital parties use affordances to increase citizen agency, such ideological claims often rely on ideas that remain unrealised. They do, however, appear authentic in the mediation of a persona that chimes with the norms and myths of new media technologies. In doing so, they create a platform for a populist reality that circumvents institutionalised politics and media in its connection to citizens. These citizens themselves become sites of mediation in their evaluation of the authenticity of populist messages. Media effects models map the role of contextual and individual-level factors in the effectiveness of populist communication, but we still lack understanding of audiences' meaning-making process in relation to populist content.

Further questions that a communications approach to populism through mediation theory may answer include, very broadly, how populists approach and mix different media types in the media ecology; how the paradox of proximity and separation inherent in the mediation process – the media's ability to bring us closer together but actually keep us apart – relates to populism's dislike of institutional mediation and promise of responsiveness to the people; how populism interacts with media culture to become part of our everyday lives and thereby contributes to the growing trend of lifestyle politics; how and whether populists engage with audiences in their construction of 'the people'; how populism interacts with the spread of conspiracy theories and alternative notions of truth in the media ecology; and which aspects of populist ideology and style encourage recirculation and virality in the hybrid media system. Such questions need to be addressed through cross-nationally comparative research that considers macro-level contextual conditions. Answering these and related questions will bring us closer to determining the power populists wield through their negotiation of the process of mediation, whether they are in government or marginalised, and thereby also the power they have over dominant representations of reality.

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CHAPTER 23:

MEDIA POLITICS AND POPULISM AS A MOBILISATION RESOURCE

Franca Roncarolo

Introduction

Scholars that have dealt with populism have basically agreed upon two of its aspects. The first aspect, despite the wide-ranging scope of the debate, is that the concept of populism continues to present 'constitutive ambiguity' (Mény and Surel 2002, 1) and remains somewhat indefinite as it is, in general, 'quintessentially mercurial' (Taggart 2000, 2). The second aspect is that the connection between the media and populism is as relevant as – actually – still insufficiently investigated despite some recent important contributes (Aalberg and de Vreese 2017; de Vreese et al 2018; Reinemann et al 2019; Krämer and Holtz-Bacha 2020). These two observations are usually brought up independently of one another. However, it is possible to question whether the strategic nature of communication and the difficulties involved in investigating the link between media logic and populistic style can, in fact, explain the conceptual vagueness that is so often lamented.

On the one hand, it seems clear that the development of the media system has changed both the way politics is covered and the relationship between politics and citizens. It has thus contributed to the present 'audience democracy' (Manin 1997), which promises to put an unmediated relationship between a leader and the people at the heart of its policies. On the other hand, it seems evident that the typical mediatisation processes of the last few decades (Esser and Strömbäck 2014) have led political actors to learn the rules of the media and have forced them to adopt new styles of political communication, which are more people centred and, in general, more in line with those that are considered the typical features of contemporary populism (Aalberg et al. 2017).

Apart from us asking to what extent the media has supported the rise of neo-populism, it appears more appropriate to investigate a double hypothesis: first, that a consistent part of what is defined as populism is, in reality, the image taken on by mediatised politics[1] and, second, that populist political communication above all represents a resource that can be used to mobilise citizens in the crucial moments of permanent campaign (Blumenthal 1982). After a short reconstruction of the development of studies conducted on the relationship between the media and populism, the analytical perspective taken here will be discussed, while the logic and functions of populist communication in different phases of the political process will be briefly differentiated between in the last part of the chapter.

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[1] In examining the historical conditions of Donald Trump's victory, Hallin (2018) suggested a similar hypothesis.

Franca Roncarolo

The Media and Populism: Still an Obscure Relationship?

Taguieff was among the first to clearly indicate the role of the media in supporting the return of populism on the international political scene. In an important essay written in the nineties, he described twin aspects of the phenomenon (Taguieff 1995). On the one hand, he emphasised the contribution of the press in making the term populism popular, using it as a framing device to identify any new political phenomena that were closely observed and stigmatised. On the other hand, he also coined a suggestive term for identifying a new type of populism: 'tele-populism', which is 'adapted to the needs of television mediatisation and liable to orientate all the typical classes of populism' (ibid., 125). These were the years in which, as Taguieff himself recalled, Sartori had raised the alarm about 'video-politics', and even though there was no systematic analysis of tele-populism in the essay, the urgency with which the new conceptual categories were applied was principally sustained by the impact of the empirical case studies conducted at the beginning of the nineties (from the case of Ross Perot in the United States to that of Silvio Berlusconi in Italy, to mention just the most famous examples).[2] In spite of the success of the terminology coined by Taguieff, some years passed before the relationship between the media and politics was subjected to more systematic and in-depth analysis. This absence of research was – at least partially – first overcome through a book by three scholars of communication (Mazzoleni et al. 2003), who revisited the area by approaching it from a comparative perspective.

In this case, the work began by stating a preoccupation shared by many: 'A theme of much commentary these days is "political elites on the ropes!"' as Jay G. Blumler observed in his brilliant foreword to the volume, in which he also identified the communicative factor as being among those that 'have conspired to undercut [politicians'] standings with the publics they are supposed to serve' (Mazzoleni et al. 2003, xv). Even more importantly, Mazzoleni's analysis in the introductory chapter, which framed the comparative research that followed by focusing on the relationship between 'The Media and the Growth of Neo-Populism in Contemporary Democracies', was in fact dedicated to the communicative factor and its relevance in understanding contemporary forms of populism. According to Mazzoleni, it was necessary to consider three aspects here. First, there was 'media populism'[3], that is, the tendency of television and newspapers to follow their own commercial objectives by satisfying popular tastes and demands, ultimately creating 'a formidable precondition for the diffusion of "popular-populist" sentiments within society' (Mazzoleni 2003, 8). It was therefore necessary to consider the different but related roles undertaken by the 'tabloid media' and the 'established media' in the process of diffusing populism. Last but not least, there was evidence that – not unlike traditional politics – populist parties and groups would attempt to take advantage of the mutual dependence between the media and politics and put into practice communication strategies in order to guarantee themselves crucial media access and attention.

Not all the theoretical premises mentioned by Mazzoleni can be traced back to the comparative research – still of an explorative nature – that the authors involved in the project conducted in eight case studies. In fact, when one reads the volume today, it appears rather evident that the authors themselves were concerned above all with focusing on the possible role of the media in supporting, even if it was involuntary, the success of populist groups. The conclusions were quite clear: whatever the intentions and perspectives adopted by the news media, whether tabloid or high-quality journalism, their media coverage would end up giving an advantage to contentious political figures in that it 'enhances their visibility and furthers their ends, by producing some kind of public legitimation' (Mazzoleni et al. 2003, 236). Notwithstanding their avoidance of a wide-ranging analysis, the first attempt to explore the relationship between the media and neo-populism remains a reference point that even today is of the utmost importance. First, considering the contribution of the tabloid media to the rise of popular discourse has influenced all subsequent works on the subject. Indeed, by highlighting a systematic connection between the advent of commercial media, the transformation of the information system as a whole and the emergence of new modes of engaging in politics which put people at its centre, it made a large contribution to explaining the rationale behind current forms of neo-populism. Moreover, since the approach proposed by Mazzoleni in the 2003 volume put the political effects of mediatisation at its heart, it laid the premises for an original analysis that would later allow scholars to understand the development of populist communication more clearly by grasping its unitary logic in both its soft-form and hard-form manifestations (Mazzoleni 2008; 2014).

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[2] It was by starting with exactly these same case studies that Taguieff developed his hypothesis of tele-populism and proposed integrating Margaret Canovan's typology with this new idea (see also Taguieff, 2002).

[3] As far as the concept of 'media populism' is concerned, which was intended to indicate a set of populist tendencies within the same media institutions, see Kramer (2014).

The possibility of attributing forms of populism that have different levels of intensity and comprehensiveness to a common matrix was at the centre of another seminal contribution to the field of research in which Jagers and Walgrave (2007) asserted the by now well-known conception that populism is a political 'communication style'. When they wrote their by now much-cited article, Cas Mudde (2004) had already scaled down the ideological dimension of populism by labelling it a 'thin ideology'. But they deserve credit for having made an additional step towards unveiling the light nature of the concept by proposing 'a thin definition' that in practice cancels out the ideological question and adopts a minimalistic conception of populism as '*a political communication style of political actors that refers to the people*' (Jagers and Walgrave 2007, 322; emphasis added). Reduced to a nucleus comprising the symbolic and rhetorical relationship with the people, populism here can ultimately and above all be summarised as the tendency to manifest 'closeness to the people simply by *talking about* the people' (ibid., 323; emphasis added), but it can also be identified according to four types. Besides the first, identified just by the mere presence of any reference to the people, and for this reason defined as 'empty populism', there are another two types that are characterised by the inclusion of two typically conflicting aspects. First, when antagonism towards anyone outside a mythic community is linked to an appeal to the people, exclusionary populism is generated. Second, when antagonism towards elite groups bolsters the references that are made to the people, an anti-elitist form of populism is produced. Only when these three forms are joined together can complete populism arise.

The main reason for the success of this model is probably its minimalistic and all-embracing nature. It is sufficiently general and flexible to accommodate the different degrees of intensity used from the populist platform, while it includes the various types of populism that have been identified in previous literature on the topic, ranging from mainstream populism (Mair 2002) to the present-day xenophobic populism of the right or the anti-establishment form advanced by the left. The fundamental belief that populism, ultimately, 'is a master frame, a way to wrap up all kinds of issues' (Jagers and Walgrave 2007, 322) represents, as will be shown later, the most critical aspect of this approach. In fact, it makes the definition so general as to transform it into a kind of hollow vessel: if everything that is people-orientated can be defined as populism, then would it not follow that everything in the realm of mediatised democratic politics is automatically populist?[4] In order to avoid the concept being hollowed out in such a way, is it sufficient to adopt a more restrictive approach such as that taken by Cranmer (2011), who only considers references to the people made by politicians? Cranmer limits her approach to politicians who explicitly propose their role as advocates or make references to accountability and legitimation, which serve as indicators of populism. The hypothesis proposed here takes a different approach.

Before I elaborate on this hypothesis in detail, it is worth mentioning another analytical model. The volume *Populist Political Communication in Europe*, which was the result of the work of a large network of scholars and was supported by the European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST) project, has been used to analyse research and public debate on populism in 24 European countries from a comparative perspective (Aalberg et al. 2017). The central tool they propose is a 'heuristic model for the analysis of political communication', which has the merit of enriching the overall picture of populism in two key ways. First, it introduces a dynamic element, highlighting the processual nature of the relationships that trigger populism. Second, it makes the analytical scheme more complex by considering the interaction between the media, politics and citizens on three levels. Beneath the macro level of structural and situational contexts, there is the meso level, at which political and information organisations work, and finally the micro level. Here, the ways in which citizens' predispositions interact with direct exposure to and messages from the media and politicians are positioned at the centre of attention. The scheme considers the impact these interactions have on individuals' attitudes and behaviour at a cognitive and an emotional level. Unsurprisingly, the analytical scheme produces an overall picture that is difficult to summarise in just a few lines and does not appear conclusive. However, as far as the avenues of enquiry that follow are concerned, it confirms the heuristic fragility of the concept of populism: 'except for mentions and appeals to "the people,"' Stanyer, Salgado and Strömbäck (2017, 357) concluded, 'not a single distinctive feature could be seen as common to all the different European populist political actors.' All that therefore remains is to begin again with the scheme proposed by Jagers and Walgrave, as the authors of the volume themselves did, although with an awareness of some of its limitations.

True Populism or Simply the Effects of Mediatisation?

It should be noted that there is a risk of defining populism merely as a form of politics that has adapted to the new media environment. It is not by chance that the effects of mediatisation emerge from all the types of populism proposed by Jagers and Walgrave. Empty populism is the best example here. How is it possible to overlook the fact that at the base of those discursive strategies, which systematically lead political leaders to exhibit their closeness to the people and to propose themselves as champions of the ordinary citizen, there is a reflection of media logic (Mazzoleni 2008)? In other words, one can see the residual effect of the mediatisation process during the years in which journalists, searching for faces to put to issues, accelerated the personalisation of politics, while simultaneously increasingly strengthening more direct relationships between leaders and citizens. It is evident that, while the parties were progressively entering a period of crisis, the media approached citizens as a collective audience but also pushed principal characters into the centre of the public arena. The media faced a political sphere that often lacked a voice due to the difficulty of governing complex problems and difficult changes. They articulated the preoccupations of society, bringing civil committees and various movements to the fore, while conducting the role of advocacy. At the same time, they offered politicians a way out. Talk-show presenters taught politicians lessons on political disintermediation,[5] while the opportunities that an ever more diversified media system offered made it attractive for the leaders to engage with the public in different ways to garner people's support for their leadership and political programmes. Needless to say, the 'peopolisation' of politics (Dakhlia and Lhérault 2008; Dakhlia 2010), with its strategies to get closer to citizens through popularisation (Street 2016), fundamentally changed the ways of thinking about political leadership and how to exercise it.

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[4] A reinterpretation of the model, which emphasises the possible ways in which different types of populism overlap, has been suggested by Reinemann, Matthes and Sheafer (2017, 16) For an even more radical approach to populism as an 'empty signifier', see Laclau (2007).

Should it come as a surprise that all this has become common practice within the framework of mediatisation? Consequently, is it possible to call the putting into practice of these lessons populism or even empty populism? Above all, if populism is a style, is political communication in general simply populist, but with different degrees of intensity? It is significant that mention has been made of 'Blair-style populism' (Canovan 2004) and of Cameron's populist tendencies (Alexandre-Collier 2015). Similarly, not only has attention been paid to Renzi's populist language (Tarchi 2015) and rhetoric (Salvati 2016), but according to Mazzoleni and Bracciale (2018, 9) Italian politics shows '"endemic populism" that overflows from strictly populist precincts into the general political discourse'. Moreover, several studies 'have claimed the importance of populism in both the victories and the defeats of American presidential candidates, ranging from Reagan to Clinton and from Bush Jr. to Gore' (Mudde 2004, 250). Lastly, it is hardly worth mentioning that Trump's election in 2016 was associated with his populist political communication style, his digital prowess and the affinity between social media and populism.

Analogous questions and reflections are also valid when passing from the purely formal level of style to that of content. Even in the case of anti-elitist populism, for example, it is difficult not to observe the echo of anti-political protests that emerged in response to negative daily media coverage. Indeed, because of the journalistic task of denouncement and their commercial interests, newspapers and television programmes have predominantly represented the vices of politics and its weaknesses, ending up constructing a representation of an evil governmental elite that stands in opposition to the mythic image of the 'good people'. This image can become even more favourable when the media itself suggests the need for a new form of politics that is at least formally more open to the issues citizens face (Mastropaolo 2012). It is difficult not to see a reflection of these processes of disintermediation, initially triggered by the mainstream media and then diffused by digital media, in the anti-elitist form of populism. Indeed, these processes have made the ideas of being excluded from power and relegated to the margins of society by elite groups less and less acceptable to public opinion (Canovan 2004; Alvares and Dahlgren 2016). And these same processes have offered leaders the opportunity to present themselves as spokespeople for political dissatisfaction and the frustration of those who feel excluded.

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[5] The concept of disintermediation was introduced in media studies by Chadwick (2007, 232). See also Chadwick (2006) and Mancini (2013).

Using the same analytical perspective, one can also ask whether it is possible to identify typical elements of mediatisation in the exclusionary populism that is rooted in identification and aims to reinforce a sense of belonging to the 'imagined community' (Anderson 2016). One can assert that the logic of polarisation has contributed greatly to triggering explosive exclusionary populism. Polarisation was partly generated through attack advertising (Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1995), which has since become radicalised due to the effect of a more and more aggressively partisan and extreme media,[6] but also through the frequent use of social networks as echo chambers, in which the repetition and affirmation of similar opinions has stimulated intolerance towards diversity. Naturally, the presence of xenophobic content is an important element in qualifying the more general tendency towards polarisation, which pits insiders against outsiders within each group in the wider context of contentious politics (Tilly and Tarrow 2015).

However, this aspect also merits further investigation. In fact, more focused analyses are needed in order to understand to what extent exclusionary politics belongs to the realm of rhetoric and to distinguish between authentic xenophobic propaganda and true ideological opposition to 'others' (foreign people, immigrants and so on) from simple forms of 'straight-talking', which reveal problems that are usually left unspoken. Again, if 'paradoxically the fact that we live in an ever more closely surveilled society has had the effect of intensifying the "sense of existential insecurity"' (Furedi 2009, 197), is it not in some way inevitable that political communication should intersect with waves of 'public anxiety' (Silverman and Thomas 2012, 284) concerning highly relevant issues such as terrorism and immigration? Overall, the problem seems to be twofold. First, as has already been mentioned, there is confusion about the different types of political communication in mediatised democracies and the exact attributes of populism. Second, there is the long-standing question of the role the media plays in supporting the emergence and success of forms of politics that are called populist. Although, overall, one cannot fail to agree with the critical overview with which the anthology composed by Aalberg and his colleagues concludes that there is still an inadequate volume of empirical research on the subject, it is, however, also possible to try to advance some more precise considerations.

The Role of the Media in Supporting the Rise of Political Actors Defined as Populist

Much has already been said about the role of the media in supporting the coming to power of a form of politics orientated in a populist direction (Mazzoleni et al. 2003; Mazzoleni 2008; Aalberg et al. 2017). However, among the aspects that deserve further exploration are the ambivalence of the media's role, interaction between citizens' concerns and the attention given to populist actors by the media. In fact, as has already been mentioned, not only can the media system be an ecological factor that favours the emergence and spread of messages that can be conventionally defined as populist, but it can also be considered to have a critical role, as it is potentially able to produce unintended effects for at least two complementary reasons. First, populist political actors can turn criticism of the information elite to their advantage. They can do this easily by both accusing journalists of being part of the maligned establishment and by exploiting the traditional underdog position that is generated when the media limits the amount of coverage reserved for a figure who is supported by a part of the public, above all when they present their ideas in a negative, critical or sarcastic tone. Clearly, from this point of view, the climate of public opinion in the country and, more generally, the orientation of the given societal values is decisive here. The second aspect that should be considered concerns the more or less willingness of citizens to embrace the content at the heart of what populists offer politically. If we explore the relative relationship between the attention dedicated to populist themes by the media and the orientation of public opinion, four typical situations emerge. On the basis of the available research on different national cases, it is possible to obtain a better understanding of the dynamics through which the populist message achieves greater or lesser diffusion (see Figure 23.1).

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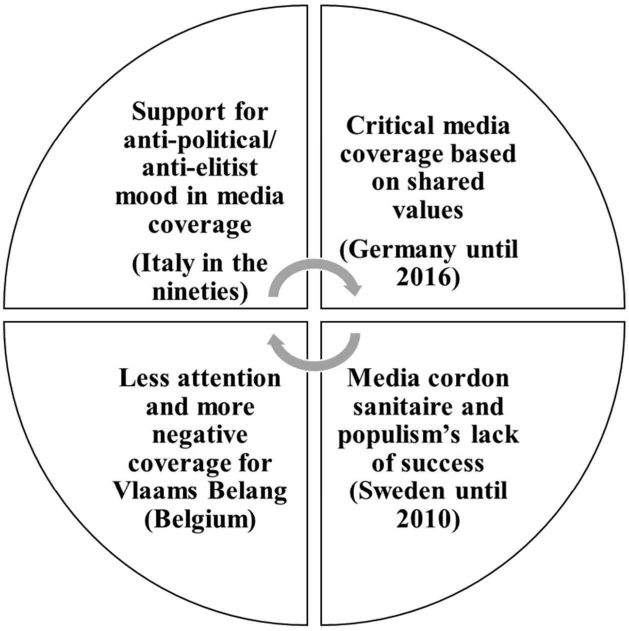
[6] On the concept of extreme media being distinct from partisan media, see recent contributions from Taylor (2017), for whom 'extreme television media' comprises 'those television shows that use bombast, derision or sarcasm to castigate or praise politicians, political actors or issues'. For an overall analysis of the polarising effects of partisan media and of the contemporary media system, see Levendusky (2013) and Prior (2013).

Figure 23.1: Media Coverage and Citizens' Attitude Toward Anti-Elitist and/or Exclusionary Messages


Support for anti-political/ anti-elitist mood in media coverage
(Italy in the nineties)
Critical media coverage based on shared values
(Germany until 2016)
Less attention and more negative coverage for Vlaams Belang (Belgium)
Media cordon sanitaire and populism's lack of success (Sweden until 2010)

The first typical situation is found in the convergence of a climate of opinion strongly oriented towards radical and serious change among the governing elites and a media discussion that supports that request for change, while encouraging anti-political protests. This is what occurred, for example, in Italy at the beginning of the nineties. The coverage of views by a section of the media and the opportunities allowed by popular television (Street 2016) came together to diffuse criticism of the political parties (Roncarolo 2002). The call for a new form of politics thus contributed to the success of two political parties in Italy that have often been considered populist – Forza Italia and Lega Nord (Tarchi 2008; Bobba and Legnante 2017) – but also led to the collapse of the First Republic. In contrast to this situation, Sweden had been considered an exception to the populist rule until a few years ago (Strömbäck et al. 2017). In fact, according to research findings, it was only after 2006 that the cordon sanitaire against populist insurgency, which until then had functioned well, started to weaken, and the media began to pay increased attention to the Swedish Democrats. This resulted in the realignment of some of the electorate and the first partial success of this marginal party in the 2010 election, which culminated in it entering the Swedish Riksdag with 5.7 per cent of the vote (Oskarson and Demker 2015).

Some intermediate cases of the typology are, for example, those in Belgium and Germany. In Belgium, even though there has never been an outright media cordon sanitaire against populists, journalists have paid less attention and given more negative coverage to the Flemish radical right-wing populist party Flemish Interest (Vlaams Belang, VB), which, up until its recent decline, nevertheless enjoyed a long period of increasing electoral success (De Cleen and Van Aelst 2017).[7] The German case, on the other hand, has been specular. In Germany, until recent signs of tension emerged, a wide agreement on the values of German society accompanied the critical attention the media paid to political parties in general (and parties with populist features in particular), which has made the country exceptional at European level in its substantial lack of support for populist parties at national level; at least until the success of Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) in various regional elections in 2016 signalled the probable start of a new phase (Fawzi et al. 2017).

This first draft of a typology, which references only a few cases by way of example,[8] cannot in any way claim to identify any certainties concerning the role of the media in supporting political actors who, in political debates, are defined as populist. Moreover, the typology should be made more complex to take into account the differences between popular and elite newspapers, which – although they are situated within the overall context of the progressive commercialisation of the media – are still not detectable (Rooduijn 2014). Similarly, much more attention should be paid to the political effects of media criticism and the uses that political actors can make of it (Esser et al. 2017). However, putting journalistic orientations and those of the citizens in systematic relation to one another again highlights the limits of considering the direct influence of the media and presents, instead, the opportunity to consider the media's effects in somewhat ecological terms.[9]

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[7] Before its recent decline, Vlaams Blok, later known as Vlaams Belang, had experienced continuous electoral growth from the end of the eighties to the mid-2000s and reached a particularly high peak in the 2004 political elections, when almost one out of four voters (24 per cent) voted for its proposals (De Cleen and Van Aelst, 2017, 99). Two examples of variations to the situation in Belgium can be mentioned here. First, there is the case of Lega Nord in Italy, whose electoral vote grew up to 1992 despite the indifference of the mainstream media and which today is still the subject of essentially critical coverage outside the official channels of the party and right-wing newspapers. The second, more complicated case is that of France, which, in spite of a somewhat critical journalistic attitude towards the Front National (now Rassemblement National), has witnessed an increase in the space reserved by the media for Jean-Marie Le Pen and later, above all, for his daughter Marine. Such increased attention can be attributed, on the one hand, to the growing commercialisation of the media and, on the other hand, to the increasing importance of the topic of immigration in contemporary society (Charlot 1986; Hubé and Truan 2017).

[8] The British case, which deserves its own analysis on account of its relevance and complexity (Akkerman 2011; Stanyer, Archetti and Sorensen 2017), is among the important examples that are missing here.

[9] See the documentation collected on the Media Ecology Association site (http://www.media-ecology.org).

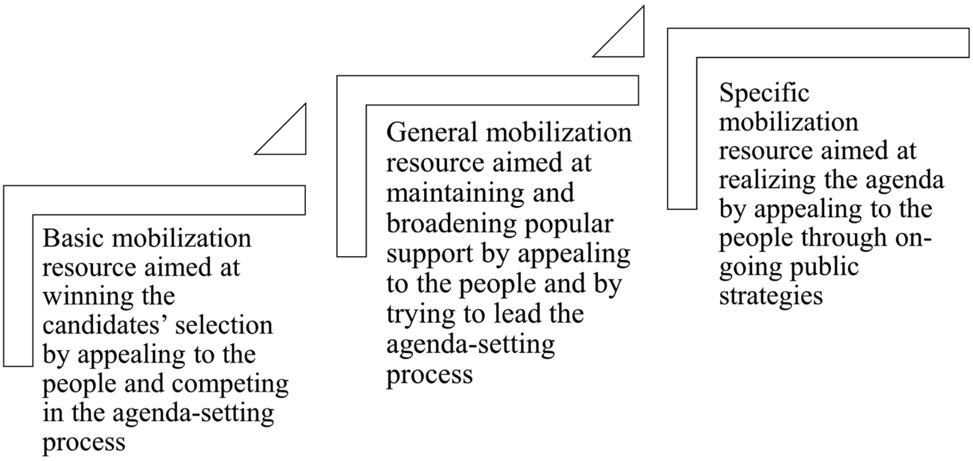
Conclusion: The Populist Style as a Resource for Mobilisation

It is from this perspective that reflections on populism can be narrowed down better. Two different aspects, which are connected to each other, should especially attract our attention and be drawn upon in future research. The first concerns the use of a populistic repertoire as a resource with which to respond to the challenge of establishing a relationship of trust with those citizens who are extremely critical, if not wholly disenchanted, with politics (Albertazzi and McDonnell 2008). The second aspect refers to the functions that the populistic style can have with respect to the need to conduct political leadership in the context of what Mair (2002) has defined as 'populist democracies', namely those democracies where parties have in fact stopped working as intermediaries between the demand side and supply side of representation. All this has to be done while attempting to take advantage of the opportunities new and old media present, but also while managing their negative effects and keeping their destructive potential under control.

If it is indeed true – as has been suggested here – that what Jagers and Walgrave have called 'populistic style' is instead, to a very large extent, just political communication style adapting to a new environment that is more widely exposed to the media, it should then be pointed out that such an adaptive process is much more wide-ranging than has so far been considered. This process not only necessitates learning the grammar of the media and its simplified or personalised logic, but it also, above all, necessitates responding to the new demands of a profoundly transformed society, which the media has helped render more independent but also more anxious and uncertain. It is a society that is much more individualised than was the case in the past, less trusting, and forced to face an infinitely more complex world without traditional cultural and ideological points of reference. It is a society in which the people are exposed to media narratives on a daily basis, which – whether deliberately or not – feeds society's uncertainties and fears and thus maximises its anxieties. Needless to say, this society has had to experience an extraordinarily long and intense economic crisis over the last decade, to which some citizens have responded with protests against austerity as part of anti-establishment movements (Della Porta et al. 2017; Gerbaudo 2017), while others have responded with reactions that many have judged to be populistic (Kriesi and Pappas 2015; Norris and Inglehart 2019), and almost everyone has experienced worry and resentment.

Apart from the necessity of responding to the challenges of social change, interpreting demands and governing contradictions, present-day political leaders find themselves in the difficult situation of having to compete in order to push through their proposals without being able to count completely on the support of their parties. This implies, among other things, that it is necessary to establish relationships with the citizens as a whole that, on the one hand, are direct and unmediated and, on the other hand, reinforce the attraction the people have towards discursive structures. Both forms of pressure – one that demands speaking for and responding to the expectations of disillusioned citizens and one that obliges an individual to compete in order to obtain and exercise political leadership without the mediation of a party – contribute to the establishment of what we define as populist communication (see Figure 23.2). Whoever puts themselves forward as a candidate in electoral competitions and whoever governs – but also whoever from the opposition challenges the majority – is thus required to employ a form of political communication that can effectively reach the citizens. They must forcefully point out their distance from traditional elites and, at the same time, give credible reassurance and a sense of belonging by presenting idealised visions and, at the same time, giving concrete objectives. In order to do this, they must navigate a complex media environment and be able to dominate not only traditional media logic, which operates on the basis of extreme simplification and 'spectacularisation', but also follow the imperatives of disintermediated horizontality. However, above all, they must make communication the strategic resource for permanent mobilisation with the aim of supplanting instability with political consensus. Since politicians need to continuously reinforce their ability to lead, they cannot reduce the intensity of their communication, soften their tone, cease to maintain connections with their potential electorate or cease to make the electorate feel part of a shared project centred around the keyword 'us'.

Figure 23.2: Populistic Communication Style as a Mobilisation Resource During Campaigning and Governing


Basic mobilization resource aimed at winning the candidates' selection by appealing to the people and competing in the agenda-setting process
General mobilization resource aimed at maintaining and broadening popular support by appealing to the people and by trying to lead the agenda-setting process
Specific mobilization resource aimed at realizing the agenda by appealing to the people through on-going public strategies

In such a context, dedicating oneself unflaggingly to gathering support from citizens by utilising a people-centred repertoire of communication and anti-elite rhetoric thus becomes an almost indispensable imperative within the social and political environment. The tone and intensity of the appeal to the people will surely change according to the national culture, the political system and the leaders by whom it is made. Moreover, in the different phases of the cycle between one election and another, the forms of communication can partly change according to factors that merit further empirical investigation. Anyway, it seems clear that, globally speaking, populist actors respond to the basic requirement of keeping the hearts of the people mobilised. It goes without saying that depending on the content and political strategies different forms of populist political offerings will arise. Donald Trump has shown us how far the alliance between a leader who presents himself as the hero of anti-elitism and his base can go and where calls for mobilisation can lead. However, confusing communication devices with the logic and aims of political action does not help us to understand. Whatever the reasons and the specific contents of a political proposal, the logic of mediatisation imposes its own rules.

More precisely, in the context of the by now dominant permanent campaign, it is not always possible to totally renounce the logic of mobilisation, not even when a party eventually passes from an election battle to the task of setting up a government's agenda. This is in part because continuing to feed passion among one's followers can compensate for the inevitable moderate tendencies that characterise the act of taking on the responsibilities (and constraints) of directing public affairs, conveying different messages according to whether one is addressing the political arena or the people. It is also in part because keeping one's own constituency mobilised with appropriate rhetoric, even in a populist vein, can become a way of guaranteeing resources, which can be used during crucial moments of political battles to exert pressure. In short, it is worth considering whether much of the political communication – and of politics as a whole – that is characterised as populist is not also this: a way of trying to hold campaigning and governing together, while attempting to survive the impossible challenge of actually delivering what the people want within the framework of the constraints the economy and various crises impose. Without doubt, much more research is still needed in order for us to understand better what politics has become in our mediatised democracies.

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CHAPTER 24:

REFORM IN WAR: THE MEDIA POLICIES OF LATIN AMERICA'S LEFTIST POPULISTS

Philip Kitzberger

Introduction

Populists of all strands share the trait of holding critical views on the mainstream media. The latter usually get defined in populist appeals as a part, ally or instrument of established power that opposes and silences *the people*. Of course, the mainstream media targeted are different kinds of media institutions that vary according to each context (Waisbord 2019). If there is a common core in the fact that certain established media institutions are placed in populist views and rhetoric as (at least part of) the powers that antagonise *the people*, questions arise about the extent to which populists in government exhibit specific media policies. Does it make sense to talk about populist media policies? And if something as a common media policy core exists, how does it relate to democratic freedom of expression? The main aim of this article is to approach these questions by exploring the media policies of Latin America's wave of leftist-populist government experiences and how they have been discussed. What can be learned from them? There is no disagreement across approaches to populism in the respect that the presidencies of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela, Rafael Correa in Ecuador, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner in Argentina and Evo Morales in Bolivia pertain to a regional leftwards-oriented populist wave. Each of these experiences has additionally pushed ambitious policies intended to radically reshuffle power relations in the media sector in the midst of confrontational relations with wide sectors of the privately dominated mainstream media.

These policies, their nature, purpose and consequences have been a very contentious issue in regional public debate. Academia has not managed to escape the polarised views around these political experiences either (Hawkins 2016). Widespread naturalisation of anti-populism in journalism and in social sciences has contributed to a set of dominant, negative normative expectations regarding populism and media freedom (Moffitt 2018). Confirming those expectations, standardised indexes of media and press freedom – such as those issued by Freedom House, V-Dem or Reporters Without Borders – reveal a negative correlation between cases coded as populism and freedom of expression ratings, with left-leaning populist governments having a statistically increased negative effect on media freedom measurements. Causal narratives range from characterisations of populism as intrinsically authoritarian and/or illiberal, to political science approaches that point to the incentive structures of populist leftist leaders in certain political and media institutional settings (Kellam and Stein 2016; Piccato et al. 2016; Kenny 2020). Media policies (and their relation to press freedom and democracy) cannot be properly understood by bracketing the political dynamics in which they occur. Their value for comparative analysis and for advancing knowledge about populism and media (policies), their drivers, determinants, enforcement and consequences in general depends on correctly grasping their wider political and media-system contexts (Humphreys 2012; Waisbord 2013). This chapter will examine the media policies of Latin America's recent wave of leftist populists in the context set by the prior role of the media in the different regions' political life and by the 'media wars' in which they took place. I will first review the main approaches used in scholarly studies and then undertake an empirical reconstruction from the previous context to the present populist aftermath. I will finally discuss some of the observations in relation to the questions posed.

Approaches

As to the factors shaping leftist-populists' media policies, accounts ranged between an emphasis on pre-existing *populist mindsets* and *views on the media*, on the one hand, and explanations rooted in the contextual/institutional opportunities and constraints, on the other. These dimensions are not mutually exclusive, as most policy formation accounts recognise some sort of mediation and mutual determination between ideas or policy beliefs and contextual constraints. Some studies have underscored the weight of pre-existing populist world views and attached re-foundational ambitions as distinctively shaping media policies. Waisbord's contributions (2011; 2013b), for instance, have highlighted the importance of ideas and perceptions. While acknowledging other concurring factors, Waisbord argues that Latin American populism has a discourse tradition rooted in a mixture of Marxism and nationalism, which views the media as powerful instruments of domination of anti-popular outward-oriented minorities. Such views support calls for radical reform. Further, inscribed in populism's DNA lie both an obsession with the media due to the perception of their decisive role in political struggles, and an assumption of the illusionary nature of any claims of autonomy and neutrality.

Other studies have alternatively emphasised the historical, politico-institutional and media system constraints that shaped populist policies. These approaches do not deny the role of ideas but focus on how political-institutional settings and vested interests condition their viability (Kitzberger 2012; 2016; de la Torre and Ortiz 2016). From that perspective, Cristina Kirchner's, Morales' or Chávez's media policies are not populist in the sense that they follow preconceived populist media-policy scripts. They are rather the product of a series of constrained choices that shaped them as such.[1] What makes them populist are the meanings conferred on them in an increasingly polarised political arena. The governments and their reformist allies saw in them a democratic response to *media monopolies* or *hegemonic media*. To the mainstream media and the political opposition, they were no more than expressions of populism's authoritarian nature oriented towards silencing dissent. Populist media policies are therefore a marker and divider of populist and anti-populist identities (Samet 2016; González 2021). This perspective follows Levitsky and Roberts (2011) in characterising a *party-institutional* or a *populist-outsider* path within the leftist turn. The structural constraints and the institutional incentives attached to those pathways account for the degree of policy moderation or radicalism – i.e. willingness to deviate from economic orthodoxy, to alter property relations and to redistribute.

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[1] For an analogous analysis of Perón's – classic populist – heavy-handed press policies, see Cane (2011).

The left-turn governments that emerged in the context of party system collapses featured personalist outsiders prone to populist mobilisational appeals. The electoral manoeuvring room provided by the lack of a competitive opposition and by the export commodity boom encouraged radical reformism. Much of the policy choices of these post-neoliberal populisms and their re-politicisation of class clashed with editors' policy preferences and media-related business interests. They thereby reawakened historical institutional memories of traditional media institutions confronting classic populism. Populist outsiders emerged amid discredited and electorally weakened established parties. In this initial setting, oppositional forces faced disincentives to invest in electoral strategies. Their links, affinities and access led them to converge in the media arena, reinforcing the media's role in the nascent anti-populist movement (Kitzberger 2012; Van Dyck 2019). While prior identities matter, at certain critical junctures political actors take decisions to switch towards confrontation, based on short-term calculations, that, as they unroll, define and eventually stabilise political (populist) identities. In other words, instead of unilaterally positing that populist mindsets determined 'media wars', scholars should pay attention to the degree to which 'media wars' forged (leftist-)populist identities.

Post-Neoliberal Leftist Populism and Media Policies in Latin America

Context

The leftist populists' media politics have to be considered in their setting. In Latin America's media systems, both print and broadcast media developed predominantly as privately owned and commercially oriented institutions. While the press originated in 19th century elite disputes that legated traditional family papers, radio and television developed under the influence of US capital and its media industry. Editorial stances and newspaper owners' political leanings have prevalently tilted towards conservative positions, even military dictatorships, and towards opposing populism and the left. However, media owners' relations to state elites are better characterised as those of mutual accommodation and instrumentality. The *quid pro quo* consisted in leaving media interests unregulated and/or distributing particularistic favours in exchange for docile political coverage. In this scenario, public service logics never took root, and state outlets functioned mostly as governmental mouthpieces. The 1980s transitions from authoritarian rule hardly included public debate on the media's role in democratic politics. Democratisation in Latin America coincided with a dramatic expansion of the broadcasting industry, with television consolidating itself as the dominant medium structuring national public spheres (Fox and Waisbord 2002). This expansion coincided with the 1980s debt crisis, the worst socio-economic stagnation in Latin American history. This crisis severely damaged the credibility of re-nascent party politics. In that scenario, media institutions, especially the forming conglomerates, acquired a new centrality and reputation as a power factor.

Neoliberal reforms transformed the media landscape in the 1990s. Privatisation, the removal of ownership restrictions and regulatory liberalisation resulted in multimedia conglomeration and trans-nationalisation, thereby consolidating oligopolistic media markets on the world's top rates of ownership and audience concentration (Fox and Waisbord 2002; Mastrini and Becerra 2009; Hughes and Prado 2011). Increased market logic reinforced problems of diversity, pluralism and the overrepresentation of privileged groups' interests and viewpoints (Hughes and Prado 2011; Segura and Waisbord 2016). Marketisation did not reduce the game of particularistic political pressures either; it merely improved the resource balance in favour of media interests (Hallin and Papathanassopoulos 2002; Hughes and Prado 2011). The context of the increased mediatisation of politics and declining muscle in mass-political organisations turned media powerhouses into perceived key political players. Those developments were themselves the cumulative product of media policies that, sanctioned behind-the-scenes and selectively enforced, reflected the particularistic exchanges between state and media elites. After re-democratisation, media regulation in the public interest became a no-go area for political elites increasingly fearful of corporate reactions. Accommodating the mainstream media seemed the only game in town for political survival. In this context, media policies have been characterised as 'captured', which alludes to media owners' capacity to influence and steer public regulation in their own interests (Hughes and Prado 2011; Guerrero and Márquez-Ramírez 2014; Segura and Waisbord 2016).

Post-Neoliberal Forms of Populism

By 2000, the exhaustion of the Washington Consensus and the so-called 'pink tide' changed the setting. With the 1998-2002 economic crisis, hardship unleashed a backlash against neoliberal reforms. Most incumbents were voted out of office and campaigning against neoliberalism became an electorally successful approach. The subsequent post-2002 export commodity boom provided the room to govern on the left (Levitsky and Roberts 2011). Within these post-neoliberal governmental experiences, those that emerged amid examples of radical party system collapse especially – Hugo Chávez (1998-2013) in Venezuela, Evo Morales (2005-2019) in Bolivia and Rafael Correa (2007-2017) in Ecuador – or party system partial disarray – Néstor and Cristina Kirchner (2003-2015) in Argentina – governed as populists.

Chávez's arrival as Venezuela's president in 1998, amid an abyssal political crisis, inaugurated the cycle of media-government wars. Early on, established media players, perceiving their usual insider-ways of exerting influence on the state blocked, assumed a leading oppositional role. Media outlets' editors and owners, and high-profile journalists assumed key roles in mobilising opposition, radicalising a discourse that thoroughly denied Chávez democratic legitimacy (Lugo and Romero 2003). Anti-Chavism mirrored Chávez's anti-establishment discourse and claimed exclusive democratic authority. In the absence of party-political stances, news outlets turned into *de facto* mouthpieces of the opposition. Their reporting became subordinate to the task of eroding the government. Both identities rose in an antagonistic, polarising form of choreography (Samet 2017; González 2021). By 2001, media elites joined a plot to remove Chávez by extra-electoral means. Backed by one-sided private media coverage, a putsch was attempted in April 2002. After the failed *putsch* Chávez deployed radical policies to reshape the media landscape that would portray him as a regional inspiration and a menace. With different timing Argentina's, Bolivia's and Ecuador's left-turn governments followed similar patterns of polarisation between the government and established media institutions. Venezuela's example had signalled the political viability of confrontational strategies towards the mainstream media.

Embattled governments deployed direct communication practices, such as regular presidential broadcasts, to publicly confront the news media by exposing their bias attributed to elite domination and, consequently, by calling for radical media democratisation reforms. At the opposite pole, the mainstream news media contested these governments as authoritarian populists threatening press freedom and liberal democracy itself. Invariably, these menacing traits were associated to *Chavismo*, an effective issue with which to mobilise (especially right-wing) anti-populist opinion both in and outside Venezuela. These media politics, which characterised the leftist populist experiences, signal the passage from an accommodational to a confrontational pattern of relationships. Media-government conflicts collapsed with the formation of nascent populist political identities and the (re-)birth of the populism/anti-populism polarisation as a central political fault line, with the private media occupying a prominent role as relatively independent organisers of anti-populist opinion. The governmental approach of going public with exposing the interests of established media institutions, criticising their bias in news coverage and disputing the media's pretences of representing the public, brought about the intense politicisation of the media order, which indicated a major policy shift. As Waisbord (2011, 99) puts it: 'Populist policies have triggered a vibrant yet belligerent debate about media reform, which has reinvigorated old discussions in the region about the desirable role of states, market, and civil society in media systems.' The increased debate, however, came at the price of the dominance of polarised binary controversies. If one side saw long-awaited democratisation to reverse historically elitist and commercial media domination, the other interpreted the declared democratisation intentions as covering up instrumental moves by authoritarian populists intended to curb free speech and silence critics.

The counterpart to these media critical discourses were radical changes in governmental communication. Regular presidential broadcasts and other practices seeking direct communication and the by-passing of journalism became normal. During the all-out confrontations, leftist populists deployed a wide range of political resources that, besides the mobilisation of unprecedented legal reforms, are part of media policies in a broad sense. The myriad initiatives, actions and decisions responded to immediate motivations, be they interpreted as serving imperatives of *counter-hegemonic battles* against dominant anti-popular media powers or, inversely, as attempts to *curb the independent press*. As a whole, these policies reverted to the market orientation of the 1990s in an attempt to rebalance the weight of the market, state and civil society in the media sphere. Like the rest of the left-turn governments, populists stressed that the state should play an active role in media regulation, ownership, funding and production. Populists, however, outperformed in creating or revamping the state media. Of course, their public interest programming, coverage and editorial line remained generally tightly aligned with the government to counter the oppositional press (Kitzberger 2012). Government media activism also focused on fostering the non-profit sector and so-called 'community media'. Added to legal recognition and rights in constitutional and legislative reforms, significant portions of alternative, resource-poor media received material government support. While pre-existing alternative media movements allied with governments in their questioning commercial media dominance, tensions over autonomy and co-optation arose within these groups. Yet the governmental aim of radically altering power relations in the media sphere did not mean an all-out attack against private media. Instead, the *Realpolitik* of confronting established media institutions called for seeking alliances with certain other pre-existing or private media that were created *ad hoc*.

Selective rewards for allies and decisions stripping foes from resources partly characterised media war policies. In Argentina, for example, the Kirchner's media war focused on the Clarín Group, the country's dominant conglomerate. The legal reform was the long-term intended instrument to curtail the conglomerate's dominant power through the imposition of anti-concentration rules that would have forced the group to divest and fragment.[2] However, throughout Cristina Kirchner's tenure several other state levers played a role in undermining Clarín's interests and credibility. Initiatives ranged from promoting public questioning and judicial investigations of Clarín's role during the dictatorship, stripping the conglomerate of their long-standing lucrative first division soccer transmission rights, reducing government advertising and promoting competitors (Kitzberger 2016). In Ecuador, Correa radically changed private commercial ownership structures. Enacting the new constitution, the government forced the financial sector out of the broadcasting market. Parts of the assets were confiscated and run by the state. Correa additionally prohibited public contracts with media companies with established residence in tax havens, discretionary allocated public advertising and used tax policies to affect media adversaries. Correa even resorted to suing columnists and media directives in courts. In Venezuela, notoriously, licence renewal for broadcasters, among many other state decisions which affected private media interests, depended on their stances and owners' attitudes towards Chávez (Waisbord 2013a).

Legal Reforms

All four cases of leftist populism pushed forward a series of ambitious media regulatory reforms. The fullest expression of the policy shift lies in the contrast between the wave of legal and constitutional reforms and the almost non-existent legislation since democratisation (Waisbord 2011). In their general goals concerned with *political* and *social welfare*, the present reforms also represented a counter tendency to the globally prevailing convergent media and telecommunication policies, which focused on efficiency and technological concerns (van Cuilenberg and McQuail 2003). If policies are understood as referring to conscious public projects for achieving some goal through certain means, it is in the content of these legal reforms and in the process of their sanction that a populist policy core should be sought. The main legal reforms were the following: Argentina's Audiovisual Communication Services Act (2009), Bolivia's Law Against Racism and All forms of Discrimination (2010) and the General Telecommunications and Info-communication Services Act (2011), Ecuador's Organic Law on Communication (2013) and, finally, Venezuela's Organic Law on Telecommunications (2000) and the Radio and Television Social Responsibility Act (2004). In Ecuador and Bolivia, certain structural regulations regarding diversity and ownership, while sanctioning rights to communication, also found expression in new constitutions sanctioned in 2008 and 2009 respectively.

In all of the aforementioned countries, a central focus of the reforms has been on regulating radio and television services.[3] Informed by a vision of the positive role of the state as a guarantor of the democratic freedom of expression, and with the backdrop of a diagnosis of democratic deficiencies, the reforms contained a series of policy goals such as securing media pluralism, diversity and minority group rights. Most of the policy instruments intended to pursue such goals – cross ownership bans, licence concentration limits, market-share caps, programming quota's, subsidies and public broadcasting – conform to traditional policy devices oriented towards political and social welfare objectives. Others, such as the provision of broadcast spectrum reserves for community media, constitute regional innovations. The latter's development can be traced to the historical struggles of community media to overcome illegality (Kitzberger 2017). Though all of the populists' reforms contain, to varying degrees, that media democratisation agenda, the policy normative narratives are not in themselves populist. They stem from pre-existing media movements, activism and advocacy networks, acting on both the domestic and transnational levels. Rather, the populists' frictions with the established media led them to converge (and articulate reform coalitions) with those mobilised groups. Media reform movements and organised citizens played a critical role in these processes and decisively shaped the legal reform outcomes (Waisbord 2013a). The regional anti-neoliberal climate, the electoral triumphs of challengers from the left and the increased tension between the state and media elites encouraged mobilisation. The sense of political opportunity glued diverse groups from community media movements – trained in demanding (legal) rights – ,journalists, unions, NGOs, advocacy groups and universities around umbrella frames of communication rights (Mauersberger 2016; Segura and Waisbord 2016).

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[2] Through judicial filings, Clarín successfully avoided enforcement.

[3] Digital communications regulation has not raised systematic attention in the populists' reform agendas.

All populist reforms share some proportion of those agendas that originated in civil society. However, important legislative outcome differences appear upon examination. In what relevant aspects do the populist media reforms vary? What accounts for those variations? As far as legal reforms are concerned, the familiar distinction between a radical populist left and a moderate party left does not account for policy outcome variation. Uruguay's moderate left not only sanctioned a media law but also drafted a reform strikingly similar to Argentina's. These Southern Cone leftist reforms, in turn, sharply contrast with those of the Andean leftist populists in key respects. Argentina's 2009 Audiovisual Law most closely featured the demands of the reform movements. The legislative draft was famously based on almost all the 21 points manifesto of the so-called Coalition for Democratic Broadcasting. It was the first regulation to stipulate broadcasting spectrum reserves (in thirds) for the private commercial, state and non-profit sectors, in line with UNESCO's and other international organisations' policy recommendations regarding pluralism and democratic freedom of expression. The law therefore became a normative reference (Mauersberger 2016; Segura and Waisbord 2016).

Additionally, the legislation mainly addressed plurality and diversity concerns by means of structural regulations aimed at reversing excessive media concentration through divestment mechanisms. Its main features were pay-TV subscriber caps, cross-ownership bans and limits to broadcast and cable television licence numbers. While still executive dominated, the law broadened political and social representation in regulatory agencies and public media boards. As regards content regulation, the law created an audiences' ombudsman with advisory powers, leaving conflict resolution in the hands of the judiciary. For its compliance with international freedom of expression standards, the bill was praised by the freedom of expression rapporteurs of both the Organization of American States and the United Nations. The same year, another law decriminalising libel and slander was approved by the Argentine Congress. Argentina's audiovisual law is almost identical to Uruguay's of 2014 in terms of its name, regulatory scope, core values, policy goals and structure regulating instruments. Uruguay stands as the only case within the leftist turn of the non-populist moderate party left that passed a media regulatory reform. The cases of the Andean countries share parts of the principles and devices of the Argentinean model. Bolivia and Ecuador in their 2011 and 2013 laws especially, which explicitly adopted broadcasting spectrum reserves, affirmative action measures and anti-concentration rules, among other devices. The earlier Venezuelan 2000 law contains advances in recognition of non-profit groups as right-holders and the state's duty towards them. But besides these structural broadcasting regulations, the Andean countries' reforms focused on certain content regulations that raised domestic and international controversy given their incompatibility with Western standards of freedom of expression.

What are then the determinants of varying populist media policy reforms? As stated earlier, current dual dichotomies between the 'populist' and 'moderate' wings on the left do not help much in accounting for the two types of outcome concerning legal/regulatory reforms. The latter have to be traced back to factors/variables such as prior organisation and cohesion of reform movements, the presence of ethnic cleavages, an authoritarian past and other political incentives (Kitzberger 2017). The Argentinian and Uruguayan legal reforms are a story of mutual influences due to parallel historical and political developments, their geographical and cultural proximity, and personal links. The Uruguayan Frente Amplio government had pioneered advancing legal recognition for community radio, thus granting equal opportunities to access broadcasting frequencies with the 2007 Community Broadcasting Act. The idea of reserving a part of the spectrum for private non-profit actors and restructuring the prevailing logic of frequency allocation was later adapted in the Argentinian 2009 law, by establishing three types of broadcasters (state or public, private commercial and private non-profit sector) with spectrum rights, a division later incorporated into the Uruguayan 2014 Audiovisual law. Upon their arrival, none of the governments had taken up the issue of media reform. Yet in both cases, the governmental change signalled an opportunity that worked as an incentive for social mobilisation. In both countries, broad media democratisation coalitions surfaced. Kirchner's early opening towards issues of human rights served firstly as an incentive to achieve the unitary framing – despite the many differences – of media regulation as a matter of human rights and democracy. The presence of human rights organisations in the coalition opened the doors to government offices (Mauersberger 2016). In Uruguay, a similarly composed coalition was intimately linked to the extensive grassroots activists that participate within Frente Amplio's organisational structures.

In both cases, the integration of the human rights movement into the media reform coalitions had far-reaching consequences. These movements were a direct legacy of the repressive authoritarian experiences during the 1970s. Their prestige and public legitimacy helped to mobilise wider sectors of society, especially in Argentina. Due to their historical struggles, they were trained in reaching international organisations such as the OAS dependent Inter American Human Rights Commission. These linkages contributed to articulating a common frame in the language of rights and freedom of expression and helped the movements' agendas to conform to international standards. That conformity derived from public support by international organisations and INGOs such as Reporters without Borders. These legitimations, in turn, not only helped to widen public support and overcome resistance, they also encouraged the executives to risk moves that were fiercely opposed by the big media. The scaling-up and mobilisation facilitated by the human rights frame was also matched by the fact that, in both cases, the existing legal frameworks were still those enacted by the military dictatorships, so that reform could be soundly presented as part of *unfinished democratisation*.

The 2008 agrarian conflict in Argentina ended the early pragmatic understanding with the Clarín Group and initiated the confrontational phase of Kirchnerism. In that context, Cristina Kirchner approached the coalition and relied on their previous work to elaborate the bill draft. The mobilised support of the coalition expanded to a wider number of intellectuals, journalists and personalities from culture who perceived class bias in the media's coverage during the conflict with the landowners and shared the perception that Clarín's excessive power was problematic for democracy. Meanwhile, after the government's parliamentary defeat over the agrarian conflict, the political opposition and Clarín did not believe the media law would succeed in congress and consequently chose to delegitimise the initiative as a gag law, and therefore abstained from debating it. Yet they miscalculated the political correlation of forces. The widened public support and mobilisation allowed the government to expand its legislative coalition to include progressive non-Kirchnerist and minor oppositional parties to pass the bill. In Uruguay, the media reforms were approved in a much less polarised and mobilised scenario by the Frente Amplio's legislative majority. While similar in content and opposed by the business sector, the Uruguayan Audiovisual law passed without much public mobilisation and awareness, compared to its equivalent in neighbouring Argentina. Despite the fact that Bolivia and Ecuador incorporated many of the structural policy instruments into their legal reforms, while Venezuela's early telecommunication and broadcasting laws only weakly recognised broadcasting rights to non-profit actors, the three Andean countries stand out as a distinct group given the presence in their legislation of a series of content regulation provisions that are foreign to the general policy orientation discussed above. In sharp contrast to the Southern Cone cases, these heteronomous provisions deviate from international freedom of expression standards.

Divergent historical paths and several contextual factors account for this different regulatory outcome. First, in the Andean cases there are difficulties in creating and sustaining unified coalitions for media reform. These weaknesses are linked to the specific contexts in which they emerged. On the one hand, with the partial exception of Bolivia, during the 1970s the Andean countries had not experienced extremely repressive military dictatorships comparable to those that had begot potent human rights movements in the Southern Cone. As a consequence, they lacked the kind of organisations experienced in recurring to international human rights regimes to make their claims and that were key to extending the language of rights and their advocacy repertoires to wider agendas. In Bolivia and Ecuador, social mobilisation was dominated by identity and ethnic frames. In these different settings, media reform movements remained relatively weak, while their main claim revolved around indigenous community broadcasting organisations. The lack of a common backbone provided by the human rights frame made bridging divisions between radical leftist and moderate pluralist views difficult. Therefore, particularly in the case of Ecuador, divisions in the media movement weakened their influence in the legislative process. On the other hand, media reform groups in these countries rose in a context of political representation crises that disincentivised strategies oriented towards legal recognition and institutional reform. Therefore, alternative media groups linked to protest movements tended towards radicalisation and widened the gap between themselves and reformist-oriented NGOs, academia and international cooperation.

Second, the prior troubled relationship between the governments of the Bolivarian bloc and the OAS, which led them to generally dismiss the transnational legal regime structured in the Inter American Human Rights System as an agent of US imperialism, blocked its role as a reform ally. Contrastingly, international organisations stepped in as critics, not supporters, of the Andean reforms. Third, Chávez, Morales and Correa rose to power in the midst of severe political crises. The absence of competition or electoral threats incentivises radicalisation. But more importantly, in such scenarios, oppositional voices and interests which are politically impotent tend to recur to the media as expression platforms, further pushing them into oppositional roles and into polarised engagement with the executive. In these circumstances, political logic tends to overrule journalistic and professional norms in the news media. Governments, in turn, decode the convergence of the media and the opposition as *putschist* behaviour, thereby reinforcing previous beliefs in the media's nature. In sum, extreme polarisation with the media, an absence of solidly trusted allies in organised civil society and a lack of international normative references deemed as legitimate led to the drafting of bills based on rather idiosyncratic traits but, especially, on immediate and the governing nucleus's particular experiences of threats to its political survival. These influences became visible in the particularities of each of the content restrictive provisions.

Venezuela's legislative reform almost lacked structural diversification regulations. By 2000 and 2004, the discussions over frequency allocation mechanisms had not matured yet, as seen above. The 2004 Radio and Television Social Responsibility Act focused exclusively on content regulation. Beneath programming quotas devised to promote national content production, bans on advertising for tobacco and alcohol, and provisions for children's viewer rights, the legislation lists a number of restrictions that clearly reflect the recent experience of private media behaviour during the 2002 attempted coup. It foresees, for example, severe sanctions for messages that *promote war*, *incite public order alterations*, are *contrary to national security* or that *ignore the legally constituted authorities*. Narrowly defined activities, such as omitting the hour/date of recorded images, or non-compliance with governmental chain transmissions, make the influence of memories of media behaviour even clearer. An executive-controlled agency is responsible for determining and sanctioning such infringements. Such discretionary powers, critics noticed, promote self-censorship and have dissuasion effects on reporting and opinion (see the annual report of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, 2004).

The 2009 Bolivian constitution commits the state to 'supporting the creation of community media and providing them with equal conditions and opportunities'. The 2011 telecommunications law takes up the country's constitutional mandate by dividing the available broadcasting spectrum into thirds and divides the non-profit sector between 'social communitarian' and *indigenous peoples* and places limits on licence concentration. The bill was passed as a 'technical law', away from public attention. Attempts at forming a broader reform coalition failed. Indigenous organisations, through 'their own' representatives in congress, nevertheless succeeded in introducing the spectrum reserves in the final draft. Bolivia's telecommunications law contains no content regulations. However, the 2010 *anti-racism law* stipulates fines or licence withdrawals for publishing/airing 'racist and discriminatory ideas'. Again, the potential for government discretion raised concern. Yet, contrasting it to its equivalent in Venezuela (and later Ecuador), the law's regulatory decree, taking up criticisms, improved *a-posteriori* and narrowed definitions and sanctions so as to make *essential progress* regarding freedom of expression standards (see the annual report of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights 2011). This comparatively receptive attitude towards criticism might be due to Morales' embeddedness in a strong pre-existing bottom-up social movement, which contrasts with Chávez's and Correa's more top-down leadership. The heteronomous content provisions in Bolivia's legislation also reflect the particular experiences of the governing elite shaped by the ethnic cleavage. Racist stereotypes depicting 'Indians' as diminished in political judgement and therefore prone to manipulation pre-existed and persisted after Morales' arrival, as reported by organisations such as Reporters Without Borders. Along the path to political power, the social movement led by Morales' ethno-populism continuously protested against the bias and racial stereotypes in mainstream media coverage.

After assuming government in 2007, Correa immediately called for a constitutional reform. The mainstream media's opposition led him to start the confrontation with these *poderes fácticos*, as he called them, lumping them with the established powers responsible for the 'neoliberal night'. The 2008 Constituent Assembly was initially an open process with wide social participation. Civil society organisations with media reform agendas gathered, despite tensions, in a 'Communication Forum'. The effort paid off. Framed as communication and information rights, the new constitution recognised public, private and community actors and guaranteed equal access to frequencies. It further prohibited 'communication monopolies' and specifically banned financial interests in broadcasting. Additionally, the constitution mandated the drafting of the Organic Communication Law within a year. The law was issued, with a delay of four years, in 2013. The long impasse reflected the divisions in civil society and within the governing coalition. In contrast to Argentina, the executive drafted the bill proposal behind closed doors. This unexpected move broke the reformist coalition. The organisations linked to the indigenous movement, which was already distanced from Correa, presented their own radical bill proposal and isolated moderate groups. Meanwhile, the government party did not count on a congressional majority. The executive's inclusion of content regulations linked to extra-judicial sanctions, added to ambiguities in the anti-concentration and frequency redistribution mechanisms, alienated progressives in the government and potential allies from opposition parties. Each time moderate sectors within the government attempted to reach an agreement to adjust content regulations to normative standards, Correa reacted disdainfully.

In Correa's view, the press acted as an extra-constitutional veto player throughout Ecuador's tumultuous political history. These praetorian symbolic powers acted unconstrainedly, as Correa's expression *sicarios de tinta* [**ink assasins**] denotes. Due to a belief undoubtedly influenced by the political instability that preceded him – three presidents had been ousted the previous decade – Correa often posited the existence of a historical pattern traceable to the lynching and killing of Eloy Alfaro in 1912, the leader of the modernising Ecuadorean liberal revolution and Correa's role model, allegedly instigated by the conservative press. The September 2010 attempted coup reinforced such narratives and increased his public defence of the need for exemplifying sanctions against such press behaviour. By the end of 2010, Correa consequently resorted to the penal system against a columnist and a newspaper editor for an opinion column that called him a 'dictator' and accused him of 'crimes against humanity' during the September crisis. After his re-election in 2013 and with him having obtained a congressional majority, the controversial communications act was passed. While it broadly upheld the structural regulations in the broadcasting sector, its content regulations included all forms of the media (print, broadcasting, pay television and online media). A government-dominated special agency was entitled to distribute sanctions and penalties over a wide range of infractions such as failing to provide *quality* content, *omitting* information of *public interest*, failing the obligation to circulate only *verified*, *corroborated*, *accurate* and *contextualised information*, among other vague definitions. The text even included a ban on 'media lynching'.

Selective Implementation

Critics have maintained that the above-mentioned differences in terms of regulatory devices and adjustment to freedom of expression standards remain in the legal texts. In their view, divergences in quality and freedom of expression standards are immaterial or diminished since populist governments never intended to create these rules to enforce them, but merely to instrumentalise them as weapons against their media foes. Especially in Argentina, critics see the law as window-dressing intended to co-opt civil society support, while they provide power holders with further levers to exert discretionary power against rivals in the public sphere. Even supporters of the laws have claimed that their implementation did not live up to their democratising goals and that many progressive aspects of the legislation were at odds with with the polarised political dynamics and governmental calculations of the time. The populist-led executives maintained a close influence over newly created regulatory agencies and imposed selective implementation, which extended the punishments/rewards logic (Mauersberger 2016; Segura and Waisbord 2016). But are stick and carrot tactics, selective law enforcement and media-clientelism specific traits of populist media policy or do they constitute a more pervasive feature of Latin America's media-politics relations, transcending partisan ideologies and even political regime form?

As has been widely established, particularism and patrimonialism are ubiquitous in organising media-politics connections in contexts of the low development of rational legal authority (Hallin and Papathanassopoulos 2002). The prevalence of selective implementation of legal or administrative rules, epitomised in the famous dictum attributed to both populist and non-populist political leaders: 'to the friends everything, to the enemies the law', has been a central and ecumenical tool of governmental media-management in the region. While critics have acknowledged that populism is not the exclusive bearer of such tactics, it has been accused of perpetuating or even deepening such practices of media patrimonialism despite its public commitments to media democratisation and change (Waisbord 2011; 2013b). As happens with other traits, such as public media outlets functioning as governmental mouthpieces, these general features are often identified in public debate and eventually in academia as being specific of populism. Beyond naturalised anti-populist stances, these perceptions might be conditioned by the fact that such practices come forward in the context of the politicisation of the media order conducted by populism. In contrast to 'normal' times, when such forms of logic remain rather invisible, their superimposition onto antagonistic media-government polarisation brings government discretional interference to the fore.

Populist Aftermath

While Venezuela backslid into outright authoritarianism, the other populist left governments lost office. All the cases of the populist aftermath brought about anti-populist right-tilted government alliances. In Ecuador, while Correa's party successor won, he broke with him to ally *anticorreísta* forces upon assuming power as president in 2017. In Bolivia, a *putsch* toppled Morales in November 2019, giving way to a provisional government. Only Argentina experienced a 'normal' transition with Kirchnerism leaving office after her 2015 electoral defeat. These populist aftermaths raise questions about the endurance of their reforms beyond the context they emerged in, their possible legacies and impacts, and the degree of restoration of previous patterns of captured media policies. Both Argentina and Ecuador counter-reformed their respective media laws.[4] While not repealed, both laws were substantially modified. Argentina's counter-reform consisted in the swift issuing of executive decrees that relaxed licence limits and ownership restrictions, thereby liberating Clarín of divestment obligations and further allowing its merger with a telecommunications giant. Ecuador, in contrast, followed a legislative path. After sending a draft focused on eliminating the controversial content regulations and engaging IACHR (Inter-American Commission on Human Rights) and UN freedom of expression rapporteurs, the government presented the reform as a transition from authoritarian rule. Both reforms reveal a certain level of restoration of captured policies given the return of back-door access to business and the retrenchment of the state and market alternative logic. It was, however, an example of incomplete restoration. Given insider-group mobilisation and the increased standing of the normative principles of pluralism and diversity embedded in the norms, most incorporated legal rights and resources into 'third sector' media (Kitzberger and Schuliaquer 2020).

Discussion

Politicisation of the media order is, arguably, the only common policy shared by and exclusive of the forms of populism studied here. Systematic public criticism of the mainstream media is absent in Latin America's non-populist pink tide governments. Even Uruguay's media reformist party avoided mobilising public opinion during legal debates. At the same time, this observation might travel well to right-wing government experiences. All the other traits described above pertain or are linked to contextual factors surrounding the populist government experiences. The overall reform agendas adopted by the leftist populists were driven by specific pre-existing demands mobilised by regional media democratisation movements linked to leftist and progressive traditions. The democratising element in populist appeals dovetailed here with the long-standing media democratisation demands of post-authoritarian Latin American countries. That same civil society agendas influenced the Uruguayan party-leftist media regulatory reform and made up the content of the failed Workers' Party-led governments in Brazil.

Further, variations in legal reforms within forms of leftist populism depended on particular developments in national political history, civil society developments or ethnic cleavages. Not all regional forms of leftist populism have used the penal code and content regulation to discipline public voices. Discretionary decisions, media patrimonialism and selective law enforcement to pursue instrumental goals are not exclusive of populism. They are rather general traits in Latin America's media-politics relations. The policies discussed were also contextual in that they were probably the last ones that focused on the traditional media. By 2010, according to World Bank data, only a third of Latin Americans were internet users. Traditional media, particularly empowered in Latin America during the 1990s, were still the dominant gatekeepers of public communication. The reform agendas were particularly centred on broadcasting and constituted a regional adaptation within the post-war political welfare-oriented policy paradigm. Subsequent forms of populism, left or right, are placed within post-broadcast digitalised environments.

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[4] The recently inaugurated centre-right government in Uruguay also initiated reforms to the 2014 law.

Finally, what can be concluded about the implications for media freedom in relation to the populist media policies scrutinised here? Do these observations on the leftist populists' media policies confirm that populist media policies erode freedom *per se*? Waisbord (2013b), paying attention to the Schmittian antagonist logic that underpins populist views, sees leaders claiming to embody *the people* and policies informed in such claims as a dubious way of improving openness in the public sphere. In discussing the Ecuadorean case, de la Torre and Ortiz Lemos (2016) stress that it is not the logic of populist discourse in itself that leads to authoritarianism. Rather, it is in the context of serious crises of representation that populist government strategies towards the media (and other institutions) tend towards democratic erosion. Interestingly, if radical institutional collapse is a (necessary) condition for a populist government to corrode freedom, then it is not populism *per se* that undermines the public sphere. As shown above, populists and their media policies that, out of nowhere, disturbed a vibrant democratic public sphere cannot be grasped as emergent. The outsiders emerged from crises in which polarising dynamics structured binary scenarios in which each side tended to deny democratic legitimacy to the other. The media were at the heart of those polarising contests. Those 'media wars' and their broader context cannot be abstracted when evaluating whether the character of the aforementioned media policies enhanced or eroded media freedom. Like Hallin (2020), reflecting on the limitations of media freedom's standardised measures, recently cautioned, it is unclear whether co-variations between ratings and pink tide populist presidents reflect media freedom or perhaps political polarisation between the media and state elites.

This is not to deny that populists have used (to varying degrees) state levers and their authority in chilling ways to unambiguously erode freedom of expression. But normative evaluations of democratic media freedom should also and independently take into account dimensions such as pluralism, scope and issues in public debate and voice inclusion and representation in the public sphere. Populism has shaken up policy debates through promises of tackling long-standing democratic shortcomings in the media sphere through state action. Some years ago, still in the populist heyday, Waisbord observed that populist policies were a reminder of the state's centrality as an 'arena for political, economic, and civic interests to wage political battles, and that governments have considerable margin of action to produce significant shifts in media environments' (2013, 135). In the present context of the populist aftermath, it could be added that populist policies also exhibit the limits of governmental politics in terms of improving democracy and freedom of expression in the public sphere.

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CHAPTER 25:

PERFORMING POPULISM: COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES FOR POLARISATION, PROVOCATION AND FEARMONGERING

Christina Holtz-Bacha

Introduction

When Donald Trump moved into the White House, his advisers were hoping he would give up tweeting on his personal Twitter account. The spread of unfiltered messages by an incumbent president was deemed unpresidential, and that was also the argument why Trump promised to abandon his early morning habit once he was elected (Gass 2016). Much to the horror of his advisers, Trump continued to post comments on his personal Twitter account rather than using the official account of the US president's office. Half a year into his term, in July 2017, and convinced of the success of his social media engagement, Trump mocked his critics by tweeting: 'My use of social media is not Presidential – it's MODERN DAY PRESIDENTIAL'. At the end, he boasted more than 84 million followers although had to acknowledge that several popstars and particularly his predecessor in the White House outranked him by far. Of course, Trump was well aware of the multiplier effect of his Twitter activities, which grabbed the attention even of those media outlets he called fake news (ABC News 2019). The huge interest in the Donald Trump's posts was first of all due to the power of the presidential office. Whatever a US president says and does is of prime importance nationally and internationally.

Attention is one of the most important resources, if not the most important, for political actors in the era of media abundance and information overload. In a democracy, political representatives need the media to address the public and inform citizens about their decisions in order to gain and sustain legitimacy *vis-à-vis* those they represent. In times of election campaigns, when politicians vie for power, the contest for attention is particularly fierce because attention is the necessary condition for any other effect. Even though digital media allow political actors to get in contact with citizens directly and without any journalistic intervention, they nevertheless still seek the attention of the traditional news media. Whereas messages on digital media are more likely to reach a partisan audience, the traditional media provide a broad public. In contrast to online media and particularly social networks, the traditional media usually enjoy greater trust and political actors hope that this may rub off on their own reputations. To increase the probability of reaching the attention of the media and to hold sway in the continuous flood of information, political actors need to consider the media's selection and production routines. These are known as news factors, which are characteristics of events and news stories (such as negativity/conflict/harm, surprise, number of people concerned, involvement of elite actors) that determine their news worthiness and therefore, consciously or unconsciously, guide journalists' selection of news. Thus, anyone who wants to prevail in the battle for attention is well advised to consider the selection routines of the media. In addition, with reference to previous research on news selection, Schulz (1982) argues that news factors correspond to general human attention criteria, which would explain the fact that the media audience applies similar criteria in their news media use (Eilders 2006).

Against this background, this chapter asks whether there are strategies that are characteristic of how populism presents itself to garner media attention and partisan support. This is done by collating the pertinent literature on this subject to provide an overview of characteristic populist strategies and to discuss whether such strategies are particularly promising in attracting public attention and what it is, in addition to the importance of the US president's office, that made Donald Trump’s tweets successful on the political stage.

The Strategic Character of Populism

Forgoing the contentious question of how to define populism, this contribution primarily draws on those authors who conceive of populism as a political style (Moffitt 2016a), a political communication style (Jagers and Walgrave 2007), a strategy (Weyland 2001; 2017; Barr 2018), a frame (Aslanidis 2016), a discourse (Bonikowski and Gidron 2015), or ‘a way of being and acting in politics’ (Ostiguy 2020, 29). This strand of research has widened the perspective towards a more comprehensive view of populism and, in one way or another, contributed to a ‘performative turn’ in the study of populism (Moffitt 2016b, 52) with a ‘shift in focus from *what populism is* to *what it does* and *how it does it*’ (Sorensen 2017, 138; original emphasis). However, even though these conceptualisations put an emphasis on the *how*, most of them also refer to the core elements of populism and assume that it is a certain type of content that finds its expression in a certain form and style.

Bonikowski and Gidron, for instance, define populism ‘as a discursive strategy that juxtaposes the virtuous populace with a corrupt elite’ and go on by arguing ‘that populism is best operationalized as an attribute of political claims’ (2015, 1593). Conceiving populism as a frame, Aslanidis ascertains that ‘populism modestly becomes a discourse, invoking the supremacy of popular sovereignty to claim that corrupt elites are defrauding “the People” of their rightful political authority. It becomes an *anti-elite discourse in the name of the sovereign People*’ (2016, 96). Adopting the frame concept, Heinisch and Mazzoleni understand populism ‘as an intrinsically ambivalent claim [...] diffused by individual and collective actors to challenge the *status quo* in favour of people's empowerment and elite change’ (2017, 117).

Pulling together the various approaches, Moffitt goes a step further by conceiving populism as a political style and defining it as ‘*the repertoires of embodied, symbolically mediated performance*’ (2016, 7; original emphasis). By drawing on performance and thus a term from the world of theatre and drama, Moffitt points to the strategic character of political style and, at the same time, broadens the perspective by embracing verbal and non-verbal elements in the mediation of populism. Moffitt's conceptualisation can thus be easily connected with approaches from the field of strategic communication and political marketing, such as Winder and Tenscher’s assessment of populism as a widely used political marketing technique and ‘a political communication style that is strategically deployed by political actors in order to mobilize voters and to establish stable relationships with specific target groups’ (2012, 231). Emphasising the communication perspective, Lederer et al. similarly build on ‘populism as a selling and marketing approach’.

As Barr points out, regarding populism in strategic terms has analytic advantages because 'we can observe the thing itself' (2018, 52) and the defining characteristics can serve as its indicators. Populism thus becomes measurable and can be subjected to qualitative and quantitative analysis. At the same time, assessing populism based on how it is expressed suggests treating it as a gradual phenomenon no longer bound to the simple dichotomy of populist/non-populist. However, this step means broadening the perspective and thus a loss of conceptual clarity, because a gradation inevitably includes those who are usually not regarded as populists and the pragmatic employment of a populist style, for instance for campaign purposes, addressed by Hartleb as 'electoral populism' (2012, 28) and, with reference to the 2016 Brexit campaign, by Smith et al. (2021) as 'strategic populist ventriloquism'.

Packaging Populism

Against this background, focusing on how populism is expressed and appeals to its target groups, in discourse and in behaviour, verbally and visually, implies that populist strategies are the means used to package populism. Strategies are based on calculations and are aimed at specific goals (Raschke and Tils 2013, 127). In this sense, populist strategies are the techniques applied in order to communicate populism to generate attention among the media and support from voters. In their search for a suitable definition of populism, several authors mention characteristic elements of how populist content is packaged and how populism presents itself to the public. Some of them have also been applied in or are the outcome of empirical research that is usually based on content or discourse analysis.

Polarisation

In his political style approach, Moffitt suggests three key features that characterise populism: '*appeal to "the people" versus the elite; "bad manners"; and crisis, breakdown, or threat*' (2016a, 29). The three features, however, concern different dimensions. The first, appeal to the people versus the elite, of course relates to the ideological content of populism that the ideational approach sees at its core (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2013, 500). Particularly with the surge of right-wing populism in Europe, the vertical dichotomy has often been complemented by a horizontal dimension that stands for the exclusion of those who are defined as the Others and not belonging to the people. In their seminal study that also laid the groundwork for the gradual measurement of populism, Jagers and Walgrave (2007), for instance, used two dimensions to distinguish between a thin concept (references to the people) and a thick concept (anti-establishment and exclusion of specific groups) and ascertain the degree of populism in Belgian parties' discourse. In addition to the proportion and the intensity of references to the people, Jagers and Walgrave employed an anti-establishment index combining anti-state, anti-politics and anti-media discourse, and an exclusivity index to tap negative evaluations of specific population categories (Jagers and Walgrave 2007, 328–331). They found that all Belgian parties employed the thin populist style but that only the Flemish Block (Vlaams Blok, VB) scored highly on all three indexes and therefore represented a 'textbook example of thin *and* thick populism' (ibid., 333).

In fact, as other research (Bos and Brants 2014) has shown, references and appeals to the people are common among political actors, but the populist construction of *the people* mostly draws its defining character from its association with anti-elitism and the demarcation towards groups that do not belong to *the people*. This is Trump presenting himself to Washington as an outsider who vows to drain the swamp, to put ‘crooked Hillary’ in jail, and to build a wall at the border to Mexico to prevent ‘criminals’ from entering the United States. It is Italy’s Five Star Movement’s (Movimento 5 Stelle, M5S) poster for the 2014 European election campaign with the claim ‘O noi o loro’ (Either us or them) and the presentation of their candidates as ‘No one accused, no one convicted, no one recycled, no politician by trade’. It is also Matteo Salvini’s poster for the 2019 European election campaign by the Italian Lega that says ‘Stop! Burocrati Banchieri Buonisti Barconi’ (Stop! Bureaucrats Bankers Do-Gooders Barges). And it is the Swiss SVP’s 2007 campaign poster showing white sheep standing on the Swiss flag and kicking a black sheep off the Swiss territory, accompanied by the claim ‘Creating security’ and crediting the authorship of a people’s initiative for the deportation of criminal foreigners (Doerr 2017).

As already addressed in these examples, appeals that draw a line against the establishment and the Others come along with stereotyping, stigmatisation, scapegoating and blame for negative and condescending characterisation of those groups, demonstrating in this way that they do not belong to the people, and for making them responsible for whatever social or economic problems are at stake (e.g. Jagers and Walgrave 2007, 331; Wodak 2015, 102; Sanders et al. 2017). The exclusionary discourse, drawing the line between ‘us’ and ‘them’, aims at polarisation, which Priester (2017, 534) calls a political practice and thus more than just a communication or mobilisation technique. In this way, pitting one group against the other primarily serves an identity-building function by constructing, affirming and reconfirming the identity of the people. In fact, Priester argues that the unique feature of right-wing populism lies neither at the programmatic nor at the stylistic level, but at the ideological level of an identity discourse which is variable content-wise (2017, 534).

Provocation

The polarising discourse finds support in and overlaps with what Moffitt (2016a, 29) lists as the second key feature of populism, bad manners. According to its denomination, *bad manners* evokes an association with certain forms of conduct and is thus very much bound to an actor, but also pertains to verbal and visual aspects in the packaging of populism. At the same time, and as the Twitter president has demonstrated, flaunting bad manners has proven a successful strategy for garnering the attention of the media and thus serves a double purpose. Bad manners come in many disguises and have been described in various ways. Moffitt (2016a) himself draws on Ostiguy’s concept of the high and the low in politics, which identifies the low as ‘an essential *and* noncontroversial defining feature of populism’ (Ostiguy 2009, 23). He characterises the low as coarse, uninhibited, warm and direct, displaying the ‘from here’ (as the opposite pole of cosmopolitanism) and home pride, and preferring a personalist form of leadership (Ostiguy 2020, 47). When Ostiguy further determines that ‘people [on the low] frequently use slang or folksy expressions and metaphors, are more demonstrative in their bodily or facial expressions as well as in their demeanor, and display more raw, culturally popular tastes' (ibid., 45) and finally also points to populism always being transgressive, his approach connects with those that emphasise the strategic employment of bad manners. Transgression runs counter to 'the "proper" way of doing politics, of proper public behavior, or of what can or "should" be publicly said' (ibid., 39). This relates to Wodak's (2014, 101) assessment of the 'strategy of discursive provocation', which stands for the intentional violation of taboos, political norms and conventions, and the constant testing and shifting of boundaries. Examples of this abound, from the Dutch Geert Wilders, Austria's Jörg Haider, Italy's former minister of the interior Matteo Salvini to Brazil's president Jair Bolsonaro and US president Donald Trump, and while (bad) manners are contextual, their targeted employment nevertheless appears to be a phenomenon that characterises populism across cultures.

In a similar vein, Sorensen (2018, 8–9) suggests *disruption* as an analytical concept supposed to explain populist strategic behaviour. Using the example of the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) and the South African Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), she demonstrates how populist actors engage in disruptive acts to increase their (media) visibility, manage their self-presentation and, at the same time, expose the dubiousness of the elite's impression management. Challenging established political norms and practices, disruptive acts, bad manners and provocation also serves populists in constructing an image of authenticity for themselves. The staging of authenticity is generally regarded as an important political marketing technique (Schneiker 2019, 214) but plays a particular role in populist actors' self-presentation as genuinely authentic and true representatives of the people, while accusing the political establishment of only performing authenticity (Sorensen 2018, 2). Alleged authenticity is also the trick with which politicians who actually belong to the elite publicly despised by populists show themselves as ordinary people and as outsiders to the political establishment.

Judging by the number of academic publications and newspaper articles, Donald Trump seems to have gained the status of a prototype of bad manners, which he also used to acquire the appeal of authenticity and the image of a Washington outsider (Oliver and Rahn 2016; Enli 2017; Gantt Shafer 2017; Montgomery 2017; Peetz 2019; Hart 2020; Koch et al. 2020). His provocative style, which also extends to his non-verbal behaviour (Bucy et al. 2020), has proven highly successful for him and reliably earned him the attention even of those media outlets that he disdainfully addressed as fake news. Apart from and before Trump, there are many other examples of politicians who indulge or have indulged in the transgression of conventional political norms. For instance, Wodak (2013; 2014) has repeatedly analysed the provocative discourse of the Austrian Freedom Party (Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs, FPÖ) and its former leader Jörg Haider. The German Alternative for Germany (Alternative für Deutschland, AfD) provides a more recent case (Detering 2019; Ruhose 2019; Jahnen 2019, 134–135), Brazil's president Bolsonaro another one (Sponholz and Christofoletti 2019, 76–77). Similar references to the former Greek prime minister Alexis Tsipras demonstrate that a provocative style is by no means restricted to those who are usually assigned to right-wing populism (Stavrakakis and Katsambekis 2019, 43). In fact, strategic provocation, in speech and in demeanour, turns out to be a characteristic of populist actors around the world, which is also attested to by a study conducted by Nai and Martínez i Coma (2019). In an assessment of how 152 populist and mainstream politicians worldwide score on personality inventories, they found a 'pattern of "populist reputation" which portrays them as disagreeable, narcissistic and potentially unhinged, yet extrovert and socially bold – in short, bad-tempered and provocative, but charismatic' (Nai and Martínez i Coma 2019, 1359).

A specific version of the provocative style is what Haller (2013, 224–225) calls intentional self-scandalisation, defined as the deliberate violation of moral boundaries with the primary aim of generating public attention. With reference to populist scandals, Wodak (2014, 115) assigns them a typical dynamic in which

> the scandal is first denied; then once some evidence is produced, the scandal is re-defined and equated with entirely different phenomena. Predictably, the provocateurs then claim the right to freedom of speech for themselves, as a justificatory strategy. Such utterances immediately trigger another debate – unrelated to the original scandal – about freedom of speech and political correctness. Simultaneously, victimhood is claimed by the original provocateur and the event is dramatized and exaggerated.

In his analysis of 'typical neo-populist scandals' which start, intentionally or inadvertently, with unacceptable talk or behaviour and the transgression of moral standards, Herkman (2018, 349) points to the influential role social networks play in this context. As US president Trump demonstrated several times a day, social media provide political actors with an instrument that allows them to reach citizens and traditional media with unfiltered messages and to orchestrate their performance. It practically guarantees great attention, particularly if the posts fit the media's selection criteria as perfectly as moral transgressions do. In the course of populist scandals, supporters of the scandalised politician use social media to initiate a 'counter cycle' by attacking the mainstream media, which take up and amplify the affair (Herkman 2018, 349). Targeting the media in this way aims at prompting a 'victim-perpetrator reversal' (Wodak 2014, 111) and thus at diverting the outrage to those who lament the transgressive behaviour in question. Martyr framing is deployed to justify transgressions and turn the tables on the straitjacket of political correctness and the mainstream, which does not allow for dissenting opinions (Niehr 2019, 2).

All in all, what Moffitt (2016a) calls bad manners is a defining feature of the populist style. However, the designation of bad manners arouses the association that someone cannot do better and therefore forbearance is appropriate. At the same time, it shrouds the fact that it is a matter of strategic communication behaviour, which is characterised by deliberate and targeted provocation. This strategy of provocation serves to present political actors as the true and authentic representatives and voice of the people, challenge established political norms and denounce the staged performances of the elite. Trump's 'modern day presidential' use of Twitter proved daily that provocation is one of the best strategies, if not the best, for luring the 'elite' into a trap: In addition to garnering public attention and increasing visibility, populist provocation is also used to induce the elite to break the norms of conventional political behaviour. The limitation of the individual tweet to formerly 140 and now its expansion to 280 characters promotes the escalation of and, on the other hand, offers justification for the fact that provocative comments can be misleading and presumably misunderstood.

Threat

With *crisis, breakdown or threat*, which Moffitt (2016a, 29) describes as the third key feature of populism, he refers to one of the concepts most frequently associated with populism. Whereas 'crisis' was often seen as the cause of and catalyst for the upsurge in populism, Moffitt also advocates viewing populism as a trigger of crises, an attribute which is therefore internal to populism. By assuming that crises 'are never "neutral" phenomena but must be mediated and "performed" by certain actors' (ibid., 114), he integrates crises into his approach, which conceptualises populism as a political style in the sense of a mediated performance. According to Moffitt, crisis is staged according to a script that reflects a spectacularisation process starting with the identification of failure and its elevation to the level of crisis (ibid., 121). With reference to Taggart (2000, 2), he further argues that it is not important whether there is a crisis; what matters instead is a sense of crisis (Moffitt 2016a, 130). However, the populist performance that elevates failure to crisis does not preclude that a sense of crisis can also arise from the onset of an 'external' crisis. Like the financial crisis in Europe in the early 2000s, which revealed a 'fuzzy relationship' between populism and crisis (Pappas and Kriesi 2015), the sudden emergence and rapid spread of the new coronavirus and the resulting pandemic have shown that there is no fixed script for how populist actors react to and strive to profit from such a crisis (Katsambekis and Stavrakakis 2020).

Creating a sense of crisis serves populists to confirm and widen the gap between the people and the Others and typically connects with what Wodak (2015) terms the politics of fear. To build up fear, threats heavily draw on emotions that exploit insecurities – about changing social values, economic instability, one's own status or health – if necessary, with the help of disinformation and conspiracy theories. While threats are a common element, for instance, in electoral advertising (e.g. Matthes and Schmuck 2017), populism deploys them to further their exclusionary endeavours by identifying a scapegoat who can be held accountable and blamed for the threat. There are plenty of examples. On all continents, migrants serve as the preferred object of populist fearmongering paired with highly emotional discourse. It is the Mexicans in the United States who, in undisguised racism, are portrayed as criminals, rapists and drug dealers (de la Torre 2017, 189). And it is the Muslim immigrants in Europe who are identified as a threat to traditional and Christian values and parasites of the continent's welfare systems (Schmuck et al. 2017). In Australia, One Nation leader Pauline Hanson, with her xenophobic discourse, is considered emblematic of the populist construction of fear, crisis and dangerous others (Sengul 2020). Recently, Prasad (2020) described how populist leaders in India exploited the COVID-19 pandemic for an anti-Muslim discourse intended to spread fear and paranoia among the Hindu population by declaring Muslims to be the carriers of the virus.

While threats and the creation of a climate of fear fit populists' polarising discourse, they also serve political actors by pushing their agendas and justifying their political plans. At the same time, they provide leaders with an opportunity to present themselves as saviours of the nation and the people, a role that has also been associated with the masculine identity politics of right-wing populists (Weyland 2013, 20; Sauer 2020). Once again, Donald Trump evolved as an exemplary case, who showed himself as a superhero in times of crisis (Schneiker 2020). Similarly, but with a more religious touch, the saviour role also applies to Venezuela's late president Hugo Chávez (de la Torre 2018, 2; Gualda 2019) or the Czech president Milos Zeman, who campaigned as the saviour of the common people (Santora 2018). The example of the Italian Lega Nord demonstrates that collective political actors also present themselves in the role of saviours (McDonnell 2016).

Conclusion and Where Research is Needed

Polarisation, provocation and threats form the basic pattern of populist attention strategies. They are typical challenger strategies and can very well be found among those political actors who are not usually referred to as populists. It is the permanent coupling and blending of these strategies that make them a hallmark of populist performance. Future research should go beyond the analysis of populist strategies and systematically assess how they are employed by populists and non-populists and how they affect the electorate. Above all, it is the constant provocation through the transgression of social and political norms and with it the exhaustion and shifting of moral boundaries that have proven to be an effective means of setting a trap for the media and political opponents. Their outrage, negative comments and criticism provide populist actors with wide attention and visibility and offer them the opportunity to put their issues on the agenda. Future research should examine how such attention spirals develop and what effects they have. Findings from such studies can then be used to make recommendations on how the media and other politicians can avoid falling into the trap of the populists.

The special features of social media prove to be conducive to populist performances. They allow political actors to bypass the media and avoid any changes through journalistic selection processes or verification. By addressing people directly, they give their followers the impression of immediate proximity between the representatives and the represented. Social platforms such as Facebook offer politicians the opportunity to address specific and closed target groups with appropriately tailored posts that are beyond public control. These messages encounter an already inclined audience, and this is also the place where hoaxes and conspiracy theories thrive and their effects unfold. The COVID-19 pandemic offers an opportunity to study how populists employ social networks to capitalise on current events and crises. In contrast to social networks, the microblogging service Twitter is public and preferably reaches opinion leaders in politics and the media. Twitter is therefore particularly suitable for influencing the public agenda. The current limit on individual tweets of a maximum of 280 characters requires a simple message, fosters dramatisation, and exculpates Twitter users from the need for extensive explanations and justifications. In view of these characteristics and being aware that the usual news selection criteria guarantee the leader of a political, economic and military superpower a place in the headlines, it is obvious why Donald Trump did not want to do without this ‘modern day presidential’ communication tool in order to hone his image and to rail against his political opponents, the fake news media, and immigrants. With his skilful use of Twitter and the resonance he obtained with it all over the world, the former US president became a prototype and prime example of the strategies with which populism sells itself.

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CHAPTER 26:
POPULIST AND NON-POPULIST MEDIA: THEIR PARADOXICAL ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND DIFFUSION OF A RIGHT-WING IDEOLOGY

Benjamin Krämer

Introduction

Are the media populist, and if they are, in what sense? Or do the media unwillingly foster populism even if they are declaredly anti-populist? This contribution discusses populism in and by the media, that is, coverage by the mass media that can be termed 'populist' in different senses. Krämer (2014, 48) has introduced a concept of media populism in the narrow sense. It is characterised as 'the use of [certain] stylistic and ideological elements by some media […]: the construction and favouritism of in-groups [the homogeneous "people" that are in the majority, but nonetheless construed as subaltern], hostility towards and circumvention of the elites and institutions of representative democracy, reliance on charisma and common sense, and appeal to moral sentiments (thus, on an emotionalising, personalising, and ostentatiously plain-spoken discourse)'. Populist actors, in general, can also claim to represent this in-group and that they are able to capture the will of this people, and demand that it should be directly implemented against the resistance of the corrupt and conspiring elite without regard for sensitivities, complicated procedures or minority rights (cf. Krämer 2018). In a broader sense, media outlets and actors can also claim to represent the people or work towards the implementation of its will.

Populism has often been described as a thin ideology (Mudde 2004; Rensmann 2006; Abts and Rummens 2007; Stanley 2008; Elchardus and Spruyt 2016). However, thinness can be understood in at least two interconnected ways. First, it is argued that populism has not reached the same level of theoretical elaboration, or even scientification, as other ideologies, such as liberalism or socialism (Hawkins 2009). Second, populism is said to cover fewer aspects of social life and politics, or to only consist of a core that needs to be complemented by other ideological elements in order to form a fully-fledged ideology. Some aspects are indeed more important to typical populist world views and are typically adopted by populist movements (Rooduijn 2014), such as a particular way of 'decontesting' the concept of 'the people',[1] which results in anti-elitism, anti-out-group bias (which is more pronounced in the case of right-wing populism), and the claim to directly represent and implement the popular will. Further elements are probably not completely arbitrary but more compatible with the interpretation of the core concepts of populism and other peripheral features (for an overview of such elements and various definitions, see Diehl 2011; Pappas 2016). The core of populism is then combined with further elements to form more concrete ideologies held by groups of actors – whole world views with utopian and practical aspects, as theorised by Mannheim (1929); (Ivaldi and Swyngedouw 2006; the authors also refer to Mannheim in characterising right-wing populism). For example, many (right-wing) populist actors also hold and express typical attitudes on other issues – such as gender relations, climate change, cultural policy, etc. – that derive from, or that are consistent with, the core elements of populism. The present argument mainly refers to European right-wing populism (see Betz and Johnson 2004 for its elements), because an analysis of several types with their commonalities and differences would be quite complex.

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[1] On this morphological approach to ideologies, see Freeden (1996). He assumes that ideologies interpret contested political concepts such as liberty, equality or justice in a way that is specific to each world view. While fully-fledged ideologies 'decontest' all relevant concepts, thin ideologies only cover a limited number of them.

It is argued here that (right-wing) populism is, or has evolved into, something like a fully-fledged ideology. It can still be considered thin because it lacks founding figures and theoretical key works, but it is being increasingly theorised – albeit at a certain price, as we will see – and has its own intellectual roots, which may nevertheless be identifiable (Finchelstein 2014). It seems that for some parts of the population, this ideology is not too thin; it provides guidance in the interpretation of the most different political and social phenomena, in their political practice and even with regard to aspects of their lifestyles. In some contexts, it may be useful to strictly define populism as a thin ideology, reduce it to its core or conceptualise it as a discursive frame or strategy; I do not consider these conceptions and the one adopted here mutually exclusive. In order to understand the wide variety of relationships between populism and the media, a thicker concept of populism seems more appropriate – as is a broad conception of media populism. We should certainly differentiate between the media being populist themselves (as suggested in the narrow definition of media populism above) and other ways in which their activity fosters or sustains populist world views. Different categorisations have already been proposed in research literature, such as 'news value populism' or 'tabloid populism' (Bos and Brants 2014). The aim of this contribution is to develop a framework for the interpretation and classification of media populism by reviewing previous research and complementing it with further aspects. It will be argued that, in the broadest sense, the media can be 'populist' in at least six ways that all have somewhat paradoxical implications. The first four sections discuss media populism in a broader sense – ways in which the media indirectly, and even unwillingly, reinforce populism – while the two remaining sections discuss media populism in the narrower sense. The first types of media populism can be considered paradoxical because non-populist or anti-populist journalism may foster a world view that is at odds with the foundations of the liberal and pluralist public sphere this type of journalism strives to realise. The remaining types of media populism can either be paradoxical in the same way if they only form a smaller part of the overall coverage by an otherwise non-populist medium. Or the paradox may consist, for example, in the unclear and sometimes unintended relationship between media populism and other populist actors. Media populism may be intended as a substitute for other actors' populism but may reinforce its appeal, or the populist media may want to support populist leaders but find themselves in competition with them over who really speaks for the people.

Fuelling Anti-Elitism by Routinely Reporting Negative Incidents Involving Elites and Acting as Democracy's Fourth Estate, Even in a Way that Undermines Democracy

If the mass media are sufficiently free, they tend to and are expected to be critical towards elites, focusing on problems, harm, misconduct, scandals, opportunism, personal interests and crises in politics and other fields (for example, it is not uncommon for journalists to consider themselves watchdogs, see Hanitzsch 2011, or advocates of social change, see Hanitzsch et al. 2016). If journalists and media organisations embrace a critical and independent role, political scandals and value changes in journalism and in the overall population will call existing institutions into question. Furthermore, if journalism has to demonstrate its independence towards increasingly aggressive political PR, this will lead to an increase in negativism (Lengauer et al. 2011). Routines of reporting that focus on problems and controversy can be considered highly functional for a democratic system. At the same time, negativism (as well as merely strategic or opportunist framing of politics) may cultivate distrust in elites and, possibly, also in the political system as a whole. The vast body of literature on distrust and cynicism fuelled by the media, as well as the arguments and evidence of their positive effects on participation, cannot be reviewed here in detail (Capella and Jamieson 1996; Bennett et al. 1999; Newton 1999; for an overview, Barthel and Moy 2015). As a consequence of negativist coverage, citizens from certain *milieus* may turn away from non-populist democracies and towards more authoritarian models or populist forms of representation (for a discussion of the relationship between media malaise and populism, Mazzoleni 2003). However, while the media's function as a countervailing power to party politics and governments may lead to anti-institutional undertones in coverage, many media organisations and actors are closely intertwined with political institutions, and many also stick to the norm of impartiality, therefore extending their critical coverage to both non-populist and populist actors.

Negativism or criticism of elites does not equal populism and, of course, criticism of elites does not have to imply the exclusionary and authoritarian ideological elements of right-wing populism. While tabloid media run a considerable share of positive stories (Engesser et al. 2014), they also typically tend to frame a large part of their coverage with regard to the opposition between politicians or elites and the people (Klein 1998). If their audience relatively lacks understanding of political processes – and if political self-efficacy is already low among some of their users – negativism, a focus on people instead of issues and generalised anti-elitism in tabloid reporting may particularly suggest populist interpretations to this part of the population. Negativism and strategic framing, as well as further news values, routines, frames, etc., can have populist implications without a medium being affiliated with populist movements. Coverage is often ethnocentric, confirms established issues, frames and discourses (for example, once a social group has been defined as a threat), and focuses on surprising and controversial short-term events (see below), as well as personal responsibility, instead of structural explanations (which is in line with populist conceptions of leadership, anti-institutional attitudes and conspiratorial thinking).

Providing Platforms for Participation and Media Criticism Without Responsivity

By providing online platforms for self-expression and discussion, media organisations seem to promise new opportunities for people to participate more directly in discourses and, ultimately, in the political process. If they are dissatisfied with how journalism functions in general or particular contributions in the media, they can also voice criticism of the media. People's wishes for participation and accountability may express themselves in a pluralist and deliberative mode. However, if the political system and journalism fail to respond to the demands of citizens, this may foster or at least confirm populist, anti-elite sentiments. This could also be the case if a gap between the attitudes of functional elites and the clientele in each respective field (voters, media users, etc.) manifests itself if one compares regular coverage and contributions by media users (even if this impression is highly biased by the self-selectivity of commenters). In this case, populism and anti-media populism (populist criticism of the media) in particular can manifest themselves in the comment sections and discussions on media platforms.

However, functionalities for participation can be framed in either a more deliberative or more populist way, and journalistic content can be populist, non-populist or anti-populist. Therefore, we should not conclude that online participation or new media technologies foster populism per se. This depends on particular constellations, which would have to be interpreted from a populist perspective, that is, as a sign that popular and elite views differ and that popular demands are ignored by an elite. That elite would then only create opportunities for pseudo-participation, but not respond to popular demands, and conspire to force its views on the people. If one does not subscribe to this populist view, this does not exclude scholarly criticism of participatory features of online platforms (for example, as driven by commercial rather than democratic aims, a means of maximising page impressions and data accumulation, or as the exploitation of audience labour to create content for free). However, this criticism should not be projected onto a critical audience, whose criticism may be driven by different motives and interpretations that may or may not be inspired by populist world views. Still, providing opportunities for participation may paradoxically fuel populist hostility towards the functional elites and institutions in politics and journalism.

Responding to the News Value and Self-Stylisation of Populist Actors and Providing Them with a Platform

The controversial discursive styles and political strategies of populist actors (both in 'anti-party parties', Decker 2006, and populist movements outside the political system) fit into schemata that usually trigger journalistic coverage. Even if many media outlets and journalists are far from sympathetic towards populist actors and ideologies, they direct the public's attention towards them and contribute to the normalisation and legitimacy of populism – which, however, may lead to a decrease in the news value of populist actors, as suggested in life cycle models of populist movements (Stewart et al. 2003; Herkman 2017). On the other hand, populist provocation may lead to shifts in the limits of what can be said publicly, and populists may be able to impose their own definitions of issues, timing and claims of expertise and representation. For example, right-wing populists have contributed to a discourse in which migrants and refugees are mainly seen in terms of cultural compatibility and deviant behaviour. While this hegemony is not unchallenged, these populists have constantly fuelled moral panic by means of provocative intervention, which have then initiated debates based on their premises (Yılmaz 2012).

Haller (2013) describes these provocative strategies by smaller – and, in particular, populist – parties as intentional self-scandalisation: Actors willingly transgress moral boundaries and count on the scandalisation of this behaviour by the media and other political actors. It is a means of attracting attention, creating a conflict in which controversial issues have to be discussed on populists' terms, polarising the electorate and mobilising one's own supporters. Furthermore, the meta-message of such intervention might be that the elites do not take the issue seriously or may even suppress its discussion, and that this is the reason why such drastic means are necessary. However, in order to be successful, some parts of the population must not be repelled by the provocation – otherwise the scandalisation of it would not lead the populist followership to close ranks. There has to be some ideological agreement in some *milieus*, and further factors may render populist intervention acceptable, or even admirable, to some. If virtually everyone was outraged by the provocation, it would not have any particular strategic value besides increased media attention. Such intervention is particularly effective if a sufficient part of the population accepts the aforementioned meta-message.

The fact that media coverage of populist actors is often personalised may contribute to explaining the function of self-scandalisation. This line of explanation has been developed for cases in which neo-liberal and exclusive populists are successful among the same electorate whose interests should incline them towards at least a more inclusive, class-based variety, or whose group identity has even been constituted by the politics of inclusive 'plebeian', instead of ethnic, populism.[2] Filc (2011) refers to the particular habitus of the more recent right-wing populist leaders in order to explain this seeming paradox. Their down-to-earth – or even provocative – style invokes a feeling of belonging, as if they are a part of – or keep themselves in touch with – the people, and that their clientele is taken seriously (even if this inclusion works by excluding further underprivileged groups). This style implies that, as opposed to the rest of the political elite, these leaders are not afraid to say exactly what concerns the common people, whereas the language of the elite seems to be intentionally nebulous and jargon-laden in order to obfuscate the truth and their interests. Personalised coverage then allows for the identification of this habitus more easily. However, style cannot be separated from content. While identities and social categories may shift and the habitus remains the same, the tone seems to validate the concrete message, namely that the leaders indeed speak for the in-group, which they provocatively set apart from some out-groups. Conversely, if parts of the clientele already tend to accept the exclusive ideology, the provocative style and message seem all the more justified to them, and the reactions confirm the underlying world view.

Whether the media scandalise provocative interventions or refuse to address the issues populists construct and try to place on the political agenda, these actors may also use such reactions strategically. They can complain about the unfairness of the mainstream media and the neglect, or even censorship, of the views of an allegedly large part of the population, or even the 'true' and natural interests of the people. Sometimes the media react to these accusations by devoting a great deal of (or as some may say, disproportionate) attention and coverage to populists and their messages. For example, the frequent accusations of liberal bias raised against US mainstream media may have contributed to the favourable coverage and mainstreaming of the Tea Party, constructing it as a movement that represents ordinary citizens with legitimate concerns and offers new and viable political ideas (Guardino and Snyder 2012). The paradoxical conclusion of this is that non-populist media respond to populist provocation even if the strategy of intentional self-scandalisation is obvious because of the professional routines triggered by the news value of these interventions. Populist media criticism (or anti-media populism) can almost rule the journalistic field because it forces journalism onto the defensive by appealing to professional norms, which leads to even more intensive coverage of populists. However, in some contexts, it may be another norm that forces journalists to cover right-wing populist parties and politicians extensively: As they are increasingly established as a part of the normal political spectrum, this construction of the political field is recursively confirmed by different actors (including journalists), becomes almost naturalised and demands 'normal' and 'balanced' journalistic coverage.

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[2] While the meaning of the term 'neo-liberalism' is contested and has changed over time, in the context of present-day populism, it mainly refers to movements that have advocated policies of deregulation, privatisation and cuts in social welfare benefits, and underlying ideologies that favour individual and economic freedom over state interventions (Boas and Gans-Morse 2009 on these and other meanings). In some cases, neo-liberal populist actors emerged from movements whose success had been based on the inclusion of socially disadvantaged groups, as opposed to the exclusionary populism based on ethnic and cultural boundaries that these actors then adopted (Betz 2001; Filc, 2011).

Supplying Evidence of Populist Constructions of Out-Groups

If the media cover deviant behaviour by members of out-groups, populists tend to use such news reports as evidence of more general problems caused by these out-groups and their inherent disposition to violate social norms. In particular, if coverage is framed in a way that emphasises cultural differences in general – or the race, ethnicity, religion, etc. of perpetrators of crimes – this may contribute to an essentialised distinction between the people and the out-group.[3] Such coverage seems to confirm the view that the characters of 'the people' and the out-group are fundamentally incompatible. It is not completely clear who has contributed more to the establishment of this construction, the mainstream media and political actors or populists, and who has profited most – populists who created or only rode the wave of anti-immigration politics, or other political actors who were restrictive in terms of immigration anyway or became so in response to populists (Mudde 2013 for a discussion). However, this conception of immigrants seems almost impossible to escape even for the most non-populist actors; populist interventions and media coverage of the issue may have contributed to the spread and normalisation of populist rhetoric in the political field (on the mainstreaming of populist discourses on immigration, Curran 2004).

While a certain type of media populism has been termed 'tabloid populism', there is no unambiguous evidence to support the hypothesis that the tabloid media are more populist than others (Bos et al. 2010; Akkerman 2011). However, this conclusion could be due to measurement issues. If media content is analysed by identifying the core elements of populism, they may not be particularly prevalent in the tabloid media because these concepts are quite abstract when used explicitly. On the other hand, content analyses that focus on the manifest presence of the core elements have to neglect peripheral elements and episodic manifestations of populist narratives. For example, tabloid media reports on crime or moralising coverage of elite misconduct may not convey a populist ideology in its abstraction but may provide episodic evidence of such a world view. As in the previous section, this pattern of reporting is not necessarily populist in the sense of the above definition. Therefore, media coverage may paradoxically confirm populist world views despite the good intentions of journalists or their convictions that they innocently report 'what really happened', for example, that a crime occurred and the offender was a migrant.[4] However, some media outlets may complement reports on single incidents with campaigns that explicitly construct a popular will. We may remember headlines in tabloid newspapers that employ the imperative and make demands to politics (on the things 'we' [the 'people'] want 'them' [the politicians] to do about 'them' [the out-group]). Populist groups then use reports on out-groups (for example, on Muslims in the case of European right-wing populism) as evidence of their world views. This leads to another paradox, which Holt and Haller (2016) have called the populist communication paradox: Despite their criticism of the media as part of the elite, populists tend to uncritically accept media reports that confirm their assumptions. Media reports are not only used as evidence concerning immigration, but also when it comes to climate change, alleged misconduct and ideological bias in the sciences, or 'political correctness' and other presumed threats to freedom and other topics.

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[3] For example, on racial stereotypes as well as mentioning the opposite accusation of the media being biased by 'political correctness', see Entman and Gross (2008), or on stereotypes concerning Muslims, see the meta-analysis by Ahmed and Matthes (2017). For an overview on the seemedia and stereotypes, including those related to crime and terrorism, Behm-Morawitz and Ortiz (2012).

Supplying Catchwords, Slogans and Interpretive Frameworks for Populism and Anti-Media Populism

Media outlets may spread information about incidents that can be used as evidence of populist world views (which may be unavoidable to a certain degree) and frame them in ways that emphasise anti-elite and anti-out-group perspectives (which is not unavoidable). Editorials, columns and media reports have also coined or repeated expressions and made claims that can serve as truly populist interpretive frameworks for incidents and issues, such as the concept of 'Islamisation', the idea of political correctness gone mad and left-wing cultural hegemony, criticism of gender theory, nationalist myths and constructions of a national character, and culturalist and racist essentialisation of particular out-groups, etc. Across different issues, the populist right cultivates a sense of injustice; an elite has become culturally dominant and infiltrated the system, which it is now using to its own advantage by installing a dictatorship of political correctness and undermining traditional values and institutions (Betz and Johnson 2004). Populist leaders and conservative journalists have claimed that they alone have the courage to speak for the silent majority, whose interests are no longer represented and may even be dangerous to express.

In the case of one of the key issues of populist politics – migration – , it is obvious how most of the media have accepted the premises of populist discourses, either by endorsing them directly or by responding to them in a way that confirms the populist way of framing the issue. Certainly, the direct and indirect effects of populist actors and other factors can be estimated differently. However, the definition of 'the people' as *ethnos* has almost superseded other social categories, such as social class and other descriptions of society and its antagonisms, which are not based on cultural differences (Yılmaz 2012). Even those who do not subscribe to dystopias of Islamisation, such as left-wing commentators, intellectuals and even many researchers, assume that immigration from Muslim countries will naturally create tensions and that the rise of right-wing populism is a reaction to migration (instead of realising the effort needed to construct this incompatibility; the success of right-wing populism is not the result of the presence but of the salience and stereotyping of migrants, Yılmaz 2012).

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[4] On the relationship between exposure to news on crime and immigration and voting for right-wing populist parties, see Burscher, van Spanje and de Vreese (2015). Smith (2010) also found that insecurity due to crime, in particular in conjunction with immigration, creates opportunities for right-wing populist parties due to their issue ownership.

This culturalist discourse may be somehow acceptable for mainstream commentators for two reasons (Betz and Johnson 2004). First, the populist distinction between the in-group and the out-group can be phrased to avoid the charge of racism by emphasising diversity and incompatibility instead of superiority, and populism may focus on the struggle against (alleged) privileges or the levelling down of differences, resistance to threats to cultural identity, national unity and tradition. Second, such a discourse can refer to liberal values such as democracy, human rights and, in particular, women and LGBT rights in order to characterise out-groups (such as Muslims) as backward and question their ability to integrate. Yılmaz (2015) summarises the results of this discourse as follows: Migrant workers (who may or may not benefit the economy) have come to be defined almost exclusively as Muslims, and the working class (among other *milieus*) has been attracted by parties that denounce an elite conspiracy to further Islamisation.

The mainstream media have not only contributed to constructing interpretive frameworks compatible with populism in the debate on migration, but also with regard to other issues. For example, right-wing populism does not only define itself by its opposition to migration, Islamisation, multiculturalism, etc., but also by its opposition to the deconstruction of gender order (or, in short, through 'anti-genderism'; Siri 2015). Again, a great discursive effort has been necessary in order to construct this issue. Sexist, homophobic and transphobic, and similar attitudes are certainly not uncommon among the general population. However, gender equality and the tolerance or acceptance of different sexual orientations, ways of life and forms of partnership are, at least by their own accounts, firmly established in mainstream political parties and the media. Nevertheless, populists have been partly successful at constructing a concrete threat (Siri 2015). While there is no danger to individual heterosexual marriages and nuclear families, etc., an abstract group has to be evoked, which is then threatened by extinction due to childlessness and by the confusion and moral corruption of children due to 'early sexualisation' or 'homosexual propaganda'.

Generally, populism does not always invoke concrete threats to the immediate everyday life of its clientele, but to a 'people' with its culture and as a 'body' (*Volkskörper*). Everyone can feel abstractly threatened; any action by elite actors or out-group members is an attack on the people as a whole and gives everyone the right to resist. The mainstream media have not necessarily adopted or given a forum to the most extreme scenarios, conspiracy theories and slurs. However, some types of comments regarding gender issues have made their way into the mainstream media because of their entertainment value, for the sake of diversity and controversy, or as legitimate expressions of the feelings of the 'silent majority'. Columnists have expressed their disdain for gender studies and endorsed biologistic conceptions of gender, lamented the celebration of sexual minorities or expressed their – as they describe it, authentic and ineluctable – revulsion of feminism or men kissing men.

Populism, sometimes in complicity with the media, constructs a crisis of identity and the traditional way of living (in terms of national culture, gender, family, etc.), a crisis of justice (where the in-group is treated unfairly by the elite while out-groups purportedly receive privileges) and ultimately a crisis of representation. Recent research on populism therefore emphasises that populism is not simply a reaction to external crises, but that it also reacts to them spectacularly (Moffitt 2015). It continuously defines problems that, according to the populist world view, reflect each other and all point to a more fundamental crisis – the antagonism between the people and the ruling class. This crisis is perpetuated by the staging of spectacular and controversial, but seemingly authentic, media events. Strong, 'unideological' leadership and the simplification of political procedures are proposed as solutions to the crisis (ibid.). Paradoxically, the anti-elite attitude and sense of crisis cultivated by this type of populist communication (which may in part come from the media themselves) can then also be turned against the established media (seen as just another element of an evil elite). The result can be fully-fledged anti-media populism, which increasingly manifests itself on social media platforms and in populist alternative media.

The mass media may also contribute to anti-media populism more directly. Parallel to the case of the United States, as described by Major (2015), conservative actors and the media have been successful at establishing the idea of a general left-wing bias among the mainstream media in many countries. Conservative columnists in the mainstream media and publications from a conservative counter-public sphere have claimed that conservative positions and widespread common-sense attitudes and concerns are falling victim to politically correct censorship. These ideas can then pass over to the populist conception of an elite conspiracy, in which most journalists participate. Thus, the mainstream media, including the quality press, could contribute to the consolidation of previously existing populist (or 'proto-populist') attitudes, make them expressible and legitimise them by developing intellectualised and euphemised versions of populist sentiment. Journalism can thus be populist in a broader sense by (even unwillingly) providing symbolic examples or, more directly, by spelling out elements of populist ideologies.

In addition to journalists, some public intellectuals who have been given a forum in the quality press have contributed to the legitimation of ideas such as migrants as invaders, the loss of sovereignty and national identity, the destruction of a natural order of the sexes and the loss of virility in Western countries, etc., using polished styles, jargon and references to intellectual history. They are able to capture right-wing populist sentiments and shift the discursive climate without facing the same accusations and evoking the same associations (for example, with Nazism) as populist leaders (see Müller 2016 on the German case). However, another paradox lies exactly in this theorisation of populism. Conservatism has been described as an ideology that is developed when a traditionalist *doxa* (an unquestioned, seemingly natural or self-evident belief) is challenged (Bourdieu 1981). Mannheim (1929) characterises it as a world view that is only elaborated *ex post* when traditions are fading or being questioned. However, populism – similarly to conservatism – is on the defensive when it begins to be theorised. Intellectualism conflicts with the idea that good social order is grounded in a group's natural features and in common sense, not abstract historical processes and reasoning (on more recent conservative or right-wing populist movements, Siri 2015). Therefore, increasing theorisation of a conservative ideology or utopia can be considered at odds with its own foundations and may not resonate well with every *milieu* that subscribes to its world view.

Serving as a Substitute for Populist Leaders

The idea that charismatic leadership is a defining feature of populism can be criticised both on theoretical and empirical grounds. The concept of charisma does not seem sufficiently clear when explaining the success of populist leaders. The concept remains tautological if one does not specify the relevant attributes of the leader and if it is not clear whether leaders have to be similar to their followers or if they need other attributes – it rather seems that a particular habitus is required (for different views on charisma, see Abts and Rummens 2007; Filc 2011; Priester 2011; Müller 2014; McDonnell 2016). Furthermore, some populist movements seem to lack a single and distinct leader. However, it may still be argued that this is a deviation from ideal-typical populism, and these movements still tend towards the typical form of leadership whose establishment can be expected sooner or later (possibly fostered by the media's tendency towards personalisation of coverage). In any case, populism favours simple, direct and – most often – personalised forms of representation instead of complex procedures, bureaucracy and all other kinds of institutions that usually guide and restrict political processes (Canovan 1999; Abts and Rummens 2007; Urbinati 2013).

As leadership is certainly not irrelevant, media outlets or individual journalists can then be populist 'leaders' themselves. They convey a populist world view by selecting and interpreting issues from a distinct populist perspective. In some cases, they even claim to represent the people by speaking for them or even acting in their interests. If this claim of representation and leadership is populist on a formal and ideological level, media actors can form coalitions with populist actors, contribute to their rise or compete with them. Krämer (2014) has discussed a number of structural conditions that make it easier or more difficult for the media to foster the emergence of populist leaderships. For example, it seems possible for them to bypass the political system and directly communicate with 'the people'. However, they are often closely linked to political institutions and actors, and their seemingly direct and authentic communication is the product of organised and specialised labour as well as professional training.

From a certain perspective, this type of representation can be considered even more 'populist' than direct democracy. It can be assumed that the populist conception of democracy is plebiscitarian and Bonapartist, not deliberative or participatory (Abts and Rummens 2007); the homogeneous, or at least majoritarian, will of the people has to be registered once and for all. A referendum is a redemptive act (Canovan 1999) that brings an issue to a final decision and is a lesson, or even punishment, for elites. Lengthy discussions and the laborious elaboration of solutions or compromises are incompatible with the idea of a pre-existing and unitary will – complex procedures are even considered a means to weaken that will, avoid its implementation and divide the people (ibid.). From the perspective of ideal-typical populism, it could be even more desirable to appoint leaders who are able to intuit and enforce the popular will (Müller 2014). Media organisations or actors who do not focus on balanced reporting and deliberative reasoning, but on functioning as a *vox populi,* could still lack direct formal power; however, they can pressure elites to follow the will of the people and thereby implement a non-pluralist, anti-institutional and somehow effortless or even consumerist conception of democracy.

In some cases, media populism could be a substitute for other populist actors. Even actors in the explicitly populist alternative media have to decide if they side with populist parties or movements or remain independent. Some populist media may weaken the positions of other populist actors, but this may be the weakest of the paradoxes discussed here. Two or more populist actors (for example, a populist party or leader and a populist tabloid newspaper) will probably not cannibalise each other just by communicating their ideologies. This will probably only happen if, for example, a tabloid paper starts attacking and actively competing with populist political actors (because scandalising some misconduct seems even more attractive than appealing to a populist world view, or because, despite its ideological commitment, the paper is attached to the elite or certain values; see the campaign by the German tabloid 'Bild' against the right-wing populist party 'Republikaner', as opposed to the Austrian case, Art 2007[5]).

Maybe another paradox is even closer to the truth: Populists claim to represent the people, and they can sometimes obtain the willing or unwilling complicity of the media. However, right-wing populist movements can be seen as a (sometimes rather fierce and violent) rearguard battle by some *milieus* against cultural change. Populist attacks against migration, gender equality and sexual diversity, social welfare benefits, etc. may even encourage the mainstream media to close ranks, strongly defend anti-populist positions and thereby foster cultural modernisation. If a larger proportion of journalists and other media producers feel that their liberal values are under attack, they could be even more inclined to defend and promote these values and to give a forum to those who represent these values or who are affected by populist rhetoric and policies. They may thus contribute to the further de-traditionalisation and pluralisation of lifestyles, an openness towards migration and cultural diversity, the acceptance and normalisation of previously stigmatised ways of life, etc. and thus to the cultural change that right-wing populists oppose.

Conclusion

As the previous argument shows, the relationship between populism and the media cannot be reduced to one simple line of causality. On the one hand, populism is compatible with a number of common mechanisms that simplify social interaction and the functioning of social systems such as journalism or the political system. For example, social categorisation, a monocentric, local perspective on society, an in-group bias and an emphasis on particularistic relationships, and a focus on negative events and threats, etc. reduce complexity. Some of these principles can be considered functional to a certain degree. On the other hand, the populist world view relies on a number of – *a priori* improbable but seemingly natural – historical and discursive constructions, such as certain ethnic and religious stereotypes, gender roles and the idea of an *ethnos* or nation itself.

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[5] Art (2007) proposes an explanation for the different levels of success of the right-wing populist parties The Republicans (Die Republikaner) in Germany and the Austrian Freedom Party (Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs, FPÖ) in Austria. While other parties, civil society actors and the media strongly opposed the Republikaner, Austrian actors have tried to 'tame' the FPÖ by cooperating with the party. In particular, Art (2007) contrasts the reaction of the German tabloid newspaper *Bild* with its Austrian counterpart *Kronen Zeitung*. While the latter praised and defended the FPÖ leader Jörg Haider even before his electoral successes and after a number of scandals, *Bild* strongly campaigned against the Republikaner. The party was successful in a number of elections during the late 1980s and 1990s, and the newspaper can be classified as conservative and populist. However, as Art (2007) argues, the German elites and press are more sensitive to right-wing extremism, and the founding editor of *Bild*, Axel Springer, had committed his newspaper to strictly opposing anti-Semitism and right-wing extremism. Therefore, despite its own use of many elements of a right-wing populist world view and style, it may be argued that the newspaper contributed to preventing the rise of right-wing populist actors (with the recent exception of the Alternative for Germany, Alternative für Deutschland), despite its occasional support in the early stages of their emergence.

The framework presented in this chapter is partly supported by empirical research or previous theoretical arguments and is partly original and speculative. When theorising the relationship between populism and the media, we can draw on and critically engage with the rich body of literature concerning the concept of populism, which has also been adapted with regard to the media and discourses. For example, Aslanidis (2015) suggested replacing the term ideology with the concept of framing, which can be more easily operationalised in content analyses. An analysis of the relationship between populism and the media, the author argues, would no longer have to struggle with the complex and contentious notion of ideology. Instead, he proposes simply counting the use of the core elements of populism if they are employed to construct political issues and propose solutions.

Furthermore, large-scale and complex studies have causally linked media coverage with the rise and fall of populist parties (see Boomgarden and Vliegenthart 2007, and Pauwels 2010 for a critical discussion; Walgrave and de Swert 2004; Koopmans and Muis 2009), which also have to be based on reliable, 'thin' measurements of populism in the media. They have to reduce populism to a manageable number of core elements that can easily be identified when explicitly mentioned in the media. These types of analyses should be pursued further by testing different mechanisms that link particular types of media coverage to particular types of populism (that differ with regard to their peripheral elements), including those mechanisms that lead to the containment of populism (Deacon and Wring 2016). However, we should complement these 'positivist', standardised and hypothetico-deductive approaches with interpretive, historical and comparative ones that understand populism as a whole world view and practice which people grow into biographically (Kemmers, van der Waal and Aupers 2016). Furthermore, overly thin conceptions of populism may allow for simple and reliable measurements but neglect important aspects of populist political communication and some of the diverse connections between an increasingly fully-fledged world view and the media.

Previous research has predominantly focused on journalism, while popular culture should be included in theories and studies of populism and the media (see Nærland 2020, for an overview of existing approaches). The relationship between popular culture and populism is not as clear as the common etymology suggests (Krämer 2014; 2016). For example, some populist movements and leaders see their ability to entertain as proof of their connection with the common people, and popular culture may reproduce social categories associated with a populist world view. However, cultural change, such as new gender roles, the growing acceptance of multiculturalism, etc., has increasingly manifested itself in popular culture. Therefore, popular media content may be one of the factors that reinforces a sense of crisis, decline, loss of identity and nostalgia (Betz and Johnson 2004) in certain *milieus* that feel their world view and lifeworld is no longer represented in the media and threatened by these changes. Then, popular culture contributes to driving those *milieus* into protest and making the media the target of anti-media populism. As indicated at the beginning, the above theses mainly refer to European right-wing populism. There is a certain trade-off between the depth of an analysis of a single variety and the potential of large-scale comparative analyses. This may be the reason why existing and ongoing international studies on populism and the media tend to focus on the least common denominator or core of populism and why we lack studies that link particular cultural and structural contexts to particular varieties of populism that constitute fully-fledged ideologies.

In the present context, however, it may be useful to end by outlining some normative and practical implications of the theoretical considerations outlined above, even if these conclusions are restricted to a particular type of ideology. As opposed to populist conceptions, many media outlets and actors are guided by a pluralist vision of society and politics. However, the functioning of this type of journalism can play into the hands of populist actors just by it striving for diversity, balance and objectivity. In its own interest or based on normative considerations, it should therefore reflect its instrumentalisation by, or complicity with, populism if it wants to avoid fostering movements that oppose some of its own principles. For example, the media should not constantly provide episodic evidence of populist world views. Instead, they should take a systemic and multi-perspective view of society and insist on alternative distinctions and explanations.

For example, they should contribute to deconstructing the essentialist representation of out-groups by populists. In contrast to their claims, ethnicity is not simply a person's true nature, and journalism is not less truthful and objective if it refuses to mention it in every instance and seeks for alternative and, often, more informative descriptions. Populists should also have to prove themselves in all policy areas. If they manage to draw attention to certain problems and contribute to the construction of a crisis around certain issues, their issue ownership cannot go unchallenged. It is certainly common for all kinds of political actors to present themselves as experts on certain issues or even strategically construct these issues. However, the news value of populist positions and statements, or their emphasis on certain issues, should not force the press to uncritically accept such constructions, for example, by inviting populists to almost any talk show on immigration, but not on other issues.

The media should offer more alternative visions of society than the simple hierarchical and segmentary populist model (Krämer, 2018), alternative criteria for the evaluation of political phenomena, other forms of social and media criticism, and identities that are compatible with pluralism and cosmopolitanism. In the face of anti-media populism, journalists should not confirm the self-definition of populists as victims of censorship too easily. It would be in their own interest not to succumb to constant populist criticism, but point to existing privileges (of the in-group that populists claim to represent and of the populists themselves, who often dominate certain discourses in reality) and disclose the rules that guide their decisions on how to cover political actors. Journalism should ideally be discursive in two ways: It should insist that the *volonté générale* is not already fixed but has to be elaborated argumentatively (at least according to deliberative as opposed to populist conceptions of democracy). At a meta-level, journalism should partly give up the idea that it has to become invisible behind the seemingly objective product and make its decisions and the underlying reasons transparent (for example, by arguing why minorities or populist actors are treated the way they are instead of simply implementing some conventional rules). By insisting on pluralism and discursivity (including public discussion of its own norms), journalism can then set itself apart from populism, while covering it in a justifiable way.

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CHAPTER 27:

DIGITAL POPULISM: HOW THE WEB AND SOCIAL MEDIA ARE SHAPING POPULISM IN WESTERN DEMOCRACIES

Giuliano Bobba

Introduction

In the last few decades, populism has become central to both the public and the academic debates in most contemporary democracies. While many interpretations have considered 'the age of crises' (Moffitt 2015) characterising these years as being mainly responsible for populist actors' success (i.e. the Great Recession, Europe's refugee and migrant crisis and the long-standing crisis of representation), another aspect deserves to be considered. This is the role of the digital media environment that, in a few years, completely distorted the relationship between politicians and their constituencies, fostering new spaces and forms of political communication and citizens' involvement in politics (Chadwick 2017). Several authors have pointed out that populist communication seems to be favoured by the proliferation of digital media, and populists have been described as particularly suited to the logic of digital media (see, for example, de Vreese et al. 2018, 5). Nevertheless, the concept of 'digital populism' is far from being consolidated and several questions have still not been fully addressed. These include: What is digital populism exactly? Why does it matter? Does the digital environment affect and modify the nature of populism? Or is it the same old story performed and told on another medium? Do citizens interact in a particular way with populists online? This chapter aims to answer these questions through a review of the existing literature on populism, and to provide new lines of enquiry for future research.

Digital Populism: Searching for a Definition

Among scholars of populism, it is quite widely believed that digital communication – especially the high level of penetration of social media and mobile devices – has played a key role in the rise of populism in contemporary democracies (Bartlett, Birdwell and Littler 2011; Moffitt 2016; Engesser, Fawzi and Larsson 2017). This does not mean that there is agreement on the definition of digital populism or its implications. All in all, this strand of literature still appears underdeveloped and the phenomenon has been only partially analysed so far. As regards the definition, there is a lack of consensus even on the label that should be assigned to the phenomenon. On the one hand, terms like 'online populism' (Hameleers 2020a), 'web-populism' (Anselmi 2018) or 'cyber populism' (Gerbaudo 2017) have been employed to refer to the impact of the internet on populism, in general. On the other hand, scholars have focused their attention on the alleged ability of the so-called web 2.0 and especially social media to enable new forms of political interaction between politicians and citizens. In this context, terms such as ‘populism 2.0’ (Gerbaudo 2014; Moffitt 2018) or ‘social media populism’ (Bobba 2019; Bracciale, Andretta and Martella 2021) have been used to stress the close relationship between populism and the new digital environment. For this chapter, I opted for an expression already used in the academic debate: ‘digital populism’ (see, for example, Bartlett, Birdwell and Littler 2011). Using it in an inclusive way, I consider digital populism to be the outcome of the effect of the web in general and of social media in particular on the populist practices of politicians, the media and citizens. This includes not only the use of digital channels to conduct populism, but also the changes that the digital environment has on the very content and style of populist arguments.

Populism *per se* is a contentious concept. Nonetheless, most scholars agree on a minimal definition. Populist discourse relies on the juxtaposition of a ‘good people’ with a series of ‘bad elites’. Moreover, in the case of right-wing populists, the people’s values, their identities and rights are considered to be endangered not only by the elites but also by the actions of a series of ‘out-groups’ that right-wing populists contend receive preferential treatment by the elites (Canovan 1999; Taggart 2000; Mudde 2004; 2007; 2014; Kriesi 2014; Albertazzi and McDonnell 2015) While most scholars argue that these elements – the people, the elites and the out-groups – are the *core* of populism, there has been an ongoing debate regarding whether it should be interpreted as an ideology (Taggart 2000; Mudde 2004; 2007; Stanley 2008; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2017), a political strategy (Weiland 2001; 2017) or a type of communication (Jagers and Walgrave 2007; Moffitt and Tormey 2014; Aslanidis 2016; Moffitt 2016; de Vreese et al. 2018).

Although no author has focused in detail on the features of digital populism with respect to these approaches, in all three strands of the literature on populism different aspects affected by digital populism can be detected. As regards the ideological approach, some authors have pointed out that the internet has facilitated a new form of centrality of ‘the people’ and a redefinition of the balance between the people and the elites (Biancalana 2014; Momoc 2018;). In particular, studying the origins of the Five Star Movement (Movimento 5 Stelle, M5S) in Italy, Biancalana (2014) noticed that the internet provided useful and essential elements for the populist ideology of the Movement. In particular, its ideological discourse relied on a series of opportunities provided by the internet, namely a) the process of disintermediation (citizens can interact with anyone without the need for parties, trade unions, journalists, etc.); b) the uselessness of a leader (citizens can take all major decisions together); c) the possibility of establishing a ‘true’ democracy (the citizens become the state).

Scholars who view populism primarily as a political strategy have dealt with new forms of engagement and of leadership support through the internet. In particular, it has been observed that the internet provides populists with a powerful tool to mobilise their followers, together with traditional channels of political communication (Kriesi 2014, 367). The advent and widespread diffusion of social media platforms over the past decade has provided populist leaders with a way to communicate directly and more spontaneously with their audiences (Bartlett 2014), thus contributing to the realisation of what Weyland (2001, 14) posited, namely that the populist strategy is realised thanks to a personalistic leader who ‘seeks or exercises the power of government based on the direct, unmediated and uninstitutionalized support of a large number of mostly unorganized followers’.

The strand that interprets populism as communication is, for obvious reasons, the one that has been most concerned with the digital dimension of populism. In particular, Waisbord (2018a) has identified two lines of enquiry directly connected to the internet. The first questions whether major changes in contemporary media ecologies, such as fragmentation, polarisation and commercialisation, can foster populist parties (Kellner 2017). The second one examines whether social media and digital mobilisation foster populist communication (Engesser et al. 2017; Enli 2017). This introductory overview leads us to argue that digital populism is not limited to repurposing old content via new channels. On the contrary, digital media contributed to the rise and evolution of populism in the last few decades. In the next section, this will be analysed from the perspective of populist actors, the media and citizens.

Three Faces of Digital Populism

The digital era has created new spaces for politics (Koc-Michalska and Lilleker 2019). However, populists benefited from this new digital environment more than other politicians. If we focus on the three quintessential actors who interact in democratic systems – politicians, journalists and citizens – it is clear that a) populist actors have adapted better than others to the digital environment; b) the disinformation phenomenon is putting a strain on the journalistic system; and c) the potential of the web is seldom used to achieve political goals, while forms of online incivility and hate speech are increasingly spreading in all major democracies. These three phenomena together seem to have contributed to the rise of populism.

Digital Populism and Populist Actors

Several scholars have approached the issue of digital populism from the point of view of populist actors. Here, the question is whether populists gain more visibility online than in traditional media, whether, how and why they behave online differently from mainstream politicians, and whether they obtain greater benefits in terms of citizens' engagement. Although Barack Obama's presidency demonstrated that a politician can be popular on the internet and social media without necessarily being populist (Postill 2018, 761), his experience seems to be the exception rather than the rule. In the last decade, Donald Trump in the US along with dozens of European populists have shown an 'elective affinity' with social media (Gerbaudo 2018). These platforms allow them to bypass the mainstream media, creating a sort of 'going public' (Kernell 2007). However, instead of being an exclusive and exceptional option for a presidential figure, this strategy becomes available to every politician and a normal form of communication. It is precisely the simplicity of communicating and interacting with the 'people' in an immediate and low-cost manner that has made social media popular among populists. Engesser, Fawzi and Larsson (2017) have found four different benefits of social media for populists: a) they provide direct access to the public without journalistic interference; b) they offer the possibility of establishing a close and direct connection with the people; c) they foster personalised forms of communication; and d) they facilitate the construction of political communities through the dissemination of shared values and a sense of belonging. Probably for these reasons, populists are usually more active in this respect, namely they interact more on social media, than mainstream parties (Bennett et al. 2020; Ceccobelli, Quaranta and Valeriani 2020; Larsson 2020).

Moffitt (2016, 63) noticed that the internet's turn to web 2.0, social networking and the ubiquity of mobile devices have opened 'many performative opportunities for populist actors to speak directly with and for people'. In his opinion, the real novelty is the multiplication of 'stages', and therefore of opportunities, for populists to reach their followers. With social media, populist actors are able to overcome the gatekeeping of traditional media: this implies both solving their problem of visibility in the public debate (Mazzoleni 2003; 2008) as well as having a new effective instrument of political organisation and mobilisation. The case of Beppe Grillo and his Five Star Movement in Italy is a good example of the relevance that the internet can have for populists. This party has used the internet to facilitate the visibility of the leader's claims (through the blog beppegrillo.it), to organise local offline groups (based on the meetup.com website), and to make members select candidates and vote on urgent issues through the platform *Rousseau* (Mosca, Vaccari and Valeriani 2015; Mosca 2020). This last function has been also implemented by other populist parties in Europe, like *participa.podemos* in Spain (Deseriis and Vittori 2019).

Social media sites like Facebook, Twitter and, more recently, Instagram are therefore the preferred places for populist actors to 'uncontestedly articulate their ideology and spread their messages' (Engesser et al. 2017, 1110). In this digital environment, populists have different conduct with respect to non-populist actors. While the difference is not significant in terms of the volume of messages published, citizens' engagement with populists is consistently greater than their interaction with traditional actors. Larsson (2020, 12) considered the number of likes, comments, shares and reactions in a period of ten years (2008-2018) on Facebook and found that 'populist actors strengthened their dominance over their non-populist competitors on a year-by-year basis'. These results are not only achieved through claims based on populist elements – people-centrism, anti-elitism and exclusivism for populist right-wing parties. Several scholars have pointed out that populists also share a particular communication style that is highly emotionalised and oriented towards conflict. These discursive features are not new in the populist repertoire (e.g. Taggart 2000; Fieschi and Heywood 2006). However, on social media, the simplification and fragmentation of the message (Bracciale and Martella 2017; Engesser et al. 2017), the negative and conflictual tonality (Bobba 2019; Schmuck and Hameleers 2020), the emotionalised attribution of blame (Hameleers, Bos, and de Vreese 2017), and the relevance of visual communication (Larsson 2020) are increasingly relevant elements in populists' communication flow, contributing to their online success. Finally, in the 'hybrid media system' (Chadwick 2017), we know that social media and the mainstream media feed off one another in recursive cycles of 'viral reality': this contributes to the spread of populism both online and offline (Postill 2018).

Digital Media Populism

Nowadays, the ecology of political communication is characterised by a hybrid media environment in which the relationship between politics, the media, technology and citizens gives rise to a process of continuous change and adaptation (Bennett and Pfetsch 2018). This includes the proliferation of news and information sources; the alteration of the traditional information formats; the convergence of mass and interpersonal communication; the emergence of new uses of media; and the change in news consumption models, characterised not only by a user's increasing self-selection of sources, but also by algorithmic selection (de Vreese et al. 2018, 4). This information environment favours the phenomenon of disinformation and the spread of fake news. Corbu and Negrea-Busuioc (2020, 193) have convincingly shown that the current media ecology favours not only the spread of populist discourse but also the 'dissemination and amplification of false attractive content' and that populism and fake news intersect and overlap to a great extent. According to the authors, three features are shared by both phenomena. First, the aforementioned changes in the media environment – including the media's declining commitment to facticity, accuracy and objectivity and the contemporary shift towards sensationalism, immediacy and emotionality (Bakir and McStay 2018) – have spread populist arguments and disinformation to an unprecedented level. Second, fake news and populism rely on a similar narrative pattern based on the dichotomy between 'us' and 'them', often using the characters of 'hero', 'villain' and 'victim'. This is an effective mechanism for both, since it leverages the citizens' identification with and the reinforcement of their previous predisposition, including stereotypes and prejudices about burning issues (Corbu and Negrea-Busuioc 2020, 187–190). Third, social media are perfectly suitable for both populist arguments and fake news since they easily allow quick dissemination and amplification of attractive content, which often goes viral (Bracciale, Andretta and Martella 2021). This content enters a self-powered cycle between senders and receivers that can be fostered even further using algorithms and bots that create a high level of circulation and influence citizens' information diet (de Vreese et al. 2019, 246).

There are different types of fake news and the terms misinformation and disinformation are often used to define this broad phenomenon. Tandoc, Lim and Ling (2018) propose a typology of fake news based on the level of its facticity and the extent of its author's immediate intention to deceive. Not all types of fake news are relevant for our purpose, only politically manipulated content and counterfeit information, namely fabricated content. Such content creates information disorder that pollutes the information ecosystem (Wardle and Derakhshan 2017) and leads to informational relativism (de Vreese et al. 2018, 5). The 2016 US elections were the political event which showed the world the growing phenomenon of dissemination of false information via social media as well as the wider consequences that it entailed in the definition of a post-truth society (Waisbord 2018c). In that campaign, fake news stories circulated widely, influencing the climate of opinion and, arguably, voters themselves. Guess, Nyhan and Reifler (2018) estimate that, in the last month of campaigning, one in four Americans visited a fake news website. Trump supporters visited fake news websites more than the other voters, and those websites were overwhelmingly pro-Trump. Facebook was a key vector of exposure to fake news, and fact-checking of fake news rarely reached its consumers. From a complementary perspective, Groshek and Koc-Michalska (2017) suggest instead that forms of passive or uncivil social media use were linked to an increase in the likelihood of support for Trump.

Such a news environment is suitable for populists. Although, to date, there are no studies that testify to the active participation of populist actors in the production and dissemination of fake news, there is no doubt that populists are the ones who benefit most from information disorder in which factual information is viewed as a matter of opinion, evidence is neglected and conspiracy theories flourish (Castanho Silva, Vegetti and Littvay 2017; Mancosu, Vassallo and Vezzoni 2017; Corbu and Negrea-Busuioc 2020; Hameleers 2020b). Finally, while populists undermine the credibility of political institutions, fake news and disinformation undermine trust in another key actor in contemporary democracies: journalism. In a context of continuous challenges and pressure for journalism – economic, technological, of credibility – the democratic functions it should play appear increasingly hard to achieve (Waisbord 2018b). In sum, the joint activities of populism and the spread of disinformation further weaken citizens' trust in the functioning of democratic regimes (Bennett and Livingston 2018).

Digital Populism and Citizens

The third aspect of digital populism concerns citizens in their dual role as the public and voters. The effects of populist communication and populist news coverage in favour of populist actors have been extensively studied (Esser, Stępińska and Hopmann 2017; Shah et al. 2017; Hameleers 2018). Studies dealing with digital populism and citizens, although still limited, show that a proportion of citizens play an active role in the generation and spread of populist arguments. In addition to publishing intrinsically populist content, these citizens take an active part in communicative interaction, for example by expressing themselves in reaction to news coverage or interacting with messages from populist actors on social media. To shed light on the ways in which the digital environment has become a fertile breeding ground for populist ideas, Stier et al. 2020 analysed five European democracies and the United States, relying on web tracking and survey data. They found that citizens with populist attitudes, though consuming news from a variety of online sources, demonstrate a high propensity to visit hyperpartisan websites instead of legacy press websites. In this perspective, citizens appear as both targets of and contributors to digital populism and, more in general, to digital threats to democracy (Miller and Vaccari 2020). Whereas we have already addressed the issue of citizens as targets of populist actors and (mis- dis-)information, two ongoing processes to which citizens are key contributors deserve to be discussed. These are the generation of populist content and the spread of incivility online.

As populist messages are popular on social media, it is not surprising that social media are also the place where citizens express their populist views the most. According to Hameleers (2019), Facebook offers a framework of discursive opportunities for citizens to vent their populist discontent and to interact with like-minded others. Focusing on the Dutch case, he found that citizens' populist discourse essentially mirrors populist actors' discourse – mainly relying on anti-elitism and exclusionism – but expresses it with a much higher level of hostility and incivility. Blassnig et al. 2019 go a step further and show that messages containing populism in turn generate populism. Basing their findings on a comparative content analysis of online news articles and comments in France, Switzerland and the UK, they found that key populist messages from political and media actors in news articles not only provoke more reader comments but also prompt citizens to use key populist messages in their comments.

A second phenomenon closely intertwined with digital populism and citizens is the spread of incivility, hate speech and harassment online. Ideally, the internet offers citizens unprecedented opportunities to access public debate, providing new means of strengthening democratic participation. In reality, a growing number of studies have shown that the environment created by social media in the last decade has provided a powerful stage for the undemocratic voices of citizens (including, but not limited to, populists). Administering a random quota survey of the

German population, Frischlich et al. (2021) found that 46 per cent of the participants who had witnessed incivility in the last three months also engaged in uncivil participation. This uncivil behaviour is highly associated with features of digital populism, namely right-wing populist voting intentions and frequent social media use.

Citizens do not only contribute to the cause of digital populism simply by spreading populist arguments. They also play an active role in attacking first-hand those targets identified as enemies of the 'people'. A clear example of this particular kind of digital mobilisation has been documented by Waisbord (2020). His research on the online harassment of US journalists clearly showed that journalists are increasingly the target of populist citizens online. This results from the combination of three developments: 'easy public access to journalists, the presence of toxic right-wing and far-right cultures on the internet, and populist demonisation of the mainstream press' (Waisbord 2020, 1038). This last point has been also pointed out by Schulz, Wirth and Müller (2020), who studied people's perceptions of the media in France, Germany, Switzerland and the UK. Their findings show that the perception of the media as hostile actors grew with the increase in populist attitudes. Similar hostility towards other minority groups, such as refugees in Europe, have been detected on social media (Ekman 2018).

Populism and Democracy in the Age of Social Media

Although there is a long-standing debate on the relationship between populism and democracy, scholars do not agree whether it is a pathological political phenomenon or the most authentic form of political representation. Arguably, Rovira Kaltwasser (2012) provided the most convincing analysis of this ambivalent relationship, stressing that populism might well represent a 'democratic corrective' in terms of inclusiveness, but it also might become a 'democratic threat' concerning public contestation. From this point of view, digital populism is no different, embodying the tension between corrective and threat. This is mainly because populism has become a constitutive element of contemporary democracies and, in its digital format, it is 'twice hybrid, as it involves the incessant interaction between old and new media as well as between online and offline communication sites' (Postill 2018, 762). This feature suggests we should consider both online and offline populism as a whole, highlighting the relevance that the digital environment has in social and political practices. Digital media are shaping – or in any case driving – the evolution of current populism. The previous paragraphs have shown that this happens at the level of political actors, information systems and citizen involvement: what happens online reverberates offline, producing new content, interpretations and targets that are reused online in a circular way.

Of course, the internet and social media are not the exclusive channels used by populists. However, populists, as a matter of fact, have shown a greater capacity to adapt quickly and effectively to new forms of logic in communication, interaction and participation with respect to mainstream politicians – with the notable exception of Barack Obama. This situation opens up new questions for scholars about the future of digital populism and its relationship with democracy. Three challenges seem to be the most relevant today. The first one pertains to how the digital frontier is affecting populism. The digital environment is constantly evolving and new platforms with new forms of logic are expanding users' opportunities to engage in 'platform-swinging' (Tandoc, Lou and Min 2019) and push politicians to follow them on these new channels. While mainstream politicians seem less likely to experiment, there have been several recorded cases in recent years of populists using emerging instant messaging platforms, like Telegram (Urman and Katz 2020), or emerging entertainment platforms, like TikTok (i.e. Matteo Salvini in Italy) for their communication. This 'elective affinity' (Gerbaudo 2018) between populists and social media could lead non-populist actors, the media and citizens to perceive populist practices as a normal way to conduct politics. The second concerns the technological development of populism. In recent years, it has been documented that populists have benefited from the unscrupulous use of bots and trolls on social media (e.g. Jamieson 2018; Golovchenko et al. 2020). The growing availability of deep learning algorithms for image and video reconstruction and processing is exacerbating this issue by providing new potential tools to manipulate messages and create information disorder in the near future. A final challenge, closely intertwined with the previous one, concerns the construction and perception of political reality in contemporary democracies. Populists are particularly likely to engage in the spread of fake news. And this poses a problem in relation to the question of the ever-thinning boundaries between what is factual, plausible or false, both within the public debate and from the perspective of the individual.

Noticeably, these challenges do not exclusively concern populism but, more broadly, the ability of politics and democracy to adapt and respond to social demands. Through these challenges, digital populism confirms the ambivalent nature of populism *tout court*. On the one hand, populists exploit the opportunities given by a changing (information) context to gain power. On the other, and in parallel, they expose some problems in contemporary democracies, offering traditional political actors the opportunity to address them.

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PART IV:
Populism Between Emerging and Consolidated Research Topics

CHAPTER 28:

SOCIETAL MALAISE IN TURBULENT TIMES: INTRODUCING A NEW EXPLANATORY FACTOR FOR POPULISM FROM A CROSS-NATIONAL EUROPE-WIDE PERSPECTIVE

Wolfgang Aschauer

Introduction: The Driving Forces behind Populism

This chapter introduces the concept of societal malaise[1] as a factor in explaining the rise of populism across Europe. All the critical events of recent years – EU enlargement to the East, the financial crisis beginning in 2008, the eurozone crisis that followed, which particularly affected the Mediterranean countries, the conflict in Ukraine, the refugee crisis, the climate crisis and the current coronavirus crisis – have all placed an enormous strain on the ability of the European Union to function as an efficient community of states. In one of his last books, Zygmunt Bauman (2012) identified the contemporary period in the development of Western societies as an 'interregnum'. The classical promises of modernity (Lyotard 1987; Habermas 1994) have been called into question in profound ways, while European integration has become more contested than before. Authors such as Hartmut Rosa (2013) claim that widespread transformations in the economic, political and cultural spheres have contributed to the feeling that progress in Europe appears to be stuck. Significant parts of the population are expressing fears of societal decline and political alienation, and are tending to rely more strongly on their national identity, which, in turn, is connected to a rise in exclusionary attitudes.

This chapter looks on the one hand at contextual factors and on the other hand at individual feelings of deprivation, in which populist politics thrive. Thus, it empirically analyses the links between the current social conditions of EU member states and the rise of societal malaise, which may be a crucial factor in explaining populism. The term malaise is derived from medical science and in this field describes general feelings of discomfort or a lack of well-being. But in recent years, according to the Oxford Dictionary this term has also been used to refer to societies that are 'afflicted with a deep cultural malaise'. This second connotation of societal malaise encompasses latent feelings about society not being in good health (see Elchardus and de Keere 2012, 103ff.). It is assumed that these feelings of societal dissatisfaction are to be found mainly within societal groups who feel left behind in society (Castel 2000; Standing 2011). However, worries about the functioning of society and concerns about the future are also becoming more and more common among the middle classes (Kraemer 2010; Lengfeld and Hirschle 2010; Bude 2014; Nachtwey 2016). The pertinent notion of the 'silent majority' (with regard to Italy, see, for example, Arrigoni and Ferragina 2015) was coined to reflect the underestimated reservoir of protest voters who have shaped recent elections. In an ongoing climate of insecurity, various social groups perceiving frustation may still be highly susceptible to various forms of populism (that have been precisely elaborated in Chapter 1 of this Handbook).

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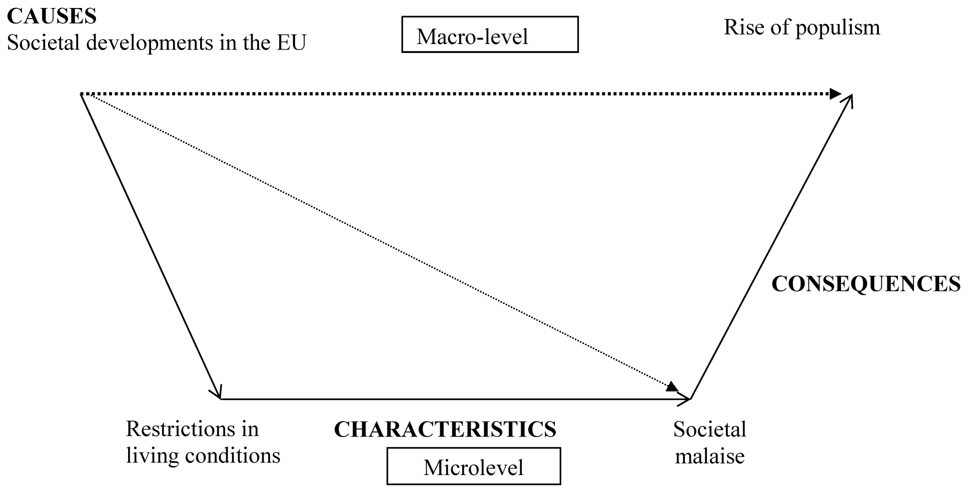
[1] Citizens' perceptions of societal crises can be summarised under the terms societal pessimism (Steenvorden 2016) or societal malaise (Aschauer 2014; 2016). All these terms are used synonymously, although societal malaise is the preferred term with which to assess contemporary feelings of society malfunctioning.

Theoretical and Empirical Approach: An Overview

This chapter's theoretical approach highlights the causes of societal pessimism (societal conditions in Europe at the macro level), the characteristics of societal malaise (at the micro level) and the consequences of societal perceptions of crisis (for example, the rise of populism). This represents my basic theoretical model; it systematises and links approaches at the macro and micro levels, thus presenting a macro-micro-macro explanatory framework (Coleman 1991; Esser 1993).[2] It is best represented by the 'bathtub model', as depicted in Figure 28.1 (Coleman 1991). In the theoretical approach I employ, contemporary societal developments are considered to be major factors that influence objective living conditions and societal well-being at the micro level. Societal pessimism can be characterised by the multifaceted perceptions of crisis (see next section). A higher degree of societal pessimism within certain countries or European regions may thus strongly correlate with the rise of populism and the tendency towards political radicalisation in Europe.

Figure 28.1: The Macro-Micro-Macro Explanation Scheme for Populism in Europe



Note: Based on Coleman's 1991 Bathtub Model.

Although societal malaise is considered to be a prominent explanatory factor in the rise of populism, it is not the aim of this chapter to chart the extent of populism in European societies. This empirical analysis sticks predominantly to the micro level to explore the main causes of societal malaise in certain European regions. The multifaceted dimensions of societal well-being at the micro level are quantified using three waves from the European Social Survey (2006 and 2012 and 2018). Three main research aims guide the empirical section of this chapter. First, it is necessary to propose a comprehensive operationalisation of societal conditions at the macro level, potential restrictions in individual living conditions at the micro level and an elaborated measurement of societal malaise (the dependent variable). Second, comparisons of the means over time are intended to allow for the monitoring of societal well-being from 2006 to 2018. This approach is designed to provide an initial overview of which EU countries have experienced disturbances in various perceptions of societal functioning in recent years and which nations have continuously suffered from restrictions to societal well-being.

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[2] The guiding logic of this traditional sociological explanatory scheme holds that social phenomena have to be explained with reference to the micro level because they are always influenced by individual actions.

The third objective of the empirical study is to use a comprehensive set of contextual indicators and individual characteristics to explain the degree of societal malaise in a multilevel model. To evaluate the stability of the model, the analysis is based on the ESS data set 2012 as well as on the ESS data set 2018. It is assumed that while roughly the same individual characteristics may explain societal dissatisfaction, variation in negative societal climates across EU countries can be traced back to different contextual conditions over time. The aggregation of individual perceptions of crisis into collective reactions (for example, voting preferences) is not easy to test empirically (for more details, see Esser 1993, 95ff.). Several mediator variables (for example, the extent of social inequality, the functioning of the welfare state, the amount of exposure to the refugee crisis or the current coronavirus crisis, as well as media coverage or political discourse) influence how populism is manifested in certain countries. Viewing a rise in populism as a consequence of societal malaise is a relationship that will not be tested empirically in this chapter, but it remains a promising area for further study. The last section will address potential new areas of research into populism based on societal malaise.

Characteristics of Societal Malaise

Societal malaise can be described using three key perceptions of crisis, which are connected to economic, political and cultural conditions in Europe: EU citizens express *fear of societal decline*, show increasing levels of *political disenchantment* and react with *social distrust* to the challenges of cultural diversity.

Fear of Societal Decline

Although current stratification research often deals with precarisation (Standing 2011), it also focuses closely on the vulnerable middle classes (Burzan and Berger 2010) and is beginning to examine subjective fears of social decline (Kraemer 2010; Nachtwey 2016). It is notable that middle-class insecurities are often not connected with real experiences but are based on individual or historical comparisons. People feel underprivileged in comparison to other groups or to a previous point in time. Citizens in Western Europe often consider the 'golden age' of the second half of the twentieth century (Castel 2000) to have been an era of peacebuilding, economic growth, political stability and European integration. Current middle-class fears can best be attributed to changes in expectation for the future, since EU citizens now seem to have the impression that European stability is itself illusory. In close proximity to the prosperous regions of Western Europe, there are several trouble spots, such as the Middle East, and new conflicts, such as that in Ukraine, which have weakened Europe's position in global power relations. New borders between the West and radical Islam (combined with the terror threat posed by Islamic State) threaten social cohesion between Christians and Muslims. Fears of societal decline are reflected in high levels of pessimism about the future.

It is important to distinguish expressions of fear among the middle classes from the perceptions of social groups who are clearly underprivileged. In Southern Europe, we can observe a deterioration in the lives of the poor as objective living conditions have measurably declined. The emergence of a young and seemingly 'lost' generation, who are experiencing limited opportunities in the labour market, has become a major social problem. These individuals try to get by by taking on occasional jobs while facing the realities of mass unemployment and material deprivation. These marginal groups in Europe are becoming more and more visible in certain peripheral regions. It is thus important to take feelings of recognition (Honneth 1992) into account, as people who have the fewest privileges in contemporary society all suffer from neglect. Enraged citizens (see Kurbjuweit 2010) in this group have unleashed their anger in recent elections, a process seemingly fuelled by their powerlessness to influence societal change.

Political Disenchantment

One sociological theory that is suited to explaining political disenchantment is the concept of anomie (originally developed by Durkheim 1983). In Durkheim's model, citizens witness significant disruptions to social order (for example, due to an unexpected and uncontrollable pandemic), which leaves them feeling like passive bystanders facing major crises. Anomie in contemporary society thus reflects not only the violation of societal norms but, most significantly, a relative lack of certainty in expectations for the future within a highly diverse society (see Bohle et al. 1997). While people with a higher social status remain active in civil society, disadvantaged groups tend to react with increasing apathy. It has been a widespread mistake to neglect these far-reaching forms of institutional alienation, which is also coupled with a tendency to judge them as temporary phenomena. Moreover, we are also witnessing a critical shift into a 'post-truth' era of politics (for an initial outline, see Keyes 2004), reflecting citizens' need to search for easy solutions to complex societal problems. Growing numbers of citizens tend to distrust the mainstream media and statistical data, as they favour dubious internet sources and have become more and more susceptible to conspiracy theories. The crisis of representation in democracy (see Linden and Thaa 2011) has already reached a high level, signalling a post-democratic turn in Western societies (see Crouch 2008; Blühdorn 2013).

Social Distrust

One clear symptom of a potential crisis of cohesion is the rise in social distrust in many European societies. Both the decline in social capital and forms of social exclusion are well-known research areas in the field of social cohesion, which were prominently addressed by advocates of communitarianism (see Walzer 1993; Taylor 1995; Putnam 2000). Individual strategies that undermine solidarity result from subordination under the normative goal of achievement, since in highly individualised societies (Münch 2010) all responsibility for decision-making is assigned to the individual. People experience a lack of personal freedom (as a paradoxical consequence of high levels of autonomy), as they are forced into unwanted decisions and incur debt but often have no real opportunities for advancement within society. In many European societies, the pressure to achieve social mobility is growing, and the impulse of competition may win out over that of solidarity.

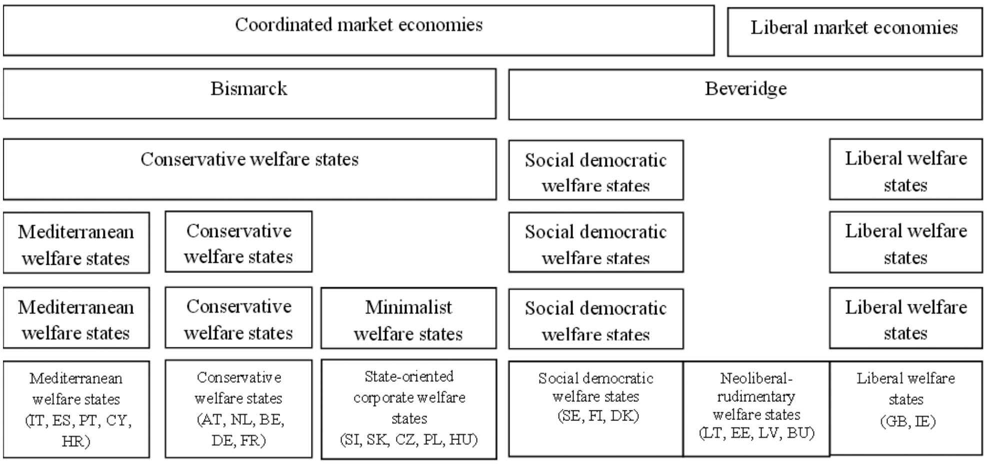
It is not only economic conditions but also political disruptions to the existing order that have provoked widespread feelings of distrust. In particular, the issue of immigration is responsible for the sharp polarisation of values in society. While some groups in society welcome cultural heterogeneity, those who reject late-modern transformations are susceptible to a revival of conservative world views (Spier 2010). Specifically, these values may take the form of disapproval of cultural diversity, resulting in increased attachment to one's own nation and a renaissance of social values aimed at preserving order by simultaneously opting for strong leadership and rejecting egalitarianism and a commitment to tolerance (Norris and Inglehart 2019). A rise in ethnocentrism is especially noticeable among the least privileged strata of society due to the fact that disadvantaged groups choose to defend their precarious levels of wealth by bullying the even more underprivileged. As a result, particular groups come to be identified as 'significant others' (Triandafyllidou 1998, 593) and are perceived as a threat to the achievements associated with Western democracies, such as relative equality and overall wealth. Disputes over cultural diversity are expressions of significant identity conflicts in contemporary society and have the potential to initiate a new 'age of irreconcilability' (Dubiel 1997, 429). To these groups, that which is foreign is perceived as a powerful invader in their ancestral territories, which can no longer be protected from the side effects of globalisation.

Empirical Approach and Operationalisation Strategy

To distinguish between different societal conditions in the EU, it is helpful to establish a finely tuned and comprehensive typology of European welfare state regimes, which afford different protection against the uncertainties of the market. Drawing on Esping-Andersen (1990) and his concept of decommodification – which refers to an individual's ability to access welfare programmes and social services that are independent of the market and the individual's performance therein – we can establish three types: the liberal welfare state, such as the United Kingdom and Ireland, which emphasises the role of the free market; the conservative or Bismarck welfare model (such as that found in Germany or Austria), which is based on linking social security to social status and employment relations, and the social democratic welfare regimes of Scandinavia, which provide the most extensive protection from labour market risks.

A fourth type of welfare regime has been suggested to reflect the social benefits that exist in Southern European states, which have been classified as rudimentary (Leibfried 1992), post-authoritarian (Lessenich 1995) or familialistic (Ferrera 1996). Eastern Europe may constitute yet a different type, as it cannot be easily accommodated as a group within Esping-Andersen's three worlds of welfare capitalism (Kollmorgen 2009). These countries may have to be segregated into two additional welfare types, with the Baltic States evidencing similarities to liberal welfare regimes and the Visegrád countries of Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary, along with Slovenia, resembling more scaled-down versions of the Bismarck model. These differences allow us to both categorise the six European regions (see Figure 28.2) according to the welfare regime in place there and account for the variation in social policy provision in our Europe-wide analysis (for recent publications on this topic, see Aschauer 2016; 2017).

Figure 28.2: A Typology of Six European Regions Based on the Varieties of Capitalism Approach and Welfare State Research


Coordinated market economies
Liberal market economies
Bismarck
Beveridge
Conservative welfare states
Social democratic welfare states
Liberal welfare states
Mediterranean welfare states
Conservative welfare states
Social democratic welfare states
Liberal welfare states
Mediterranean welfare states
Conservative welfare states
Minimalist welfare states
Social democratic welfare states
Liberal welfare states
Mediterranean welfare states (IT, ES, PT, CY, HR)
Conservative welfare states (AT, NL, BE, DE, FR)
State-oriented corporate welfare states (SI, SK, CZ, PL, HU)
Social democratic welfare states (SE, FI, DK)
Neoliberal-rudimentary welfare states (LT, EE, LV, BU)
Liberal welfare states (GB, IE)

Source: Modified and extended, according to Schröder 2013, 59.

The main empirical aims of this article are, first, to provide a comprehensive operationalisation of societal conditions (based on macro-indicators) and those concepts which hint at potential (objective) restrictions in individual living conditions as well as to measure subjective perceptions of societal well-being. Secondly, the statistical analysis aims at monitoring societal change by focusing on impressions of societal functioning in the EU member states (with mean comparisons), and at measuring the impact of contextual factors and individual circumstances to explain the extent of societal malaise in certain countries and regions over time. Three waves of the European Social Survey (2006, 2012 and 2018), which is currently considered to be the leading cross-national survey in Europe,[3] were used to monitor societal well-being over time. The multilevel analysis to detect the main influencing factors on the macro and micro levels on societal malaise is computed based on the waves of 2012 and 2018 to control for changes over time as well. In total, I selected 24 countries belonging to the EU for the study.[4]

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[3] The European Social Survey has several advantages in comparison with other survey instruments. The data quality fulfils the highest standards in survey research, which is demonstrated by the survey's extensive efforts at documentation, a high number of participating European countries (from 22 countries in the first wave up to 30 countries in more recent waves), large probability samples for each country (the minimum sample size is 1,500), equal survey modes (in the form of face-to-face interviews) and a high target response rate (70 per cent) (see Lynn et al. 2007).

[4] Greece, Luxembourg, Malta and Romania were not included in the analysis as these states did not participate in most of the waves of the ESS.

Macro Indicators Leading to a Conception of Diverse European Regions

In a first step, it is necessary to measure key societal conditions that are able to explain the extent of societal malaise at the level of a given country. I selected nine indicators which highlight the societal developments in Europe mainly based on Eurostat data from 2018 (see Table 28.2 in the appendix for the indicators for all European countries and welfare regions). I chose the GDP per capita in Purchasing Power Standards (PPS), the GDP annual growth rate, the Gini index, the annual unemployment rate, and the extent of poverty and social exclusion to show the economic context in the EU. While Northern and Western Europe is still in a leading position regarding economic development, Central Eastern European states especially have shown some signs of economic progress (with even higher GDP growth rates compared to the prosperous European countries in Western Europe). Additionally, notable income inequalities (measured by the Gini index) can be observed in the UK and in several states of Southern Europe as well, they are also extraordinarily high in the neoliberal rudimentary welfare states in Eastern Europe. The unemployment rate in the year 2018 was low in conservative welfare states (notably in Germany, Austria and the Netherlands), while Southern European countries especially (particularly Spain and Italy) are still suffering from high unemployment. This also leads to higher rates of poverty and social exclusion. Especially in Southern Europe as well as in the neoliberal rudimentary welfare states (particularly Bulgaria), more than a quarter of the population is facing severe difficulties as a result of poverty and material deprivation.

A state's current financial conditions are captured by the general measure of public debt (percentage of GDP) and expenditure on social protection (based on PPS per capita). Expenditure on social protection is generally higher in prosperous states and is thus strongly correlated with GDP (r=0.7 at the country level). Public debt has already reached a high level in some conservative welfare states (especially in France and Belgium) and seems particularly a threat to economic stability in Southern Europe (especially in Italy, which is closely followed by Portugal). The state of democracy is measured by the Democracy Matrix concept (Lauth 2015[5]), which enriches the quality of the democracy index (Lauth and Kauff 2012). Here, it is visible that Scandinavian countries particularly score high on these measurements, as do most of the countries in conservative welfare states (with Austria and France with slightly lower index scores). A few countries in Eastern Europe (such as Estonia) have already reached scores as high as in Western Europe and can be considered established democracies, while other countries (such as Poland, Hungary, Croatia and Bulgaria) are far below the levels of their Western European counterparts.

The final macro indicator deals with cultural diversity within the countries of the EU and shows the proportion of citizens with immigrant backgrounds (based on Eurostat). Yet, we have to consider that the structure of immigration is highly different across Europe. The highest proportion of immigrants can be found in Cyprus and Estonia, where immigrants often have a Russian background. On the other hand, Sweden and Austria have higher rates of third-country nationals and higher numbers of people who have been granted asylum or still have asylum seeker status. It is also evident that Southern European countries (such as Italy or Spain) have become immigrant societies over the last decade, while Eastern European countries (especially Poland, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic or Slovakia) are still rather ethnically homogeneous societies.

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[5] 15 indicators measure three central dimensions of democracy, namely freedom, equality and control of these rights. This multifaceted index was used to overcome the potential shortcomings of single measurements.

Operationalisation of Restrictions on Living Conditions

The selection of indicators to measure an individual's capacity to achieve social inclusion takes into account several socio-demographic and structural variables (see Tables 28.3 and 28.4 in the appendix). Besides age and gender, domicile, migration background and religious background[6] were used to clarify potential socio-demographic impacts on societal malaise. To differentiate clearly between social groups and to highlight contemporary living conditions, this study follows Anhut and Heitmeyer's (2000) concept of integration. The structural sphere refers to *individual-functional system integration* and covers the resources needed for advancement in society (access to jobs, education and income). Several grades of employment relationships were used to assess the structural position of citizens. Education was measured with ISCED categories to enable a comparison between European states (see Schneider 2008). Income was judged subjectively with a four-point scale which measured whether it is easy or difficult to manage on one's household income. The *communicative-interactive social integration* measure corresponds to the political sphere and institutional participation. This level is measured only roughly using three indicators. The first variable deals with trade union membership. Two indices reflect the extent of conventional and unconventional political participation in society (Uehlinger 1988). The *cultural-expressive social integration* measure is operationalised using indicators of formal and informal social engagement (Putnam 2000). The first variable, referring to involvement in voluntary organisations, is only included in the 2012 survey, while the index of social inclusion (referring to friendships, intimate relationships and social activities) was able to be built in all the survey waves of the ESS.

When we review recent developments in Europe concerning these factors, we can see some interesting trends (referring to Tables 28.3 and 28.4 in the appendix). The aspects of political and social inclusion especially provide a clear picture of the degree of social integration of EU citizens. Here, it can be seen that people in Western Europe achieve higher rates in unconventional political engagement (e.g. signing a petition, taking part in demonstrations) compared to Eastern Europe. On the other hand, conventional political engagement (contacting a politician or working for a party during the last 12 months) is rather low in all EU member states. Especially in Scandinavian countries, a large proportion of citizens declare they are members of a trade union, while these unions are meanwhile virtually non-existent in several Eastern European countries. However, social inclusion (having social contacts, discussing intimate things and meeting friends), which is measured on a seven-point scale, is rather high in all European states. The Swedish and the Dutch especially report high levels of contact, while larger parts of the population in the Baltic states, Hungary or Cyprus tend to feel rather socially excluded. Also in the ESS data, we can see the high level of unemployment in the aftermath of the eurozone crisis in Southern Europe, while in other regions unemployment turns out to be rather low in the most recent survey from 2018. This also becomes visible in the data on dealing with income. It seems that especially in Finland and in the Netherlands large parts of the population are able to cope easily on their household incomes, while people in some Mediterranean countries (particularly Cyprus) and Eastern European countries (especially Hungary, Latvia and Bulgaria) face major difficulties. When we summarise all the contextual data and individual living conditions, it turns out that Bulgaria especially, where major constraints in economic performance and the quality of democracy, plus poverty and exclusion are clearly observable in the data, is still an outlier in Europe.

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[6] I used religiosity here to control for a potential additional effect on societal malaise. In Table 28.3 in the appendix, it can be seen that religiosity is higher in Finland compared to Sweden and higher in Austria and France compared to other states belonging to the conservative welfare regime. There are other countries, such as Poland, Slovakia and Ireland, which have a notably higher level of religion compared to other states.

Operationalisation of Societal Malaise

The dependent variable of societal malaise vs. societal well-being is obviously linked to those national and individual circumstances and is seen as a major driver of the potential exhaustion of democracy and the susceptibility of populism. This main dependent variable of the study is conceptualised as a second-order factor constituted by various feelings of unease within society.[7] All measurements corresponding to societal well-being are again framed by the concept of structural, regulative and cohesive crisis states, which is based on Anhut and Heitmeyer's approach (2000). Structural perceptions of crisis are measured by *fears of societal decline*. This concept is measured by perceptions of equal opportunities in society. If people express the opinion that the chances of achieving an education or getting appropriate jobs are not fair, a (perceived) structural crisis state is assumed. *Political disenchantment* is composed of two first-order factors that contribute to societal malaise. Political trust represents a traditional measurement – similar items are used in several cross-national surveys (such as the European Values Study and the World Values Survey). A central measurement for capturing regulative crisis conditions in society is dissatisfaction with societal developments (namely the state of the economy, the government and the way democracy works in the country). Finally, the concept of a crisis of cohesion is operationalised using the indicator of *social distrust*, which is measured through three classical criteria. The respondents have to judge if people treat them fairly, if they are generally helpful and if most people can be trusted.

Table 28.5 (see appendix) provides an overview of the mean judgements on all eleven indicators (based on recent 2018 data) that are used to measure societal well-being in European societies. The last column (see table 28.5 in the appendix) presents the mean values on the index. The last variable reflects the index of societal malaise vs. societal well-being, which is further used as the main dependent variable in the multilevel model. If we consider the table, it becomes obvious that societal well-being is still quite high (above the scale mean of 5) in Scandinavian countries as well as in most Western European countries (except France and the UK). Here, the mean value falls below 5, which indicates a rather critical stage in societal well-being. Although the sub-dimensions are correlated with each other, there are notable differences between the different levels of societal well-being in some European states. If we take the UK, for example, we notice that social trust is rather high, which indicates a functioning society. On the other hand, political distrust (under the spell of Brexit) as well as satisfaction with the government and the economy is lower than in other Western European states. In addition, large numbers of citizens do not share the impression that equal opportunities exist anymore. This leads to notable negative perceptions which are growing in British society.

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[7] The model of societal well-being was already tested for validity and cross-cultural equivalence (see further results in Aschauer 2016). The first-order factors measuring structural, regulative and cohesive crisis conditions lead to high factor loadings and a clear empirical distinction between the different levels. Also, the correlations with the higher-order factor of societal malaise versus social well-being are generally substantial. The cross-cultural invariance test highlights that it was not possible to achieve scalar equivalence or partial scalar invariance, which is a necessary precondition for comparing the means between the EU countries (based on the 2012 data). However, it was possible to establish metric equivalence in all countries (which is a necessary condition for multilevel analysis and partial scalar invariance within at least most of the European regions and over time in most of the countries (see Aschauer 2017 for further computations).

Moving on to the Mediterranean region, we can clearly confirm that societal malaise is still widespread among those countries. Although there are some rather positive examples (e.g. Portugal), we note that the mean values remain considerably lower than they do in Western Europe (with Croatia being at the tail end). The perceptions of a lack of a functioning society are also higher in the Baltic states and especially in Bulgaria (with Estonia being a notable exception). The corporate welfare states of Central Eastern Europe are somewhat in between Southern Europe and Western Europe. Some countries seem to be on the path towards the conditions of Western Europe (with the Czech Republic already reaching similar values). In other countries, a high level of social distrust (e.g. in Slovakia) and political disenchantment (e.g. in Poland) is still pushing the societal climate in a negative direction. The further empirical analysis will now provide insights into the time-related dynamics in societal well-being over the last decade. Subsequently, a multilevel analysis will provide insights into the main individual and contextual factors which contribute to the explanation of societal malaise.

Empirical results

The Evolution of Societal Malaise in Europe

The first part of the analysis provides an insightful description of contemporary trends within societal well-being in European countries. Two facets of the concept, namely satisfaction with society and social trust, were selected to depict crucial trends in societal well-being within the EU.

Figure 28.3: Satisfaction with Society, 2006, 2012 and 2018 (Northern and Western Europe)

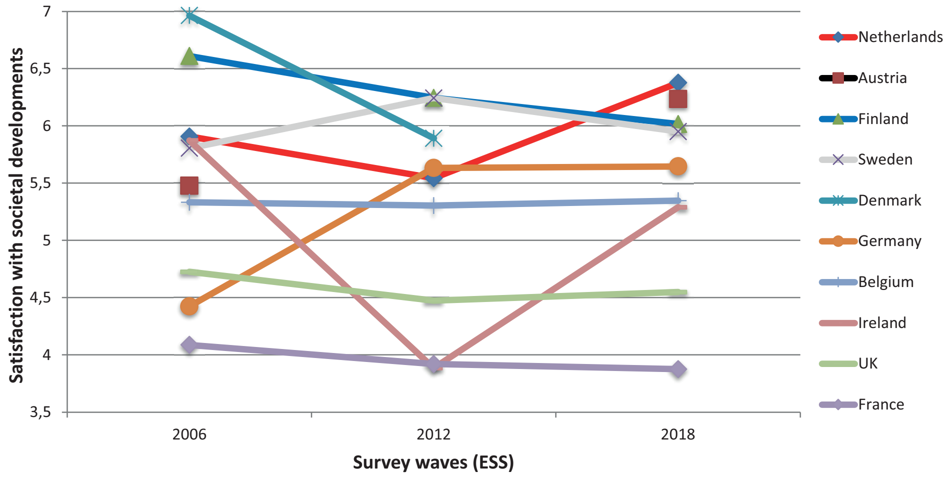


Figure 28.4: Trust in Social Relations, 2006, 2012 and 2018 (Northern and Western Europe)

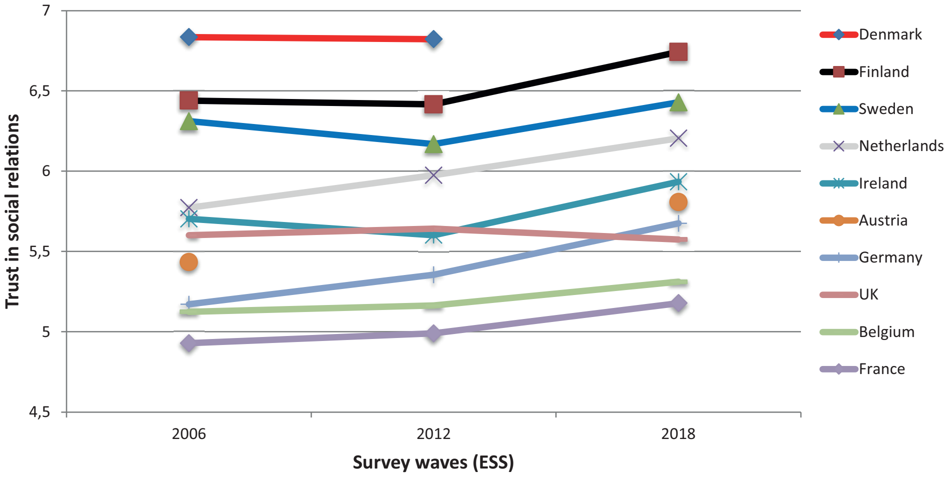


Figure 28.5: Satisfaction with Societal Developments, 2006, 2012 and 2018 (Eastern and Southern Europe)

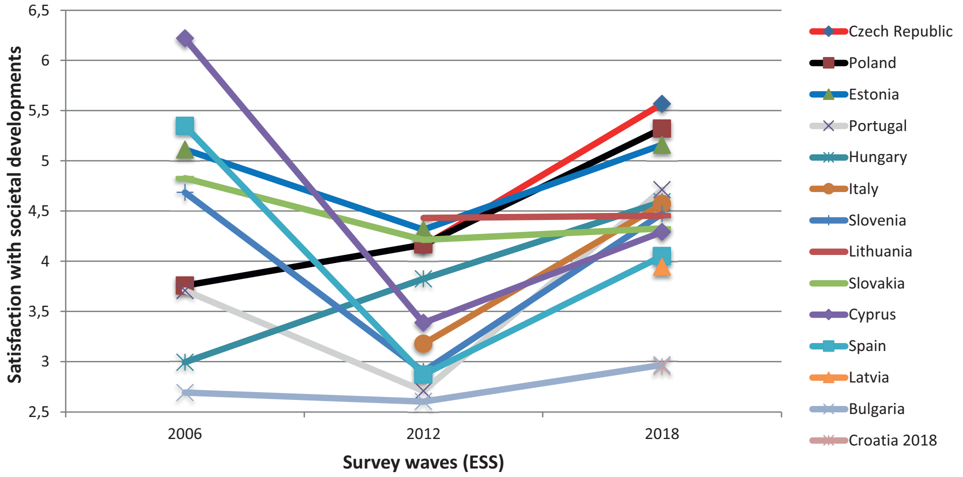
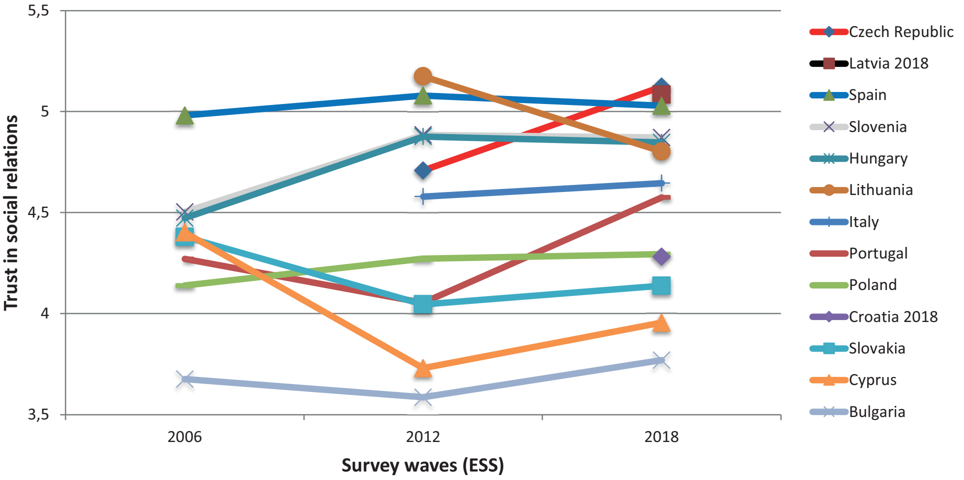


Figure 28.6: Trust in Social Relations, 2006, 2012 and 2018 (Eastern and Southern Europe)



Figures 28.3 to 28.6 allow us to formulate initial hypotheses on the evolution of societal malaise from 2006 via 2012 to 2018.[8] Figure 28.3 shows the highly diverse developments in societal well-being in Northern and Western Europe. As far as satisfaction with societal developments are concerned, there are four countries with an increase in societal well-being over time. These countries are the Netherlands, Austria, Germany and Ireland (which faced a sharp decrease in societal well-being due to the economic crisis in 2012). There are some additional

countries with a trend that indicates stagnation (e.g. Sweden and Denmark) and countries with growing signs of destabilisation (e.g. Belgium, France and the UK).[9]

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[8] Although these timely comparisons are based on an evaluated concept, the results should only be seen as an estimation of countries' means. The invariance tests (see Aschauer 2017) demonstrated that full scalar invariance was not fulfilled. This means that comparisons of mean values by country should be treated with caution.

Figure 28.4 clearly demonstrates that – at least over the last decade – there is no evident crisis of cohesion in Northern and Western European states. Thus, social trust is still widely guaranteed in Western Europe as all countries achieve a scale mean far above the threshold of 5. Danish citizens express the highest level of social trust, a position which remains stable over time. It is notable, however, that the UK is the only country where social trust has slightly decreased in the course of the last few years. This may be due to high social and political turbulence in times of ongoing Brexit discussions.

If we turn our focus to Eastern and Southern Europe (see figure 28.5), we can observe sharp declines in societal satisfaction in the aftermath of the economic crisis, but many countries seem to be back on the road to more trust in society again. While satisfaction was particularly high in the Czech Republic, Poland and Estonia in 2018 (before the coronavirus crisis), there was also a continuous increase in societal well-being in Hungary over the years. Those countries that were particularly exposed to the eurozone crisis witnessed a sharp decrease in societal well-being in 2012. This is particularly obvious in Cyprus, Spain and Portugal as well as in Italy (although there are no data available for 2006 for this country). It is notable, however, that the mean judgements of the citizens were still below the scale mean of five in 2018, which indicates a tendency towards societal malaise in those countries. Dissatisfaction with societal developments is highest in Bulgaria and Croatia, and it is highly probable that those countries will remain at the tail end in the near future.

However, this crisis of institutional trust is again not connected with a crisis of trust in social relations (see Figure 28.6). Although most of the Southern and Eastern European states rank behind Northern and Western European countries, the amount of social trust is still higher than the mean of societal satisfaction. However, the low values of social trust in Bulgaria, Cyprus, Slovakia, Croatia, Poland and Portugal still point to potential crisis phenomena at the level of cohesion. It is clearly apparent that those countries that have suffered the most from the economic crisis are also often affected by a decrease in social trust (e.g. Cyprus, Portugal). In the shadow of the current coronavirus crisis, we can assume that the ongoing measures taken to deal with this health crisis may affect various social areas. Particularly in countries with rather minimalistic social security measures, huge economic effects will appear and there is the threat that this will result in a deeper social crisis as well.

The Causes of Societal Malaise: A Multilevel Analysis

The main empirical analysis of the chapter will now focus on detecting the causes of societal malaise based on two multilevel analyses which are, in turn, based on ESS data from 2012 and 2018. This strategy is used, on the one hand, to replicate the most important results and, on the other hand, to analyse potential changes in the size of the effect of explanatory factors over time. The execution of a multilevel analysis has to follow certain steps to arrive at conclusions that provide valuable insights. Commonly, a bottom-up strategy is used (Hox 2010), which allows for a gradual increase in the complexity of the model. The first step that is required to justify the use of a multilevel analysis is to compute the intra-class correlation based on an intercept-only model. This coefficient clearly shows that, in the aftermath of the eurozone crisis, more than 30 per cent of the variance of societal malaise can be traced back to the level of the country (see Model 1, 2012 data). In 2018, when several countries were back on the road to economic growth, still more than 20 per cent of the variance in societal well-being is located at the country level. These results represent the first clear empirical justification that a multilevel analysis is best suited to distinguishing effects on both an individual and a country level. The dependent variable of 'societal well-being' represents a comprehensive index, summarising the mean judgement on all 11 indicators of the concept (see Table 28.5 in the appendix).[10] The first necessary step to justify the use of a multilevel analysis is to compute the intra-class-correlation based on an intercept-only-model. This coefficient clearly shows that more than 30 per cent of the variance of societal malaise could be traced back to the country-level in 2012. In 2018 still more than 20 per cent of the variance in societal malaise is located at the country level, which clearly confirms the necessity using a multilevel model (see the first two colums in Table 28.1).

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[9] The respondents evaluated all indicators on an 11-point scale (from 0 to 10). Country means below five (the middle of the scale) indicate societal perceptions of crisis (as people tend to voice feelings of dissatisfaction or distrust in social relations), while mean values above five reflect relatively positive judgements by citizens.

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[10] To avoid a high number of missing values, at least one item of every first-order factor (political trust, satisfaction with society, social trust and perceiving equal opportunities in society) had to be answered by every single respondent.

Table 28.1: Results of the Multilevel Analysis to Explain Societal Malaise in the European Union

Levels of analysis	Predictors	Indicators	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
			Empty model 2012	Empty model 2018	Individual predictors 2012	Individual predictors 2018	Predictors of individual and country level 2012	Predictors of individual and country level 2018	+ welfare-state classification and standardised coefficient 2012	+ welfare-state classification and standardised coefficients 2018
	Intercept		4.71	4.78	4.61	4.31	4.64		5.46	5.01
Socio-demographic level	Gender (0 = female, 1= male)				-0.06***	-0.11***	-0.06***	-0.11***	-0.06 (-0.02)***	-0.11 (-0.03)***
	Age									
	Domicile (ref. countryside)	Large cities								
		Small cities			-0.04**	0.05**	-0.04**	0.05**	-0.04 (-0.01)**	0,05 (0,01)**
	Migration background				0.06**	0.16***	0.06**	0.16***	0.06 (0.01)**	0.16 (0.03)***
	Religiosity				0.04***	0.06***	0.04***	0.06***	0.04 (0.08)***	0.06 (0.11)***
Individual predictors	Unconv. political engagement				-0.07***	-0.17***	-0.07***	-0.17***	-0.07 (-0.02)***	-0.17 (-0.05)***
	Voluntary engagement				0.13***		0.13***		0.13 (0.04)***	
	Social Inclusion Index				0.10***	0.16***	0.10***	0.16***	0.10 (0.08)***	0.16 (0.11)***
	Education (ref. ISCED 5-6)	Low (0–2)			-0.34***	-0.34***	-0.34***	-0.34***	-0.34 (-0.11)***	-0,34 (-0.09***=
		Medium (3–4)			-0.26***	-0.25***	-0.26***	-0.25***	-0.26 (-0.09)***	-0,25*** (-0,08)
	Emploment relation (ref. retired)	Permanent (full-time)								
		Part-time								
		Temporary								
		Solo/self-employed								
		In education			0.35***	0.44***	0.35***	0.44***	0.35 (0.07)***	0,44 (0,08)***
		Housewife/-husband				-0.09**		-0.09**		-0,09 (-0,01)**
		Unemployed			-0.16***	-0.10**	-0.16***	-0.10**	-0.16 (-0.03)***	-0,10 (-0,01)**
		Disabled			-0.26***	-0.40***	-0.26***	-0.40***	-0.26 (-0.03)***	-0,40 (-0,04)***
	Subjective estimation (social status)				0.19***	-	0.19***	-	0.19 (0.23) ***	-
	Dealing with household income				0.46***	0.37***	0.46***	0.37***	0.46 (0.15) ***	0.37 (0.19)***

Levels of analysis	Predictors	Indicators	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
			Empty model 2012	Empty model 2018	Individual predictors 2012	Individual predictors 2018	Predictors of individual and country level 2012	Predictors of individual and country level 2018	+ welfare-state classification and standardised coefficient 2012	+ welfare-state classification and standardised coefficients 2018
Contextual predictors	GDP / capita in KKS						0.02 (0.34) ***	0.01 (0.19)*		0.01 (0.22)*
	Unemployment rate (2012 not significant, only 2018)							-0.09 (-0.15)*		-0.09 (-0.17)*
	Public debt (% of GDP)						-0.01 (-0.22) ***	-0.01 (-0.10) $^{+}$		
	Quality of democracy (KID)						0.30 (0.13) $^{+}$	3.24 (0.16)*		2.29 (0.12)*
	Proportion immigrant background						-0.03 (-0.09)$^{+}$			
	Welfare-state typology (ref. social democratic)	Conservative							-0.70 (-0.21)*	-0,61 (-0,17) $^{+}$
		Liberal							-0.79 (-0.18)*	-1,17 (-0,23)*
		Mediterranean							-1.47 (-0.36)**	-0,74 (-0,19)*
		Corporate							-1.05 (-0.30)**	-0,58 (-0,14) $^{+}$
		Neoliberal-rudimentary							-0.73 (-0.19)$^{+}$	-0,70 (-0,16)*
Variance components	Individual level		1.43	1.98	1.12	1.74	1.12	1.74	1.12	1.74
	Contextual level		0.63**	0.55	0.41**	0.46	0.09	0.14	0.06	0.08
Explained variance	Individual level				22.1%	11.8%	22.1%	11.8%	22.1%	11.8
	Contextual level				35%	17.4%	85.7%	74.5%	91.2%	85.4%
	ICC		0.31	0.22	0.27	0.21	0.08	0.07	0.05	0.04
Deviance			130436.03	141038.13	109553.41	125944.37	109521.79	125917.29	109511.72	125905.85
	Estimated parameters		3	3	24	21	28	26	33	31
	Sample size (unweighted)		40478 / 21	39732 / 23	36858 / 21	36970 / 23	36858 / 21	36970/23	36858 / 21	36970/23

The second model includes all the individual predictors that were used to explain societal malaise at the micro level. After consideration of both survey waves, it was decided to refer only to fixed-effects models, which set the precondition that certain predictors have to be equally relevant for all countries (see Model 2).[11] Model 2 illustrates only the highly significant predictors at the individual level ($p<0.01$) due to the large sample size. The effects of socio-demographic parameters are rather weak, showing that women are more satisfied with society than men, and that foreign-born and religious people express slightly more trust in society. In terms of predictors at the level of social cohesion, we can see that social inclusion is highly relevant in guaranteeing higher levels of satisfaction with society. At the structural level, higher education leads to societal well-being, while unemployed and disabled people demonstrate a higher degree of societal malaise. The two most important predictors relate to the subjective level. People who see themselves as being at the bottom of society and people who have difficulties managing on their income are susceptible to high-level perceptions of crisis. Nearly all the results concerning the individual predictors were able to be replicated using the data from ESS 2018 and there are only slight deviances. Contrary to 2012, societal well-being is marginally higher in small cities compared to the countryside. Additionally, the effect of migration background and religiosity (increasing societal well-being) as well as unconventional political engagement (decreasing societal well-being) is slightly stronger in 2018 compared to 2012. In 2018, only the aspect of living comfortably on one's income was able to be used as a (subjective) status measure and this variable still indicates a strong positive effect on societal well-being. In general, all these indicators on the micro level are still able to explain a considerable amount of variance (22 per cent). In 2018, only 11.8 per cent of the variance in societal well-being could be traced back to individual predictors due to lack of availability of certain variables (e.g. the subjective status measure) in the survey.[12]

Model 3 includes all individual predictors and selected macro variables.[13] Altogether, three main predictors appear to be highly relevant in explaining societal malaise. Economic prosperity helps to increase societal well-being, while high levels of public debt increase societal pessimism. A third relevant factor is quality of democracy, which strengthens the public impression of society being functional. While in 2012 the proportion of immigrant background exerted a small negative effect (which was mainly due to Cyprus as an outlier), no such effect was present in 2018. Notably, the unemployment rate in a country, leading to a decrease in societal well-being, turned out to be significant in 2018. The standardised effects (shown in brackets) demonstrate that GDP per capita exerts a considerable impact on societal well-being. The influence of public debt is also highly significant, while the quality of democracy only weakly contributes to explanations of societal malaise. In 2018, the GDP effect turned out to be weaker, while the unemployment rate as well as the quality of democracy still exert a significant influence.

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[11] This precondition was set due to the small N problem in this multilevel analysis because the sample size at the contextual level is only 21 countries in 2012 and 23 countries in 2018 (see, for example, Maas and Hox 2004).

[12] The inclusion of these predictors also accounts for a significant reduction in variance at the macro level. Variance at the contextual level can also be reduced because differences between countries might be due to unequal distributions (with regard to socio-demographic and structural predictors). Model 2 controls for those differences and can thus contribute to the explanation of countrywide differences.

[13] It may be problematic to include all context predictors in one model because they are highly correlated. Thus, it was decided to implement a stepwise procedure and to integrate only those predictors simultaneously and separately where a higher impact on societal malaise was expected. Ultimately based on the data 2012, it seemed most beneficial to use four predictors that are illustrated in Model 3. In 2018, the unemployment rate was added as well because an additional significant effect was reported (for this strategy, see also Neller 2008).

In Model 4, the standardised effects of the individual predictors are also depicted.[14] With regard to country effects, Model 4 – based on the 2012 data – interestingly shows that all macro predictors can be traced back to different welfare systems and regional characteristics within Europe. This means that all country effects lose their significance when the six European areas are added to the model (see Figure 28.2). The discrepancies were really high in 2012 because citizens in Southern Europe or in Central Eastern Europe are more than one category below the reference region in their mean judgement on societal well-being.[15] In general, it is possible to explain more than 90 per cent of the variance at the country level using the welfare structures in 2012 and more than 85 per cent of the country variance in 2018.[16] While in 2012, all country-level predictors turn out to be insignificant when the welfare state typology is taken into account, those predictors still exert an additional influence in 2018 (with the exception of public debt). This indicates that levels of intra-European polarisation were slightly reduced in 2018 and country characteristics, such as GDP, the quality of democracy and the unemployment rate, play an additional role. But in 2018, it was also possible to detect additional significant effects to explain societal well-being based on the theory-guided welfare state regimes. In general, it seems that societal well-being is currently highest in Scandinavia and decreases substantially when we consider other Western European regions (particularly liberal welfare regimes). The impression that there are still high levels of societal dissatisfaction becomes evident when we turn to Southern or Eastern Europe, although these effects are not as substantial as in 2012. On the other hand, due to the coronavirus crisis, it is highly probable that these discrepancies between European areas may deepen again and may result in higher levels of polarisation concerning societal well-being in the EU. It can be assumed that welfare state arrangements as well as the main macro effects of the model (e.g. GDP, public debt, the unemployment rate as well as the quality of democracy) will remain powerful macro-drivers with which to explain a potential drift into malaise.

Discussion and Conclusion

During recent years, there has been a shift away from using GDP as a single measure for assessing social progress purely in terms of living standards. New quality of life concepts, which are high on the political agenda in many European states, favour a multidimensional approach, including objective indicators on living conditions as well as subjective measures of individual well-being (see Glatzer 2008). New indicators on perceptions of social integration and societal functioning are still absent in the research on quality of life (see Harrison et al. 2011 as an exception), but there are now calls to look more closely at the micro level and highlight future challenges to social integration in the EU (see Vobruba 2007; Bach 2008 as examples). Consequently, it is one of the principal future challenges of comparative research to take European citizens' subjective perceptions of crisis into account more adequately, to monitor societal well-being over time, and to search for comparable and equivalent indicators of this concept. This comprehensive analysis of societal well-being, which is brought to the fore in this chapter, is an important first step towards filling this research gap. The heterogeneous results of the mean comparisons suggest that there is no unidirectional path towards perceptions of crisis in Europe. By contrast, many European countries came back to higher levels of societal well-being in 2018, which signals that citizens impressions hint at a slight recovery from the long-lasting effects of the eurozone crisis and subsequent refugee waves in Europe. The mean comparisons of societal well-being and the multilevel analysis have clearly shown that the nation state still plays a crucial role in mitigating the effects of crises on citizens. But in many countries, we are still witnessing a growing crisis of institutional trust, especially in Southern Europe and in Eastern European countries. Although societal protests are not clearly visible yet, there is the danger of underestimating societal changes in countries trying to overcome certain crisis conditions, especially in the wake of the current coronavirus crisis. Thus, one should be fearful of growing societal dissatisfaction spreading across borders and fomenting intercultural distrust and radicalisation.

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[14] The effect sizes of the individual explanatory factors remain the same in all models because contextual variables have no variance at the individual level and thus cannot change the impact of the individual predictors.

[15] This is visible in the unstandardised coefficient, which is 1.47 lower in Southern Europe than in Scandinavia (the reference group) and 1.05 categories lower in those states belonging to the corporate welfare type.

[16] The last model also shows the best performance that can be tested with the deviance test. Due to the full maximum likelihood procedure, which was adopted in all models, the deviance values can be subtracted and compared with a chi^2 test. The values of 10.07 (comparing Model 4 with Model 3) and of 11.44 (2018 wave) prove to be significant in this respect (taking four additional parameters into account) (see Hox 2010).

The results of this multilevel model, designed to explore the major impacts of societal malaise, clearly demonstrate that only five individual predictors exert a notable effect on societal malaise. This result was replicated successfully by using the most recent data of 2018, which indicates the high validity and robustness of the multilevel model. The effect of subjective status measurements is particularly strong, highlighting the importance of deprivation theory (see, for example, Pettigrew et al. 2008) in explaining societal malaise and populism. Those people who see themselves as being closer to the top express a more optimistic view of the future. In addition, Europeans who are more highly qualified perceive society to be functioning at higher levels. Additionally, religious people and individuals who are included well in society also experience higher levels of societal wellbeing. The macro predictors clearly indicate that we are confronted with considerable cleavages between European regions (see, for example, Beck 2012) which have intensified in the wake of the eurozone crisis. These gaps have been declining in recent years, but there is a considerable chance that these differences will widen again in the near future due to the enduring effects of the coronavirus crisis. My empirical results clearly support those theoretical models that suggest the presence of considerable diversity among groups of European countries (see, for example, Boatcă 2010; Schröder 2013). The multilevel analysis confirms that perceptions of a functioning society in Nordic countries are due to high levels of economic prosperity, a higher quality of democracy and lower levels of public debt. By comparison, notable increases in public debt and precarisation (see, for example, Standing 2011) might influence societal pessimism in several regions of Western Europe (which is already clearly visible in the data from 2018, especially in the liberal welfare states). Financial restrictions (together with high unemployment rates) took societal dissatisfaction to extreme levels in the Mediterranean region, which is an ongoing threat to societal and political stability in the fragile future development of those states. In Eastern Europe, it might be useful to attribute societal malaise to lower levels of economic prosperity and a lower quality of democracy. Especially in the Eastern periphery, we can observe citizens' ongoing disenchantment with democratic parties. This is largely due to perceptions of corruption (see, for example, Linde 2012), which are also currently erupting in protests in Bulgaria.

These empirical findings regarding the causes of societal malaise bring us back to the issue of resurgent populism, which is seen as one major consequence of the pessimistic public mood in several European societies. It seems that Southern Europe is more susceptible to left-wing populist ideologies, which advance an inclusionary vision of society and try to unite the precariat against the establishment to promote a systemic change in global capitalism. In the West, we are witnessing different right-wing forms of populism. In Eastern Europe, the time span since the democratic transition has been too short to establish stable mainstream parties and guarantee strong ties between the citizens and political elites. Low levels of party institutionalisation have provided opportunities for populist actors to come to power by drawing on widespread levels of distrust in politics (see Kriesi and Pappas 2015). The common denominator of the far right and right-wing populist ideologies in the West and in the East is the joint opposition to the transnational direction European society is taking towards global interconnectedness. It is therefore important to remember that populism in Europe is context-dependent and culture-bound, and it is vital in this area to understand how culture shapes populist politics and how regional characteristics influence political change in certain countries and challenge collaboration within the EU. Monitoring social change and focusing on perceptions of crisis among citizens should thus neither be neglected in future empirical research on populism, nor should it be underestimated in future political conceptions of a united Europe.

Appendix:

Table 28.2: Operationalisation of Macro Indicators

Welfare state regimes	**EU-countries**	**GDP per capita in PPS (100 = EU mean)** Eurostat Code: TEC00114	**GDP growth rate (% compared to previous year)** Eurostat Code: tec00115	**GINI index (0-100)** Eurostat Code: ilc_di12	**Unemploy-ment rate (%)** Eurostat Code: une_rt_a	**Poverty and social exclusion (in %)** Eurostat Code: t2020_50	**Public debt (% of GDP)** Eurostat Code: SDG_17_40	**Expenditure on social protection (2017) – PPS / inhabitant** Eurostat Code: tps00100	**Quality of Democracy** https://www.de-mokratie-matrix.de-/ranking	**Proportion of people with migration background** Eurostat Code: migr_pop3ctb
Social-democratic	Sweden	121	2	27	6.4	18	38.8	10219.38	0.93	19%
	Finland	111	1.5	25.9	7.4	16.5	59.6	10171.8	0.92	7%
Conservative	Netherlands	130	2.6	27.4	3.8	16.7	52.4	11015.45	0.93	13%
	Austria	128	2.4	26.8	4.9	17.5	74.0	10958.29	0.86	19%
	Germany	123	1.5	31.1	3.4	18.7	61.9	11262.73	0.91	17%
	Belgium	118	1.5	25.7	6	20	99.8	10049.98	0.91	17%
	France	104	1.8	28.5	9	17.4	98.1	10916.62	0.86	12%
Liberal	Ireland	191	8.2	28.9	5.8	21.1	63.5	7205.62	0.88	17%
	United Kingdom	106	1.3	33.5	4	23.1	85.7	7991.71	0.88	14%
Mediterranean	Italy	97	0.8	33.4	10.6	27.3	134.8	8207.27	0.86	10%
	Spain	91	2.4	33.2	15.3	26.1	97.6	6233.92	0.9	13%
	Cyprus	90	4.1	29.1	8.4	23.9	100.6	4735	0.83	21%
	Portugal	77	2.6	32.1	7.1	21.6	122.0	5607.53	0.91	9%
	Croatia	63	2.7	29.7	8.5	24.8	74.7	4068.62	0.71	13%
Corporate	Czech Republic	91	2.8	24	2.2	12.2	32.6	5378.07	0.84	4%
	Slovenia	87	4.1	23.4	5.1	16.2	70.4	5692.57	0.86	12%
	Slowakia	73	3.9	20.9	6.5	16.3	49.4	4327.2	0.81	3%
	Hungary	71	5.1	28.7	3.7	19.6	70.2	3964.56	0.62	5%
	Poland	71	5.3	27.8	3.9	18.9	48.8	4661.55	0.75	2%
Neoliberal-rudimentary	Estonia	82	4.8	30.6	5.4	24.4	8.4	3909.1	0.93	15%
	Lithuania	81	3.6	36.9	6.2	28.3	33.8	3754.9	0.86	5%
	Latvia	69	4.3	35.6	7.4	28.4	37.2	3000.64	0.83	13%
	Bulgaria	51	3.1	39.6	5.2	32.8	22.3	2769.71	0.7	2%

Table 28.3: Operationalisation and Descriptive Overview of Background Variables and Indicators of Social Integration in EU Countries (ESS data 2018)

Welfare state regimes	**EU-countries**	**Gender**	**Age**	**large cities and suburbs**	**middle-sized cities**	**Country-side**	**Migration Background / Ethnic minority**	**religiosity**	**unconventional political engagement**	**political engagement**	**Membership trade union or similar organization**	**Social Inclusion Index**
Social-democratic	Sweden	49.2%	45.5	42.2%	33.5%	24.2%	19.3%	2.9	65.4%	22.3%	47.9%	4.7
	Finland	51.2%	49.1	36.0%	30.6%	33.4%	6.1%	4.8	57.9%	21.7%	44.3%	4.2
Conservative	Netherlands	50.7%	47.4	27.1%	26.9%	46.1%	13.5%	4.0	33.6%	19.3%	14.0%	4.6
	Austria	51.4%	48.1	33.4%	26.5%	40.1%	15.8%	4.8	43.1%	22.2%	20.1%	4.4
	Germany	50.7%	49.1	32.1%	35.7%	32.3%	17.5%	4.2	53.0%	18.0%	11.3%	4.3
	Belgium	51.0%	47.7	24.9%	26.0%	49.1%	18.1%	4.6	34.0%	20.6%	32.2%	4.3
	France	52.2%	48.5	31.8%	34.0%	34.2%	16.8%	4.7	49.7%	13.1%	6.3%	4.2
Liberal	Ireland	50.9%	45.6	36.1%	26.8%	37.1%	20.6%	4.7	35.0%	21.7%	13.1%	4.1
	United Kingdom	51.1%	47.4	32.8%	43.4%	23.8%	19.5%	3.5	49.1%	18.4%	12.7%	4.2
Mediterranean	Italy	51.8%	50.4	18.4%	34.3%	47.3%	10.5%	5.6	20.3%	9.8%	6.8%	3.9
	Spain	51.4%	48.8	25.9%	30.3%	43.9%	13.8%	4.0	36.2%	17.1%	9.9%	4.3
	Cyprus	51.1%	46.1	50.7%	15.5%	33.8%	11.4%	6.7	17.5%	15.9%	15.8%	3.6
	Portugal	53.3%	49.4	35.6%	34.3%	30.1%	13.6%	5.4	29.7%	20.4%	7.3%	4.2
	Croatia	52.2%	48.7	35.6%	23.5%	40.9%	16.0%	5.6	40.6%	12.2%	6.8%	4.1
Corporate	Czech Republic	51.2%	47.9	38.4%	30.4%	31.2%	4.4%	2.4	29.5%	16.1%	4.7%	3.8
	Slovenia	50.5%	49.1	25.4%	21.8%	52.9%	13.2%	4.6	20.8%	16.2%	11.8%	4.0
	Slowakia	52.1%	46.9	30.1%	22.4%	47.5%	6.8%	5.7	32.5%	9.6%	3.4%	3.7
	Hungary	52.9%	48.6	33.5%	36.8%	29.7%	5.9%	3.7	7.2%	6.3%	4.5%	3.4
	Poland	52.2%	47.4	22.6%	32.5%	44.9%	3.5%	6.1	19.5%	9.9%	5.6%	3.7
Neoliberal-rudimentary	Estonia	53.8%	48.4	39.6%	32.5%	27.9%	21.7%	3.2	18.4%	18.5%	4.1%	3.7
	Lithuania	54.9%	48.6	38.2%	33.4%	28.4%	6.2%	5.1	15.7%	8.9%	3.3%	3.7
	Latvia	55.1%	49.6	30.0%	29.7%	40.3%	17.3%	4.0	17.6%	19.2%	4.6%	3.7
	Bulgaria	52.0%	49.7	39.0%	30.1%	30.9%	12.5%	4.2	8.8%	2.7%	2.7%	3.9

Table 28.4: Operationalisation and Descriptive Overview of Socio-structural Indicators in EU Countries (ESS data 2018)

Welfare state regimes	EU-countries	Education (Isced I & II)	Education (Isced III & IV)	Education (Isced V)	Employed	in education	unemployed	permanently sick or disabled	retired	House-work	other	Feeling household income
Social-democratic	Sweden	22.9%	48.7%	28.4%	58.1%	15.4%	1.8%	3.0%	17.4%	2.5%	1.8%	2.6
	Finland	24.5%	49.2%	26.3%	48.6%	12.3%	4.0%	1.6%	29.6%	2.7%	1.3%	2.1
Conser-vative	Netherlands	31.8%	41.8%	26.5%	51.3%	13.0%	1.7%	4.4%	17.5%	10.3%	1.7%	2.5
	Austria	22.3%	53.5%	24.2%	53.3%	7.4%	4.3%	0.8%	26.5%	7.2%	0.6%	2.2
	Germany	20.5%	62.2%	17.3%	48.9%	10.2%	3.8%	2.3%	23.8%	8.9%	2.1%	2.3
	Belgium	30.9%	35.4%	33.7%	49.4%	7.8%	5.0%	5.3%	20.6%	8.2%	3.9%	2.1
	France	30.0%	51.9%	18.1%	49.2%	10.2%	5.8%	3.5%	27.4%	3.4%	0.6%	2.0
Liberal	Ireland	24.5%	46.1%	29.5%	49.7%	12.9%	4.5%	3.5%	14.5%	13.4%	1.5%	2.2
	United Kingdom	26.6%	42.5%	30.9%	57.7%	6.3%	3.4%	3.7%	20.5%	7.6%	0.8%	2.3
Mediter-ranean	Italy	48.9%	38.4%	12.8%	43.8%	9.9%	11.1%	0.5%	23.9%	9.9%	0.9%	1.9
	Spain	48.8%	25.6%	25.6%	50.3%	9.7%	8.4%	1.9%	17.6%	7.2%	4.9%	2.1
	Cyprus	26.9%	42.9%	30.1%	54.7%	10.7%	6.5%	1.1%	18.3%	7.8%	0.9%	1.7
	Portugal	58.7%	23.3%	18.0%	49.2%	10.2%	6.0%	1.9%	21.6%	9.9%	1.3%	1.8
	Croatia	26.2%	58.4%	15.5%	43.1%	8.7%	10.4%	0.7%	30.2%	6.4%	0.6%	2.1
Corporate	Czech Republic	13.5%	69.4%	17.1%	57.2%	11.8%	2.4%	1.7%	23.3%	3.4%	0.2%	1.8
	Slovenia	20.6%	60.0%	19.4%	50.6%	9.5%	3.4%	1.6%	23.9%	9.7%	1.3%	2.3
	Slowakia	15.5%	64.9%	19.6%	53.2%	6.8%	4.9%	1.2%	25.5%	6.3%	2.3%	1.8
	Hungary	24.7%	56.7%	18.7%	57.0%	8.1%	2.4%	2.4%	25.6%	3.1%	1.3%	1.7
	Poland	39.9%	35.9%	24.3%	53.5%	8.5%	3.4%	0.4%	28.2%	5.3%	0.7%	1.9
Neoliberal-rudimentary	Estonia	16.4%	51.0%	32.6%	59.6%	8.0%	3.0%	2.3%	21.9%	4.5%	0.8%	1.9
	Lithuania	15.5%	61.2%	23.3%	58.2%	6.8%	6.0%	5.4%	19.3%	3.8%	0.5%	1.8
	Latvia	14.4%	60.1%	25.5%	55.3%	5.7%	4.6%	3.9%	20.4%	9.7%	0.4%	1.7
	Bulgaria	25.7%	51.7%	22.7%	48.8%	7.9%	7.8%	1.9%	29.1%	3.8%	0.6%	1.0

Table 28.5: Operationalisation of Societal Perceptions of Crisis with ESS Indicators

Welfare state regimes	EU-countries	Most people can be trusted	Most people try to to be fair	Most of the time people helpful	Trust in country's parliament	Trust in politicians	Trust in political parties	Satis-faction with economy	Satis-faction with govern-ment	Satis-faction with demo-cracy	Fair chance to achieve appro-priate education	Fair chance to achieve appro-priate job	Societal wellbeing
Social-democratic	Sweden	6.3	6.6	6.1	6.1	4.9	5.0	6.5	4.9	6.4	6.7	5.2	5.9
	Finland	6.9	7.0	6.2	5.8	4.9	5.0	6.4	5.2	6.4	6.8	5.8	6.0
Conser-vative	Netherlands	6.1	6.6	5.7	5.9	5.4	5.3	6.9	5.7	6.4	6.5	5.8	6.0
	Austria	5.7	6.3	5.7	5.5	4.3	4.2	7.0	5.2	6.4	6.7	5.6	5.7
	Germany	5.3	6.1	5.4	5.0	3.9	4.0	6.7	4.3	5.8	6.3	5.5	5.3
	Belgium	5.1	5.8	4.9	4.8	4.2	4.2	5.7	4.9	5.4	5.9	5.3	5.2
	France	4.6	5.9	4.8	4.1	3.5	3.1	3.7	3.5	4.4	4.8	4.2	4.3
Liberal	Ireland	5.5	6.1	6.1	4.7	4.0	3.9	5.5	4.8	5.7	6.3	5.6	5.3
	United Kingdom	5.2	5.7	5.8	4.3	3.5	3.6	4.8	3.8	5.1	5.9	5.1	4.9
Mediter-ranean	Italy	4.8	4.8	4.3	4.2	3.0	2.9	4.1	4.5	5.1	5.3	3.5	4.2
	Spain	5.1	5.5	4.4	4.1	2.6	2.5	4.2	3.3	4.8	4.7	3.8	4.1
	Cyprus	3.8	4.3	3.9	3.6	2.7	2.6	4.1	4.2	4.4	5.5	3.9	4.0
	Portugal	4.0	5.4	4.1	4.2	2.7	2.8	4.5	4.6	5.1	5.2	4.0	4.3
	Croatia	4.1	4.8	3.9	2.3	1.7	1.9	3.1	2.6	3.4	6.2	3.5	3.5
Corporate	Czech Republic	4.9	5.4	5.0	4.2	3.6	3.6	6.2	5.0	5.5	7.3	6.5	5.3
	Slovenia	4.5	5.2	4.9	3.6	2.7	2.7	5.2	4.0	4.3	6.4	3.8	4.4
	Slowakia	3.9	4.4	4.0	3.7	3.3	3.6	4.7	4.0	4.4	6.3	4.8	4.4
	Hungary	4.9	4.9	4.8	4.6	4.0	3.9	4.7	4.5	4.5	5.5	4.8	4.7
	Poland	4.1	4.9	4.0	3.8	3.1	3.1	5.8	4.6	5.4	6.4	5.0	4.6
Neoliberal-rudimentary	Estonia	5.6	5.9	5.1	4.9	3.9	3.8	5.5	4.7	5.3	7.5	5.5	5.4
	Lithuania	4.7	5.2	4.4	3.4	3.2	2.9	4.5	4.0	4.8	6.1	4.7	4.4
	Latvia	4.3	5.5	5.2	3.3	2.7	2.6	4.1	3.4	4.3	6.4	4.8	4.4
	Bulgaria	3.5	4.2	3.6	2.5	2.1	2.2	3.2	2.9	3.0	5.6	3.8	3.5

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CHAPTER 29:
THE GENDER DIMENSION OF POPULISM

Sarah C. Dingler and Zoe Lefkofridi

Introduction

Notwithstanding abundant literature on populists' electoral success, their organisations and their impact on political discourse, public policy, party systems, as well as democracy more broadly, research on the relationship between populism and gender remains underdeveloped in both theoretical and empirical terms. This is due to two key shortcomings: First, our empirical knowledge is both scant and scattered. Discussions of existing works either focus exclusively on right-wing populist parties (RWPPs) (for example, Mudde 2007), or, when they do include left-wing populist parties (LWPPs), they limit themselves to a specific region, a low number of parties or a single point in time (for example, Kampwirth 2010a; Spierings and Zaslove 2017; Kantola and Lombardo 2019). Second, recent attempts towards the integration of evidence from both poles of the ideological spectrum and across global regions are confined to ideology (for example, Mudde and Kaltwasser 2015). To date, no study has attempted a more holistic discussion of populism and gender that includes populist parties' leaders, candidates, members and voters. With this chapter, we take a first step in this direction.

Based on Heinisch and Mazzoleni's conceptual framework, this chapter explores the relationship between gender and populism and understands it as intrinsically ambivalent claims diffused by individual and collective actors in order to challenge the *status quo* in favour of people's empowerment and elite change (ibid. in this volume). We begin by formulating some broad, empirically testable expectations regarding populism's gender dimension, which frame our discussion of the aforementioned literature. As we will show below, gender can act as a dependent or an independent variable in empirical analyses of populism. First, the populist gender model is likely to contain contradictory ideas. Although the inconsistency of the discursive frame may be electorally effective, it may also lead to unintended policy consequences in populist politics for women's empowerment – which concern the relationship between populist discourse and practice (Heinisch and Mazzoleni, in this volume). Second, the question of whether populists challenging the *status quo* will translate into the promotion of gender equality depends on how gender corresponds to populists' Manichean division between 'the people' and/or 'the elite'. Based on a homogeneous interpretation of the notion of people, populist parties might not differentiate between genders and thus not devote particular attention to any of them. Alternatively, populists are unlikely to pursue radical change in gender relations if feminism is regarded as part and parcel of an educated, privileged elite. However, if women are perceived as part of the *populus* (and especially of the marginalised, formerly excluded social groups), populists are likely to try to mobilise them, for example by incorporating gender

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aspects into their ideology and policy proposals. The kind of issues populists will choose to emphasise may, in turn, affect populists' appeal to women or repel them as voters.

Which specific gender models and issues are likely to be integrated into populists' ideology and policies, and how? These choices are likely to be context-dependent, given macro level developments in gender equality and in broader policy domains that affect women, for instance, the economy. Hence, populists' relationships with gender and specific issues are likely to vary according to differences in opportunity structures – which Heinisch and Mazzoleni label 'exogenous conditions' (societal and cultural change, institutional conditions, and so on). Hence, variation can manifest itself both within a country (or a region with similar characteristics, for example, Scandinavia) over time[1] and across countries (or regions). Furthermore, the kind of gender issues integrated into populist frames may also vary across ideological camps. In their competition against other parties, populists on the right and left are likely to tie gender to the issue frames in which they have a good reputation.[2] For instance, parties on the right are likely to link it to immigration, security, tradition and culture, while parties on the left are likely to connect it to social change, social justice and inclusion. However, if their leadership is highly individualistic (as is the case with many populist parties), gender models and the kind of discursive frame promoted by populist parties may be strongly dependent on the views of a single person, such as the leader, and how she or he relates to gender – which is linked to populism's 'individual dimension' (Heinisch and Mazzoleni, in this volume). At the same time, gender may also feature among the key characteristics of the populist actor in the sense that specific gender models may facilitate or hinder the conversion of non-political capital into political capital (ivi.). Indeed, if populism concerns the politics of personality, then it has always been about gender and specific models of masculinity[3] and femininity (Kampwirth 2010a: 1).

In addition, the relationship between populism and gender may be influenced by the extent to which populist organisations open up space to women as activists, members, candidates and leaders. This connects to what Heinisch and Mazzoleni label the 'collective dimension' of populism, which concerns intra-party democracy and resources. The role gender plays within a populist organisation, for example, involving women on the ground and/or increasing the presence of women in the party's central and public offices, may impact on the way populists are perceived by the electorate and/or the press, and may also affect their appeal to female voters. Finally, whether populists are in government or in opposition matters in terms of how gender and populism can be analysed. While in the latter case, analysis is inevitably limited to party ideology and discourse, in the former case, research can also examine how gender plays out in policy programmes and/or assess the consequences of populist politics and governance for women's emancipation and their professional advancement. With these expectations in mind, we attempt the first comprehensive overview of nascent research on gender and populism and seek answers to the following questions:

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[1] In Latin America, populism can be divided into three waves: classic populism (left-wing, redistributive), neo-populism (neo-liberal) and radical populism (left-wing, against neo-liberalism but with fewer resources than classic populism). These engaged with gender differently, not only due to their underlying ideology but also because each was facing a different wave of feminism (Kampwirth 2010a).

[2] See Lefkofridi and Michel (2017) about how radical right-wing parties tie the issue of welfare expansion to an anti-immigrant frame.

[3] Examples of such models used by populist leaders in their campaigns include, among others, the athlete, the military man and the father figure (Kampwirth 2010, 10).

- How do populists relate to gender?
- What kind of roles does gender play in their ideology, policies and organisations?
- Does leftist/rightist populism question the traditional roles of women as mothers and wives?
- Do populists promote female leadership and candidacies?
- To what extent does electoral support of and activism for populist parties exhibit gendered patterns?

In pursuit of these questions, we review existing knowledge and synthesise the insights gained from analyses on the populist left and right across the world. In what follows, we begin by discussing how gender plays out in the ideology and policy programmes of populist parties, along with a critical assessment of the impact of populist politics on women's emancipation. We proceed to the relationship between populism and women's political engagement, in relation to which we discuss female members, activists, candidates and leaders of populist organisations. Next, we examine gender differences in electoral support for populist parties. In conclusion, we identify the key knowledge gaps in the field and suggest directions for future research.

Gender in Populists' Ideology and Policy Programmes

Most studies of the gender dimension of populist ideology, policy agendas and discourse focus on the populist right, while few study left-wing populist parties, and even fewer examine both (Rousseau 2010; Mudde and Kaltwasser 2015; Spierings and Zaslove 2017; Kantola and Lombardo 2019). With regard to geographic scope, the bulk of scholarship concerns successful RWPPs in Northern and/or Central Europe[4] (Akkerman and Hagelund 2007; Towns et al. 2014; de Lange and Mügge 2015); only a small body of research examines Latin American neo-populism (for example, Rousseau 2010; Sosa-Buchholz 2010). In what follows, we review these works in an effort to understand how populists relate to gender. We are particularly interested in their underlying gender models and images of women, and whether they challenge traditional gender relations.

Populist Right-wing Parties in Western Europe

Contrary to scholarship that relies on the assumption that RWPPs regard women as inferior to men without empirically scrutinising it (for example Mudde 2007), recent studies of the extent to which RWPPs' ideology and discourse is gendered adopt a systematic empirical approach. Analyses of gender-related issues (such as equality, abortion and homosexuality) document an ambiguous relationship between RWPPs and gender. Examinations of parties' official documents, manifestos and MPs' activities produce three key findings: First, RWPPs tend to be more traditional than conservative parties. Most authors echo Akkerman's (2015) findings about RWPPs' support of (large) families and opposition to same-sex marriage and abortion. Second, however, there is important variation within the RWPP family. For instance, the Austrian Freedom Party (Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs, FPÖ) articulates more conservative positions on family issues than its Norwegian and Danish counterparts (Meret and Siim 2012), whereas in Poland (Gwiazda 2020) and Bulgaria (Rashkova and Zankina 2017) RWPPs represent conservative women's interests.

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[4] At the time of writing and to the best of our knowledge, no well-grounded empirical studies exist which analyse the US presidential election 2016 from a gender perspective. Therefore, since this chapter seeks to review existing research and point to avenues for future research, we will not address this election directly. The success of the populist leader Donald Trump, however, underscores again the importance and topicality of the gender dimension of populism.

Moreover, comparative analyses of RWPPs and neo-liberal populists show that some parties (for example, the Freedom Party in the Netherlands, Partij vor the Vriheid, PVV) exhibit more modern views on gender equality than others (for example, Centrumpartij '86) (de Lange and Mügge 2015; Campbell and Erzeel 2018). Few parties even seem to defend same-sex partnerships (for example, the Danish People's Party, Dansk Folkeparti, see Meret and Siim 2012). Third, though gender issues' salience in most RWPPs' manifestos (for example, the French National Rally, Rassemblement National, RN, previously Front National, FN; Vlaams Belang, VB, in Belgium) was in decline in the 2000s (Akkerman 2015); more recently the latter paid renewed attention to gender issues within the framework of their anti-immigration agenda. Gender issues are – often exclusively – linked to the overarching subject of immigration (mostly from Muslim countries), and the notion of multiculturalism and/or integration (Towns et al. 2014; Morgan 2017) both during electoral campaigns and once RWPPs form the government (Askola 2017). Politicising gender equality for their agenda, RWPPs even pose as champions of women's rights and gender equality condemning religious practices (for example, veils, headscarves) as discrimination against women (Akkerman and Hagelund 2007; see also Meret and Siim 2012). They use the presupposed unequal status of women in Muslim countries to emphasise the clash of civilisations between Islam and other religions (see Irvine and Lilly 2007; Meret and Siim 2012; Chacko 2020). For instance, the FPÖ's discourse portrays Muslims as pre-modern and Muslim men in particular as oppressors, who endanger Austrian society (Mayer et al. 2014).

What should we make of these inherent tensions in the commitment of RWPPs to gender equality? Does the packaging of conservative views in liberal rhetoric (which appears to be a common feature across RWPPs) signify a repositioning towards more liberal positions? RWPPs' revived interest in gender issues should not be interpreted as signalling change from conservatism towards liberalism. In fact, RWPPs remain deeply traditionalist and conservative parties, and their rhetorical support for liberal principles only seldom translates into concrete policy proposals that foster gender equality. These parties' 'Janus face' (Akkerman 2015, 56) reflects somewhat conflicting appearances in different policy areas and points towards a rather instrumentalised commitment to liberalism, which is confined to their anti-immigration agenda. Importantly, gender framing by RWPPs is consistent with our understanding of populism as 'intrinsically ambivalent'. Studies of RWPPs are also instructive regarding possible interactions between endogenous and exogenous conditions and the credibility of the maker of the claims as a change agent in the given context (Heinisch and Mazzoleni, in this volume). Contextual (cultural and ideological) factors matter: the social setting in which they attempt to be electorally successful affects the language these parties use. Thus, to understand the fuzziness of RWPPs' gender discourse, we must consider that most case studies concern RWPPs in advanced liberal democracies (for example, Northern Europe). At its core, RWPPs' conservative stance relies on freedom of choice arguments (for example, Mayer et al. 2014), whereby a 'genuinely free' choice for women requires more support for the traditional family. RWPPs are, accordingly, critical of a state whose policies support women with jobs and careers but does not undertake action against economic constraints that 'force' women into the labour force in the first place. For example, the Sweden Democrats critically discuss the idea of gender equality (understood as the pay gap, underrepresentation of women, etc.) in most contexts, except for immigration or multiculturalism (Towns et al. 2014).

Populist Left-Wing Parties in Latin America

Research in the less liberal Latin American context reveals that even a backwards movement regarding women's actual standing in society is possible when RWPPs in power shift their ideology towards more traditionalist positions (González-Rivera 2010). Contrary to previous Nicaraguan right-wing governments (for example, National Liberal Party, 1930s-1970s) which had promoted female employment, the Alemán administration (Constitutionalist Liberal Party, 1997-2002) was heavily influenced by socially conservative (and Catholic fundamentalist) forces in the US and thus placed more importance on family values. However, as we will discuss below, leftist populism in Latin America also seems to be deeply inculcated by the same family model and gender norms (for example, women are homemakers and men are breadwinners).

To begin with, Latin America's classic leftist populism challenged neither machismo nor the *status quo* of gender inequality and had little to do with feminists, who, according to Eva Perón, belong to 'another race of women' (Grammático 2010,128). Although LWPPs do assign women the role of crucial agents of social change and popular mobilisation, they do so by hailing them as mothers. Early populist regimes (for example, Juan Perón in Argentina, Lázaro Cárdenas in Mexico and Getúlio Vargas in Brazil) developed a maternalist ideology that was – similarly to the European populist right – characterised by many contradictions. It aimed at reproductive control over women, while using them in economic terms and as agents of development (Fernandes 2010). Under the Mexican President Lázaro Cárdenas (1930s), for example, it was development imperatives (rather than the desire to promote women's emancipation) that problematised gender relations. Not surprisingly, the resulting policy programmes preserved gender differences, such as fixed family responsibilities or standards of sexual behaviour (Olcott 2010, 31–32).

Besides this, populists in the 1930s linked their advocacy of both women's rights (including women's suffrage) and policies that benefitted women specifically to motherhood. What qualified women to take part in political life was precisely their maternal role (Grammático 2010, 129). To be part of the 'people', women in Juan Perón's Argentina (1946-1955) had to demonstrate 'self-abnegation, sacrifice, love, and selflessness, all of which were tied up with the image of the mother' (ibid., 128). Furthermore, the labour policy promoted by the Brazilian President Getúlio Vargas (in office 1930-1945), which included the obligation for factories to provide separate spaces for women to nurse their babies, was based on his ideological conviction that womanhood and, especially, motherhood were 'goods that need state protection' (Wolfe 2010, 79). During the 1970s, women's role as keepers of cultural tradition and unpaid producers of the industrial labour force was preserved (for example, compare the Cardenas and Echeverria administrations; Olcott 2010). In Nicaragua, the leader of the Sandinistas not only endorsed the 'protection model' of gender relations, which essentially confined women's emancipation to a more ‘effective’ performance of their traditional roles, but even sided with the Catholic Church on the issue of abortion (Kampwirth 2010b).

The case of the Sandinistas under Ortega is very instructive for the broader study of gender and populism also because it manifests a transition from revolutionary to populist politics, whereby the models of masculinity and femininity shift as Sandinista politics becomes increasingly populist (ivi.). Kampwirth (2010b: 163–164) argues that the connection of a revolutionary agenda, and an agenda of social justice and social change to a single person (populist leadership) may undermine feminist gains for two reasons: first, the agenda narrows as the leadership of the movement moves from being collective to individualistic and personalized; second, this shift from collective revolutionary leadership to individual leadership results in the fate of women becoming dependent on the views of that one person.

Ultimately, according to existing research, conventional models of gender relations carried on into the new millennium, and contemporary left populists’ gender discourse remains inconsistent, though it is now tied to different frames. Bolivian President Evo Morales (Movimiento al Socialismo, MAS, 2006) uses strong anti-colonial rhetoric and creates a public image, whereby gender inequality becomes a means with which to blame Bolivia’s social problems on colonial influences (Rousseau 2010). Machismo (and consequently gender inequality) are considered foreign to Andean culture and ‘imported’ from the imperialists – similarly to European RWPPs that warn against Muslims importing gender inequality. At the same time, however, Morales refers to women as symbols of motherhood, affection and honesty as well as family unity – in the Catholic sense of being self-sacrificing for the sake of the family (Rousseau 2010). Due to the changing relationships between labour and capital, contemporary populism’s maternalist ideology is ‘no longer rooted in developmentalist concerns of labour discipline’ (Fernandes 2010, 206). Latent ideological constructs in the Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez’s (1999-2002) rhetoric portray women as nurturers and caregivers (ivi.), whereas his emphasis on ‘women’s rights as a marginalised group’ is restrained to both socialism and his own image as ‘the liberator of women’, who values ‘their sacrifices and struggles to care for their families and communities’ (Espina and Rakowski 2010, 192). In Chávez’s view, Venezuela needs ‘revolutionary mothers’ to advance social change (ivi.). While a subset of Chavista discourse and symbols is developed especially for women, its ideas are diverse and conflicting: women should act as self-sacrificing housewives and as leaders and volunteers in community projects (Espina and Rakowski 2010 197).

To summarise, existing research reveals that when gender issues are emphasised, they aim at preserving the image of women as mothers, caregivers and homemakers rather than advancing feminist demands. Right and left populism focuses on feminine, rather than feminist issues. As long as the utilisation of gender serves populists’ ideology and policy purposes in other domains (for example, immigration and development), they integrate it into their discourse and policy programmes – though often in contradictory ways. Although not necessarily fundamental to their ideological profile, gender is undoubtedly instrumentalised by both rightist and leftist populist parties.

Populist Politics and Women's Political Engagement

Women exhibit different patterns of political engagement in populist politics. While some are involved with RWPPs or LWPPs as members and activists, others assume more visible roles as candidates, representatives or party leaders. These diverse forms of support are reflected by the few existing studies in this field, which we review in the following.

Female Members and Activists of Populist Parties

Research literature on female activists and members of populist parties reveals that even if populists do not challenge conventional gender models, they do try to mobilise women. The inherent tensions in their ideology, discourse and policies, however, may prove consequential for women's emancipation. In this regard, research on Latin American populists in power provides critical insights into populists' impact on women as political actors. Though neither RWPPs nor LWPPs in Latin America intended to advance a truly 'progressive' gender agenda, they opened up opportunities for women to respond to their political exclusion. Women's emancipation often came as a side effect of populist politics and policies (Kampwirth 2010a). As Grammático (2010) shows, in Argentina, the Montoneros[5] created the front Agrupación Evita (Evita Group) to use women's nurturing and caretaking capacities. Despite Peronism's dismissal of feminism, women's experience as political activists in Agrupación Evita – an organisation that did not intend to emancipate them – led women to question their roles and rethink the relations between men and women in daily life and politics (Grammático 2010, 138). Similarly, in the Mexican case, the Cardenas (1930s) and Echeverria (1970s) administrations encouraged women leagues but could not stop the tide: women organised themselves to articulate specific demands that went beyond what populists had imagined. Instead of confining themselves to wage, labour and population control, as envisioned, women demanded sexual rights and alleviation of their unpaid labour obligations (Olcott 2010). In sum, the social order that the populists' ambivalent (maternalist) ideology represented enabled women to critically reflect on their social status and to react to their political marginalisation. Despite populists' unwillingness to alter conventional gender norms in many Latin American countries, they could not control how women exploited the new opportunities presented to them.

Turning to the literature on membership, women's engagement in populist party organisations in Europe suffers from a lack of reliable information. While gender-focused research on RWPPs' and LWPPs' membership is generally scant, an overview of women's role in five European RWPPs during the 1980s and 1990s is provided by Amesberger and Halbmayr (2002). More recent studies focus on the individual level: based on interviews with party insiders, they explore women's positions in RWPPs. Félix (2015) studies female activists in the Hungarian Jobbik and the Greek Golden Dawn. In both cases, female members played a prominent role in the mobilisation of new supporters and female voters. Crucially, these parties' 'far right' image was moderated by their female members, who helped the party place itself closer to the mainstream. The ambivalence observed in populist discourse at the party and leadership levels is reflected in the ideological tensions faced by RWPPs' female activists. Petterson's (2015) analysis of female politicians' discourse in Swedish and Finnish RWPPs reveals a smouldering conflict between their somewhat feminist positions and their parties' ideological stances. The ambivalent discourse of RWPPs' female activists exposes a double standard (Bacchetta and Power 2013). In the UK, female UKIP voters are more concerned with the threat of Islam in relation to women's rights than with longstanding gender inequalities such as pay gaps (Sanders-McDonagh 2018). Scrinzi's (2014) study of female politicians in the Italian Lega (Nord) and the French RN (previously FN) indicates that their self-conception can indeed be anti-feminist and pro-women's rights at the same time. They advocate certain rights for women, but not universally – rather, they demand them exclusively for the women of 'their community' – thus promoting 'exclusive solidarity' (Lefkofridi and Michel 2017).

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[5] A revolutionary organisation tied to Perón while he was in exile in Madrid.

Latin American populists made efforts to recruit women through programmes they launched and organisations they specifically founded for this purpose. Venezuela provides a contemporary example of their successful recruitment of women. Although no data on the exact percentage of women participating in the programmes introduced by the Chávez administration (for example, *casas alimentarias*, soup kitchens) are available, the large majority of participants in health committees were women (Fernandes 2010, 210),[6] and they were the main beneficiaries of the *misiones educativas*[7] (social policy outreach programmes) (Espina and Rakowski 2010, 190). Also, two main national organisations targeted women for participation under Chavista populism: the Inamujer (the state women's institute) and Banmujer (the women's bank)[8] (Espina and Rakowski 2010, 190–1).

Female Candidates and the Leadership of Populist Parties

Another aspect of women's participation and engagement in populist parties relates to their more active roles as candidates, representatives and party leaders. Although female party leadership is a rare phenomenon, some European RWPPs are or were led by women, including the German Alternative for Germany (Alternative für Deutschland, AfD) (Frauke Petry), the Danish People's Party (Pia Kjærsgaard), the French National Rally (Marine Le Pen), the Norwegian Progress Party (Fremskrittspartiet) (Siv Jensen) and the Austrian Freedom Party (Susanne Riess-Passer and Ursula Haubner). This implies that populist leadership can by no means be considered an exclusively male affair. Research on politics and gender questions the conventional wisdom about inclusionary leftist and exclusionary rightist populism. A comparative analysis of Spanish Podemos and the Finns Party, however, demonstrates that irrespective of ideology, informal gendered practices hinder women's participation and leadership (Kantola and Lombardo 2019). Konstadinova and Mikulska (2015) also point to the importance of informal rules in their study of Bulgaria and Poland. Although the big populist parties elect more women to the national legislature than the main leftist parties, the fate of female candidates is entirely in the leaders' hands due to these parties' centralised organisations (see Heinisch and Mazzoleni on the 'collective dimension' of populism). Women are promoted if the leader is sympathetic to nominating them; this implies that leadership change (or a change of strategy by the same leader) could alter female candidates' chances of nomination and success (Konstadinova and Mikulska 2015). Populism is not necessarily male/masculine, as Coniff's (2010, 120) research into the Brazilian case suggests. However, female populists are to be found primarily in the lower echelons of government than at the top – and this is perhaps because of the difficulties women face in competitive politics in general.

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[6] Based on her own fieldwork.

[7] For example, 75 per cent of participants in Caracas were women, while the *madres de Barrio* programme (targeting women exclusively) included hundreds of thousands of women (Espina and Rakowski 2010, 190).

[8] In mid-2008 the Inamujer website placed the number of the *puntos de encuentro* (encounter points, for instance, groups of three to five women) at 17,761, and the number of women organised in *puntos* at 177,610 (Espina and Rakowski 2010, 190–1).

The importance of the personal opinions of the leader in the relationship between gender and populist politics, which is common to LWPPs and RWPPs, is evident in the case of Bolivian Movement for Socialism's President Morales. He increased the presence of women in politics by appointing a number of female ministers and successfully introducing gender parity as a principle on party lists for the constituent assembly election (Rousseau 2010, 156). Also, despite stark opposition from key political parties, including his own, the Peruvian neo-populist President Alberto Fujimori reformed the electoral code, mandating that one quarter of party candidates for congress and municipal elections be women (ibid., 145). Although he cultivated a masculine image by surrounding himself with lightly dressed female dancers on stage during his political rallies, he appointed more women as ministers, vice ministers or to other high executive positions in state agencies than any Peruvian ruler. Fujimori gave both female ministers and congresswomen a higher profile, and these women, in turn, became his most fervent defenders and helped him appeal to women's motherly concerns (such as security). Their gender allowed them to claim that they truly understood mothers' needs (Rousseau 2010).

Hence, populist parties' ambivalence may not only concern ideological inconsistency but also incongruity between the leadership's gender-related images and their practices. While male populist party leaders strongly affect the success of female candidates, they also use their mothers, wives and daughters electorally, for example, as female symbols intended to influence their election campaigns (Conniff 2010, 120). A famous example is the wife of Juan Perón, Eva. Her role as a politically active and important woman was connected to the image of the beauty queen, the mother and the wife, and she always emphasised that Juan Perón was everything and she was nothing (Grammático 2010, 128).[9]

Perception of the Female Leaders of Populist Parties

A related question concerns the ways female populist leaders are perceived by their party base, the general public and the press; and whether they are judged differently compared to their male counterparts. Historically, articulations of 'hegemonic masculinity' feature in right-wing and left-wing populism (e.g. Gibbs and Scothorne 2020). In patriarchal societies, as is the case in Latin America, the presumption that men are better leaders is not surprising. Coniff's (2010) research on Brazil indicates that when discussing populist leadership, ordinary individuals made family analogies in which the president (for example, Vargas) was represented as the *father figure* of the country and the citizens as his children. Besides the father figure, other models used by populist leaders in their campaigns include, among others, the athlete, the military man, the Catholic priest or even Jesus Christ himself, who comes to 'save' the people (Kampwirth 2010a: 10).

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[9] Eva Perón never held elected office but headed the campaign for women's rights that led to women's enfranchisement in 1947. She founded the Partido Peronista Femenino (1949), which was opposed to feminism (Grammático 2010, 127).

Crucially, women have a much harder time getting leadership roles (not only in politics but also in business), and when they do, they are often harshly judged for their performance. This is because, based on gender stereotypes, they are assumed to be compassionate and soft, while leadership requires 'toughness'. This has two consequences: first, women are assumed to be less fit for leadership; second, if women are tough leaders, they are judged harshly because they do not conform to the gender stereotype, which expects them to be gentle and kind. To be successful, female leaders have to constantly find a balance between images of masculinity and femininity (Lefkofridi 2019). Analysing prominent female figures in RWPPs reveals a similar populist style and rhetoric compared to their past or contemporary male colleagues. On the one hand, women occupying leadership positions in RWPPs display strict and dominant party leadership styles. On the other, they employ the image of the woman and mother instrumentally to position themselves as nurturing and protecting 'their people', clearly overemphasising some gendered elements (Meret 2015; Norocel 2018; Geva 2020). This gendered construct aims at compensating for an authoritarian, bureaucratic and, in some cases, tyrannical leadership style.

Gender and Electoral Support for Populist Parties

Women's electoral support for populist parties varies strongly according to the political orientation of the parties and the region under scrutiny. Left-wing populist parties in Latin America enjoy strong support among female voters. However, although the tendency is considerably stronger and more consistently for the right than for the left, men still constitute the majority of voters of both left-wing and right-wing populist parties in Europe (Spierings and Zaslove 2017). The subsequent part of this chapter discusses these different trends.

Electoral Support for Left-Wing Populist Parties in Latin America

Peruvian women's enthusiastic support for the neo-populist Alberto Fujimori is assumed to be related to his promotion of women in politics (Rousseau 2010, 147). His women-friendly strategy proved to be fruitful electorally: after 1995 the percentage of his female supporters increased consistently compared to the percentage of his male supporters. In contrast, Sosa-Buchholz (2010) suggests that women's (and men's) support for Velasco Ibarra in Ecuador was based on purely utilitarian motivations. Ibarra's populism used political clientelism with the result that men and women got rewards for their support (for instance, electricity, potable water); also, while men got jobs, women got education, which also led to employment (Sosa-Buchholz 2010, 48).

The Radical Right Gender Gap in Western Europe

Research on support for European RWPPs reveals that these parties still mostly appeal to men, a phenomenon labelled ‘the radical right gender gap’ (Givens 2004). This debate is distinguished by a case-selection bias: while France, the Netherlands and Belgium have been extensively studied, other – especially South Eastern European and Balkan – countries have often been neglected. Two mechanisms can explain different levels of support for RWPPs (Harteveld et al. 2015). On the one hand, the mechanism of mediation proposes that men and women differ on key attitudes that influence a person’s propensity to vote for RWPP parties. On the other hand, according to the process of moderation, certain issues are less (or more) salient to women than to men, which in turn leads to gaps in the electoral appeal of RWPPs parties.

Differences between male and female voters with regard to socio-structural characteristics such as education, occupation and religiosity can function as mediators and moderators. Religiosity matters because Christian churches mostly denounce RWPPs’ anti-immigrant stances, thus discouraging their – mostly female – followers from supporting RWPPs (Sineau 2004; Mayer 2015). Furthermore, men are overrepresented in the industrial sector, where blue-collar workers are more directly affected by the negative consequences of globalisation (Givens 2004). Even though these structures are changing, for example with women’s increasing vulnerability in precarious part-time jobs (Mayer 2015), a number of studies indicate that men attach more weight to factors such as socio-economic status and education when deciding which party to vote for (Harteveld et al. 2015; Coffé 2018). Overall, these aforementioned socio-structural variables exert some influence and their effect varies across countries; crucially, none of them fully explains the gender gap.

Focusing on the effect of moderation, other works suggest that men and women differ with regard to their policy attitudes and positioning on those issues, which are important for RWPP support, such as immigration, dissatisfaction with politics (Spierings and Zaslove 2015) or anti-elitism (Bobba et al. 2018). Research that combines socio-structural explanations and attitudes produces mixed findings (Fontana et al. 2006; de Bruijn and Veenbrink 2012), while often pointing towards other influential factors (Rippeyoung 2007), for example RWPPs’ programmatic appeal (Johns et al. 2011); their extremist, aggressive or outsider image, which could repel female voters (Immerzeel et al. 2015; Coffé 2018); RWPPs’ ideological distance from other rightist parties (Harteveld et al. 2015) and the existence of a viable conservative alternative (Montgomery 2015). To date, however, this debate remains inconclusive. Recent studies provide the first evidence that shifts in policy stance towards ‘modern-traditionalism’ with regard to issues of gender, women’s work and the family (Scrinzi 2017; Campbell and Erzeel 2018; Niels 2020), as well as normalisation strategies (e.g. the RN’s leadership change from father to daughter) (Mayer 2015) can narrow the gender gap in support of RWPPs (see Mayer 2013).

Further, closer inspection of female voters of RWPPs reveals that attitudes hostile to gender and racial equality also appeal to parts of the female electorate (Setzler and Yanus 2018; Ilkkaracan 2019). These findings from limited cases and narrow time frames raise the question of which factors can account for change over time and whether or not similar processes are underway across time and space. To the best of our knowledge, no enquiry specifically devotes itself to the gender aspects of support for the populist left. Yet, some studies draw interesting conclusions regarding what influences women’s support for leftist populists. For example, Coniff's (2010) fieldwork in Brazil shows that Ivete Vargas and Heloisa Helena functioned as role models that attracted women voters and opened up spaces for them in the administration. Interviewees also concurred that physical appearance does sway voters, perhaps women more than men; gender characteristics (masculinity, femininity) influence how the public perceives populists (Coniff 2010, 120).

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have tried to chart the nascent field of gender and populism by looking at right-wing and left-wing populist parties and their governments. This field is not only underdeveloped, but it is also uneven, with LWPPs being less examined than RWPPs. We discussed the role of gender in populists' ideology, discourse and policy programmes, their organisations (from the lowest to the highest ranks) and their electoral support (gender gap). Our review reveals that the gender dimension of populism is highly complex and rather unexplored (Meret and Siim 2012). In what follows, we point to the specific gaps we have identified. Firstly, the debate about gender issues in populist parties' ideological profiles remains inconclusive. For some scholars, they constitute fundamental characteristics of RWPPs' ideology and contribute to their electoral appeal (Kitschelt and McGann 1995; Akkerman 2015), while for others they are unimportant to the concept of populism (Mudde 2007; Mudde and Kaltwasser 2015). Most, however, agree that RWPPs recently tend to devote less attention to family policies and more to gender inequality tied to immigration. Crucially, the populists under study (European RWPPs and Latin American LWPPs) have an uneasy relationship with feminism; though the advancement of women's empowerment is not part of their ideology, the ambivalence of their ideology, discourse and policies may result in feminist gains.

Yet, we lack studies of contemporary left-wing populism beyond Latin America (for example, SYRIZA in Greece, Podemos in Spain) and on right-wing populism beyond Europe (for example, Donald Trump in the US context; for an overview of contemporary populism in the US, see Vergari in this volume). For this purpose, future research should employ a comparative approach to research: first, both poles of the political spectrum and, second, populist vs. non-populist parties. Perhaps populist parties' engagement with gender may differ less from the mainstream than typically assumed. Moreover, we need a robust theoretical framework (including novel hypotheses) about why and how ideologies are gendered. In this context, we should question our assumption about a fixed set of women's interests and preferences. Current research is limited to traditional women's issues, such as family policies or abortion, but does not include women's preferences in other policy areas.

Secondly, we lack research on RWPPs' and LWPPs' members and activists due to the absence of reliable numbers and data sources for their shares of female membership. Large comparative studies are, to date, absent. Single case studies are instructive but allow us neither to generalise nor to assess whether and how RWPP and LWPP membership differs from other parties. Why would 'populist women' be different? Furthermore, it would be appealing to conduct comparisons between populist and non-populist parties, as well as between the populist right and left, regarding the percentages of women nominated on their electoral lists, included in their cabinets and so on. As the tiny amount of research literature on gender and LWPPs concentrates mostly on Latin America, we lack knowledge of European left-wing populist parties, such as the Greek SYRIZA or the Spanish Podemos. These cases are crucial to our understanding of LWPPs because they operate in a much more liberal context compared to Latin America. Both SYRIZA[10] and Podemos[11] do not seem to promote women more strongly within their cabinet or electoral lists compared to other parties – despite their self-proclaimed mission to bring about radical social change.

Thirdly, research should pay more attention to the models of gender relations and images of femininity and masculinity constructed and practised by party leaders. The field would greatly benefit from comparisons between female populists (for example, Marine Le Pen and Siv Jensen) and their male counterparts given that their leadership styles and gendered representations seem to have significantly contributed to the profiling of populist parties (Meret 2015, 102). Again, current examples of female leadership provide fertile ground on which to analyse not only the ideological dimension of populism and gender but also to what extent the campaigns of candidates belonging to different poles of the political spectrum are gendered and try to appeal to women. Last but not least, more work is needed on what explains electoral support for populists; very few studies investigate the development of the gender gap over time, while many (for instance, Eastern European) countries still remain uncharted territory. Similarly, women's increasing support for populist parties and candidates (e.g. in France or the US) challenges the assumption that women are a monolithic liberal voting bloc. Instead, the success of populist parties amongst a certain group of women voters proves to be a promising avenue for research on politics and gender.

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[10] SYRIZA has been in government together with the populist right-wing party ANEL (Independent Greeks) since 2015, and women constitute only 17.5 per cent of their cabinet.

[11] Compared to other Spanish parties, Podemos nominated more women than men in total; however, only 19 per cent of those female candidates were at the top of their electoral lists in 2016.

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CHAPTER 30:
THE BODY IN POPULISM

Paula Diehl

Introduction

The body is one of the most effective instruments in political representation. It is the physical support for political performances since it enables a politician to speak, to gesticulate and to produce facial expressions. In so doing, the body is an ideal medium for activating emotions and generating identification. The Greeks paid particular attention to the role of the body in politics and dedicated an important place in rhetoric to it: the art of persuasion. Without the body, politicians cannot speak; they can neither show their emotions, nor prove authenticity; and they face difficulties in providing their audience with identification. In a mass media society, where body images play a crucial role in political communication, politicians' bodies are more important than ever. It is impossible to dissociate political messages from the bodies of the actors who express them. In populism, the body has a specific function. It activates emotions and identification, as in conventional political rhetoric, and in addition it becomes the major instrument by which a leader demonstrates her or his popular belonging to the people she or he claims to represent.

This is especially important since the opposition between the people and the elite is a central feature of populism. In the populist view, the leader is supposed to belong to the people and to build an unmediated relationship with them. Similarity to the people and direct physical contact to them are crucial for establishing the popular roots of the leader. Bodies of populist leaders are themselves political messages. Populists claim to disrupt the power of the elite and return it to the people. Their communication emphasises this message by insisting on the popular roots and on her/his capacity to represent the people by similarity. The body works as the most important evidence of the politician's popular belonging and it is the major instrument used to affirm the special attachment between the leader and the people he or she claims to represent. Such a use of the body has serious implications for democratic representation. It establishes a specific type of mirror representation: in contrast to descriptive representation, the leader's body is not associated to a specific group, rather is supposed to mirror the people as a whole.

In the light of this background, two research fields need to be connected: populism on the one hand and body performances on the other. This chapter begins by clarifying the concept of populism. Populism is more than a political style (Moffitt 2016), a 'thin ideology' (Mudde 2004) or a logic of discourse (Laclau 2005). As will be explained further below, populism can affect four political dimensions of political action: communication, ideology, organisation and programme (Diehl 2011a; 2018). For the purposes of this research paper, I have found it useful to conceive of populism as more than a category, and to approach it as a form of logic of political action that can vary in degree, depending on the political actor and situation. Body performances are generators of symbolic meaning and closely connected to the first two political dimensions: communication and ideology. Analysing body performances can provide important information about the relationship between a populist leader and the people, the role politicians claim to play, the representation mechanisms mobilised by them and the nature of political legitimacy.

Three different elements of body performance play a crucial role in populist body performances: appearance, activities and interaction with the people. Applied to empirical cases, the analysis of body performances can provide a better idea of how populists present politics and how they frame political action. This article argues that body performances are more than aesthetic practices or communication styles because they generate ideological and symbolic outcomes, providing the leader with identification and legitimacy. Finally, this article evaluates the chances offered and the risks to democracy posed by populist body performances.

Populism as a Multidimensional and Gradual Phenomenon

It has become a commonplace for scholars working on populism to invoke the diversity of theoretical and empirical approaches to the subject and the lack of a common definition of it. Indeed, there is very little consensus on what populism is. Scholars in the field operate with varied criteria, privileging different elements of the phenomenon as communication style, political discourse, political mobilisation or ideology. Authors focusing on communication style depict populism as a type of political communication that presents the leader as a political outsider who comes from the people and that includes symbolism, aesthetics and body performances (Moffitt 2016). Populist communication and style break with taboos, provoke scandals and do not use established codes of politics. In some cases, the language used can be even vulgar in order to disrupt the norms of political professionalism. Oversimplification of political issues and Manichean discourse structures are also typical (Reisigl 2008; Deleersnijder 2009).

For those who embrace the discursive perspective, populism is a logic of discourse capable of drawing a sharp line between friend and foe, separating the people from the elite. Ernesto Laclau (2005) is the most prominent author who defends this perspective. He stresses that populism articulates political discourse by unifying a heterogeneous group and providing a chain of equivalence able to connect different popular demands under one single signifier, which is usually the leader. In so doing, populism stands for popular sovereignty and empowers the people. In this sense, discourse is closely connected to ideology. Examining populism from a mobilisation and organisation perspective, authors embracing this point of view pay more attention to the linkages generated by populism. They stress that populism operates beyond party structure and appeals directly to voters (Mair 2002). In so doing, populist leaders ‘combine popular mobilisation with populist rhetoric’ (Jansen 2011, 82). Intermediation, especially institutional intermediation, appears to be circumvented by a more direct relationship between the leader and her or his followers. This can be seen in many cases such as Hugo Chávez, Beppe Grillo, Juan Domingo Perón and Geert Wilders, who all claim to speak about what the people want. In populism, the leader needs to be presented as the ‘voice of the people’.

Although the perspectives presented here do not intend to fully cover the broad variety of approaches on populism, they show that, when it comes to understanding populism, different definitions are possible. Given this situation, it is not surprising that scholars in the field have contrasting views on certain cases. One of the most controversial cases is that of Silvio Berlusconi. If a scholar embraces the perspectives of political communication or mobilisation, she or he will be more inclined to classify Berlusconi as a populist. Berlusconi uses direct and vulgar language, presents himself as an outsider to the political system, and often disrupts political codes by breaking taboos and provoking scandals. From the perspective of mobilisation, the case of Berlusconi matches the populist criteria as well. Berlusconi has created a party that has worked as a franchise and was still operating as a personalised agency for a long time. Italian scholars have called it a 'plastic party' (Diamanti 2004). On the other hand, if one adopts the perspective of ideology, Berlusconi's case becomes difficult to analyse. In fact, the former Italian prime minister never defends popular sovereignty or asks for more popular power; he never attacks the economic elite, to whom he claims to belong. Moreover, the ostentation of the luxury he enjoys and statements about his own wealth are crucial features in his political communication. Instead of insisting on the people's power, the core of Berlusconi's message is neoliberal. He defends freedom from the state and individualistic opportunities in the capitalist economy. Depending on the perspective adopted, Berlusconi is either a perfect populist or not a populist at all (Diehl 2011a).

In such a controversial research field, the idea of a 'thin-centred ideology', as invoked by Margaret Canovan (2002) and revisited by Cas Mudde (2004), has emerged as a type of glue able to unify the different perspectives with minimal common ground. In line with this approach, the common feature of populism is 'a political appeal to the people and a claim to legitimacy that rests on the democratic ideology of popular sovereignty and majority rule' (Canovan 2002, 25). For Mudde, populism is a 'thin ideology' based on the idea of popular sovereignty, on the opposition between the people and the elite and on a Manichean world view. Despite these features, populism is incapable of providing a full ideological orientation, like that which Michael Freeden assigned to ideologies (Freeden 1996). For this reason, Mudde states that populism is a thin ideology, which is not as consistent as other ideologies, such as liberalism or socialism (Mudde 2004, 544). This definition has the advantage of explaining the different shapes that populism can take, encompassing liberal populism, left-wing populism, right-wing populism, media populism or mainstream populism. The idea of 'thin ideology' is especially convincing if one looks for the ideological determinants of populism. Although populism insists that the 'people' is a moral source of legitimacy, it does not define who the people are. Only in combination with a more consistent ideology can populism specify who 'the people' are. For left-wing populists, the people are the proletariat, the excluded and the exploited. For right-wing populists, the people are determined by their belonging to an ethnicity, culture, religion or race. For liberal populists, the people are the small entrepreneurs, the self-employed or salesmen.

However, even though the minimal definition of populism as a 'thin ideology' can help to underline the inconsistencies and flexibility of populism, it does not explain the variation of the empirical results caused by the different approaches to populism or how populism operates on different levels of political action. Instead of a minimal definition of populism, a more complex approach to the phenomenon is needed to explain variations in operational modes of populism (Diehl 2011a), as is also discussed in the theoretical conceptualisation at the beginning of this Handbook. In addition, populism is a matter of degree. It is possible for politicians to be more populist or less populist, depending on the situation and political context.

Populism should be conceived of as a multidimensional and gradual phenomenon; it is a form of political logic that can affect different dimensions of political action to different degrees. This differentiation allows us to understand discrepancies among empirical results. Berlusconi, the paradigmatic case, is populist on the communication and organisation levels but cannot be considered ideologically populist. Political actors can thus use the populist logic in many different ways and degrees. The next step is now to conceptualise the body as a medium for political representation.

The Body as a Political Medium in Democracy

The body has always been a central medium for political representation and communication, a fact of which the Greeks were aware. In *Rhetoric*, Aristotle shows the importance of the body for political persuasion and decision-making. According to him, the body of the speaker is the most important medium for expressing political ideas, convictions and especially the truth. In order to affect citizens' rationality and emotions, the speaker should symbolically perform her or his messages. A successful speaker has to apply the appropriate performance in order to communicate the truth. This includes far more than choosing the right words; it requires management of the body and the voice (*Rhetoric*, vol. III, chapter 1). Since Aristotle believes that the body transmits emotions of the soul (*On the Soul*), gestures and body posture are involved in the process of persuading the audience as well. From this perspective, the performance of the speaker's body is able to affect the bodies of the citizens. For this reason, true politics should be achieved not only by exchanging arguments but equally through the body; the truth must be physically felt by both the speaker and the audience. In the ideal case, both bodies work together: the body of the speaker is the expressive medium for the truth, and the body of the citizen is the place where communicated messages have emotional and rational resonance. From this perspective, politics involves more than rational deliberation. It depends equally on the symbolic performances of a politician's body.

By privileging rationality and cognitive communication, modern political thought has neglected the symbolic meaning of the body for a long time. Only feminist theory and diversity studies have taken it into account. In recent years, however, political theorists have analysed body performances in order to understand their implications for political representation in democracy (Celis 2008; Lombardo and Meier 2014; Diehl 2015; Rai 2015). Karin Celis, Emanuela Lombardo and Petra Meier have paid attention to the effects of physical appearance and body performances on the representation of gender, and Shirin M. Rai has focused on the implications of class signs on the body for political communication in India. Nevertheless, it is possible to locate the body in a broader scope of political representation by creating a model that stresses its importance in the symbolisation of democracy concerning very different representational objects such as political principles, political institutions and the people as a whole (Diehl 2015). In doing so, political theory is confronted with a complex situation in modern democracy, where popular sovereignty forms the core of political legitimacy. Three different aspects of the body's performativity have to be taken into account here.

The first aspect is intrinsic to democracy and has been considered by political theory, especially by the Lefortdian approach. After the revolutions of the 18th century, popular sovereignty transferred the symbolisation of power from the body of the king to a symbolic empty place.

Claude Lefort has explained this symbolic shift in political representation in the following way: since the power belongs to the people, it belongs to everybody. The consequence is that power cannot be embodied by a single person, as was the case of the king under absolutism (Lefort 1988). In a democratic context, this shift has major implications for political representatives and makes their body performances particularly difficult. In democracy, representatives have to use their bodies to stress the fact that power belongs to the people; they cannot pretend to embody the power or the people, as absolutists and, later, totalitarians have done. Rather, their body performances have to refer to the people as the sovereign and invoke democratic principles, abandoning the embodiment model of political representation, where the body of the representative is supposed to be the place of political sovereignty (Diehl 2015, 245ff.). If a democratic politician presents herself or himself in a royal manner or uses the body to stress superiority or personal power, democratic symbolism will suffer. The same is the case for politicians who present their physical strength, health and masculinity in order to endorse their leadership – well-known examples are Vladimir Putin's self-presentation as a bare-chested fighter, Beppe Grillo's famous swim in the Strait of Messina and Jörg Haider's self-presentation as an extreme sports athlete. However, if there are clear limits to what representatives in democracy can do, the codes for their performances can significantly differ depending on the political culture and historical context.

Second, political body performances are products of the interaction between nature and nurture, between the individual and social norms, between the private and the political spheres. They reflect internalised social behaviour, social norms and marks of gender, class or ethnicity (Bourdieu 1980; Butler 1993). Body performances also mobilise cultural patterns of perception, depending on the role of the actor and on the situation in which they happen (Goffman 1959). In the face of these multiple social–cultural factors, the analysis of political performances can become extremely complex, requiring an interdisciplinary approach. Many scholars working on political representation and communication have embraced an interdisciplinary perspective; by using concepts such as *mise en scène* (Coulomb-Gully 2001; Diehl 2015) or performance (Rai 2015; Moffitt 2016), they intend to describe the function of the body in staging political representation. Yet, politicians' bodies can only take on political meaning in a specific cultural and political context, which is permeated by hierarchies and a social power structure. Despite the democratic principle of equality, different bodies are not treated equally. Male and female, healthy or ill, white or non-white bodies and even educated or uneducated gestures are read by an audience in very different political manners. The different bodies of political actors are above all inscribed with unequal power by social norms. The analysis of body performances in French electoral campaigns has shown that it is impossible for political actors to escape from social norms and their perception patterns that reflect social hierarchy (Coulomb-Gully 2001). This was equally confirmed by research focusing on class and race (Daloz 2009; Rai 2015). In populism, class is the pivotal marker of the leader's body; in the case of right-wing and ethno-populism, race and ethnicity are more prominent in characterising the leader's body as belonging to the people.

The third aspect of the body in political communication complicates the study of performances in democracy: its mass medialisation. Political communication is today mostly mass mediated and connected to the visualisation of issues and actors. With the predominant role of visual media in our society, news and political coverage have become more and more dependent on images, particularly on body images. The result is a strong focus of attention on the bodies of political actors, even if this attention is not necessarily conscious. Spin doctors and public relations teams are now taking special care of the appearance and staging of politicians' bodies. It seems like Aristotle's particular consideration of the body as a medium of persuasion now makes new sense. The mass media suggests intimacy, and the bodies of politicians become a crucial element in establishing a linkage between the political message and the 'real' person that conveys it. Mass mediated body images offer a compensation for the structural distance between representatives and citizens created by a 'quasi-familiarity that is generated by the continuous and intimate exposure of political personalities' (Pels 2003). For the audience, this is an opportunity to identify with politicians on different levels. The identification can be directed at the claim the politician is making but it can equally occur in a more personal way by connecting the citizens with the imagined person performed by the politician's body (Diehl 2018). In the light of this background, it is not surprising that the body has become a subject of professionalisation in politics. In a context where the consumption of mass media images has permeated political communication, identification with the politician's body has become more and more important.

Mirroring the People

The mix of the emphasis on the body in the mass media and the appeal to the people in populist logic makes body performances particularly important for the understanding of populism. In this setting, the body becomes a pivotal element in proving the leader's belonging to the people. The physical appearance and behaviour of populist leaders are essential for the success of populist communication, symbolism and legitimation of power. In the populist context, political representation is mirror representation, since the leader claims to mirror the people. In political theory, the concept of mirror representation clearly refers to descriptive representation of specific groups and minorities. For minorities, mirror, or descriptive, representation becomes a tool with which they can acquire a voice. Mirror representation presupposes a particular relationship between the representative and the represented; it bonds both through similarity of appearance (Pitkin 1969, 74), including the similarity of their experiences (Mansbridge 1999). Metaphors like 'map', 'mirror' or 'portrait' are used to give expression to this type of relationship. In populism, though, the leader does not mirror a particular group, but the people as a whole. In order to construct a unified people, populist leaders build up an idealised form of unity among the people that they claim to mirror. This has been considered one of the most problematic effects of populism on democracy, since the construction of the people occurs on the basis of the majority, ignoring the representation of minorities and diversity (Rosanvallon 2011; Müller 2014). Equally importantly, in the populist logic, the people are idealised as a moral source of politics (Taggart 2000) and, for this reason, it can never fail: *vox populi, vox dei*. In this context, the legitimation of leadership is particularly dependent on the leader's capacity to mirror the idealised people, not the diverse people. Political actors following the populist logic claim to be one of the people and to be like the people (Diehl 2018). They do so by reinforcing their differences to the elite and by adopting mimetic behaviour towards the idealised people.

Yet in the context of Western societies, the codes for body staging in politics suggest professionalisation and a certain distance between the office holder and the voter. Political representatives demonstrate institutional attitudes and professionality by dressing up, moderating their words and using restrained body language. Political actors who follow the populist logic do exactly the contrary: they embrace an anti-institutional and anti-elite attitude and stress the gap between the people and the elite by presenting their bodies with attributes of a blue-collar or folkish quality. In so doing, they claim to be like the people and not like the elite. In addition, populist body performances demonstrate the 'outsider character' of the populist leader by disrupting political institutional codes. Jair Bolsonaro and Donald Trump provide good examples of this. However, in populist representation, similarity does not necessarily mean similarity of experiences. Populist leaders do not always come from the people they are supposed to represent. Actually, many of them, like Fernando Collor de Mello (Brazil), Silvio Berlusconi or Donald Trump, belong to the economic elite. From the perspective of body performances, this is not necessarily a contradiction since mirror representation is a product of symbolic work in which the leader presents herself/himself by imitating the people (Diehl 2011b). Usually, populist leaders perform similarity to the people they claim to represent by reproducing codes of disadvantaged social classes, the poor and excluded people. In Latin American leftist populism, this closeness is illustrated by emphasising the leader's proletarian origin, body language and clothes associated with the working class. Additionally, populists like Ollanta Humala (Peru) or Evo Morales (Bolivia) are known to mix class codes with ethnic elements of the indigenous people of their respective countries. The mixture of the connotation of the idealised people as underdogs and ethnically homogeneous at the same time can be seen as a tool of right-wing populism, especially in Austria, where mimetic behaviour is interpreted as folkish. In Austria, the leaders of the Freedom Party of Austria (Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs, FPÖ), Jörg Haider and Heinz-Christian Strache, have shown a tendency to wear traditional costumes to exhibit their closeness to the people.

Regardless of the definition of the people, the key outcome of mirroring representation in populism is identification. When identifying with the leader, followers can project different meanings onto her or him. Identification can occur on two different levels: political and personal (Diehl 2018). In political identification, followers recognise the populist leader as the people's voice, the one who confers a political identity on them by engaging her or his followers in the process of 'naming', that is, the establishment of an 'empty signifier' able to unify the heterogeneity among the people (Laclau 2005). The leader serves as the interpreter of the people's will (Arditi 2005) and is the medium for establishing the people's identity as one political subject. Personal identification operates on another level and is closely connected to psychological mechanisms described by Sigmund Freud. For Freud, identifying with something primarily means desiring to become like the respective object of identification. It occurs when the ego has enriched itself with the properties of the object (Freud 1922). In this sense, the populist leader serves as an idealised object for the followers. Personal identification with the leader supplies her or his relationship to the people with sympathy and enables the followers to recognise themselves in the leader. Such an identification mechanism is necessary in order for populists to legitimise their leadership and is based on the similarity between the leader and the people. Both mechanisms are involved in mirror representation; they render the idea acceptable that the leader's power is legitimate by virtue of her or his popular roots. Depending on the evolution of mirroring the people, populist body performances can produce problematic effects for democratic representation. This is the case when identification becomes uncontested and trust unquestioned (Diehl 2018). In this situation, the followers of the populist leader have no means to request accountability because the leader has become the embodiment of the people.

By following populist logic, political actors adopt specific codes and forms of appearance performed by the body that can provide their audience with identification and generate mirror representation. In some cases, especially those of Berlusconi and Trump, mimetic identification with the leader is paired with the desire to become rich and famous, like they are. These cases are particular interesting because they do not follow populist identification only but add another important mechanism to the people's relationship to the leader: identification with celebrities, in which the desire to be successful and famous in a mass mediated capitalistic society is projected onto the leader. This kind of projection is very common in entertainment and is becoming an increasing element of populist performances (Diehl 2011b).

Populist Body Performances

Scholars working on populism rarely address the question of body practices that generate mirror representation. One way to depict populist performances is to describe them as 'performances of ordinariness' or 'bad manners', which symbolically mark populist leaders as 'outsiders' (Moffitt 2016, 58). 'Bad manners' can manifest themselves 'in self-presentation, use of slang, political incorrectness, fashion or other displays of contempt for "usual" practices of "respectable" politics' (ivi). However, although they depict an important mechanism involved here, 'bad manners' cannot fully encompass populist performances. Building on Erving Goffman's sociological approach, one can find other important mechanisms activated in populist body performances. The first concept here is the concept of 'roles'. For Goffman, social actors always play roles and follow specific codes according to the context of their interactions and on their relationships to those with whom they interact (Goffman 1967). A man acts differently as a father in a family, as an employee at work or as a consumer in a shop. Each role requires a specific code: a specific form of interaction, language and body performance. This is equally true for political representatives. Holders of political office have to follow an institutional role and apply formal codes in order to represent their office. For unelected politicians, these codes are less rigid, but they are still the model for behaviour and body performances. Populist performances are in constant dialogue with this institutional role. They tend to disrupt institutional representation by breaking with the standard code. Yet, it is not that populists do not claim to represent the people. They rather claim to not belong to the corrupt establishment and instead to be the legitimate representatives of the people precisely because of their outsider status. 'Bad manners' seem to be an important technique for presenting the actor as an outsider to the political elites and as someone who comes from the people, but they do not exhaust the variety of performances in populism. If one takes mirror representation into account, the production of similarity can provide a broader category for the analysis of populist performances. Detecting four main features of body performance – appearance, body language, body activity and interaction with the people – can provide a more systematic framework.

The first feature is physical appearance. In a mass media society, this is the first element of political performances that is noticed. Contrary to the intuitive assumption, body appearance is not solely natural, but rather a product of the interaction between the biologically given and socially constructed techniques of identity formation. The physical shape of the body, clothing and even physical reactions interact in body performance. Physical shape can be manipulated by techniques such as hairstyling, make-up, bodybuilding or plastic surgery (Diehl 2015). Hairstyling, for example, is more significant in politics than it seems. Hair can be dressed, cut, shaved and coloured in order to be connected to gender, class and race. Undressed hair makes politicians look less professional and more similar to common citizens. However, populist leaders who define the people ethnically, like Geert Wilders in the Netherlands, can manipulate their hair to become more similar to the people they idealise. Wilder's right-wing populism defines the Dutch people by connecting them to blond hair and blue eyes. However, his problem is that he happens to have Indonesian ancestors. Thus, colouring his hair blond is a technique to achieve a physical appearance similar to the people he claims to represent. Clothing is a crucial element in performances of similarity, since it can provide politicians with popular attributes. In general, political actors intending to demonstrate their popular roots tend to dress down in order to confirm their belonging to the 'ordinary' people. Instead of wearing a suit and tie, which characterise the formal code of institutional representation, enacting performances of similarity to the people, politicians embracing populism present themselves in shirts. Hugo Chávez went even further by wearing comfortable sweatpants and sports clothes as a sign of popular taste. This is equally the case with Jair Bolsonaro. In election campaigns, established politicians are more inclined to assume populist logic and integrate symbolic similarity, like the dressing-down technique, in their body performances. Additionally, for populists who define the people by ethnic belonging, traditional costumes connect them to the people.

The second feature of populist performances is body language. This includes posture, the way the body moves and facial expressions. Sociologists such as Pierre Bourdieu have extensively examined body language in order to depict the internalised signs of class. According to Bourdieu, the body has the capacity to incorporate and reflect social norms, codes and, above all, the social power structure. Individuals are disposed to internalising body language, often unconsciously reproducing it. Members of higher social classes tend to maintain a more vertical posture, keep their gestures central and moderate their body language (Bourdieu 1980; 1994). However, the body is equally effective in producing and communicating gender, race, cultural background, social *milieu* and ethnicity. Leaders following the populist logic adopt mimetic behaviour of the people; they tend to assume less controlled body language and to stress spontaneity, even if it is a product of their well-prepared performance. In so doing, they present themselves as different to established politicians and to elites. Moffitt is right when he states that we assume that politicians 'should be polished, professional, composed, and "play the game" correctly' (Moffit 2016, 61). However, the populist message is double: the leader is not controlled by elite norms or political professionality, instead she or he is more similar to the common people and communicates directly.

This message is strongly stressed by the third populist feature: body activities, which include dancing, singing or eating. By eating simple food, dancing or singing popular music, politicians demonstrate popular taste and similarity to the people at the same time as suggesting proximity to them. Chávez was famous for dancing and singing in public, and Berlusconi used to sing popular songs. However, the most powerful technique with which to demonstrate proximity and similarity is eating. Political actors show their belonging to the people by consuming the same food. Donald Trump, for example, has stressed many times that he likes fast food, which is considered to be popular food in the USA. "The Big Macs are great. The Quarter Pounder. It's great stuff," he said to Anderson Cooper at CNN. The same is true for Heinz-Christian Strache (FPÖ) in Austria; by drinking beer, especially while dressed in traditional Austrian costume, he stresses his popular roots and demonstrates his belonging to the ethnic group used to define the people in right-wing populism. By consuming the same food, in places like cheap or fast-food restaurants or in private homes, politicians who adopt the populist logic do more than produce similarity of taste and generate mimetic behaviour; by introducing the same food that the people eat into their bodies, populist leaders prove that they are willing to share the same conditions as the people without fear of their possible unhealthy consequences. Yet, if eating, dancing and singing suggest proximity between the leader and the people, populist performance needs to be accomplished by more intensive physical interaction. In this sense, physical contact is crucial for populism. Hugging people on the street, kissing or simply touching them symbolically establishes a relationship without mediation. Such physical interaction demonstrates that the populist leader and the people form one unity able to defeat the elite. In this sense, taking a 'bath in the crowd' works as an almost religious ritual that needs to be repeated in order to reaffirm the unmediated relationship between the leader and the followers and to legitimate the leader's power.

Political legitimation by populist body performances is particularly problematic. Populist performances produce a representational relationship based on mirroring the idealised people, posing two important risks to democracy. First, in order to represent each and every member of the people, populist leaders need to create a prototypical image of the people that can be mirrored, suppressing the diversity of the people on the symbolic level. Second, populist representation motivates strong political and personal identification with the leader. This kind of identification poses a serious risk to democracy: If personal identification is pushed to the extreme, representation is inverted: the represented will and identity of the people is substituted by the will of the leader. At this point, accountability becomes irrelevant because the leader is supposed to exactly feel what the people feel and know what the people want (Diehl 2018). Symbolically, this process could be observed when Chávez died. His followers went onto the streets of Caracas wearing masks with Chávez's photo on them and carrying posters bearing the phrase: 'Seamos Chávez' (Let's be Chávez). In this case, it is not the leader that represents the people, but the people that represent the leader.

Conclusion

As this chapter has shown, body performances are crucial in understanding populism. This article takes populism as a specific political logic that can affect different dimensions of political practices and varies in degree depending on the political actor. Starting from this point, I have been able to depict the populist logic in body performances. Body performances are not a simple detail of political style, rather they are symbolic means of political representation able to evoke emotions and produce identification with political actors. In democracy, the bodies of political representatives have a difficult task to fulfil. They must refer to the people's power and represent political office without embodying that power. Yet, in a mass media democracy, where political communication is extremely dependent on images, the bodies of politicians have become a crucial element in establishing the connection between the political message and the 'real' person that conveys it. In the light of this background, body performances have emerged as a key object of research in political science. This is particularly true for the study of populism. In populism, body performances are crucial for building up the relationship between a leader and her/his followers. They are used to demonstrate the outsider status of the leader, to provide identification with the leader and to symbolically construct the power bloc of the leader and people against the elite. Populist body performances are always associated with mirroring representation, immediacy and directness. However, the mirroring effect invoked here is a mimetic attitude towards the idealised people populist leaders claim to represent. This mimetic and direct attitude can be detected in four main features of body performances: physical appearance, body language, body activity and interaction with the people. This article proposes a new methodological perspective by taking body performances of populism into consideration. Analysing populist body performances can provide scholars with a better understanding of the symbolic and psychological mechanisms involved in populism.

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CHAPTER 31:

POPULISM AND ISLAMOPHOBIA

Hans-Georg Betz

Introduction

To a significant extent, radical right-wing populist parties in contemporary Western liberal democracies owe their success at the polls to their ability to ride the wave of anti-Islamic public sentiment. Appealing to diffuse latent fears and mobilising widespread resentment in response to the growing presence and visibility of Muslims in Western societies, radical right-wing populist parties have successfully promoted themselves as adamant defenders of the core values of Western civilisation against what they characterise as an insidious process of the 'Islamisation' of Western society. Their advances in the polls have pushed two contentious migration-related issues to the forefront of public debate – the questions of integration and national identity. Surveys suggest that among Western public spheres there are widespread concerns that 'the common norms and values that bind societies together will be weakened irretrievably if the newcomers do not adapt to the host-country language, culture, and identity – and, worse, if they harbour illiberal cultural practices' (Papademetriou 2012, 4).

These concerns have fuelled, and been fuelled by, an anti-Islamic discourse propagated by self-styled moral experts and disseminated via the media, both old (books, newspapers, magazines) and new (internet websites and social media). Prominent examples are Oriana Fallaci (2001), Bat Ye'or (2005), Christopher Caldwell (2009) and Renaud Camus (2011). It is in this setting that radical right-wing populist parties have found fertile ground for a political project which brings together traditional populist rhetoric and xenophobic invectives against a minority singled out for stigmatisation. The adoption of comprehensive anti-Islamic rhetoric by the populist radical right provides perhaps the strongest evidence of the central importance ideas hold in contemporary populist mobilisation (supporting the 'ideational approach' to the study of populism; see Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2013). It also lends support to the thesis that cultural rather than socio-economic concerns drive people's attitudes towards immigrants and that these concerns are instrumental in explaining the right-wing populist upsurge over the past two decades (Sides and Citrin 2007; Bornschier, 2010; Yılmaz 2012; Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014; Lentin 2014; Bouvet 2015). One promising and fruitful way to analyse the right-wing populist anti-Islamic discourse is from the perspective of nativism, an approach adopted in this chapter (Casanova 2012; Betz 2013; Hervik 2015).

Hans-Georg Betz

Nativism: Antebellum Anti-Catholicism in the United States as an Ideal Type

Nativism is a concept advanced by American historians of the nineteenth century to make sense of the frenzied response to mass immigration in the antebellum and, to a lesser extent, the post-Civil War period in the United States. Nativism represents a 'complex web of nationalism, xenophobia, ethnocentrism and racism' that comes in two versions (Anbinder 1992, xiv). Central to its light version is the notion that the native-born should be accorded preference over aliens. Against that, the hard version starts from the assumption that some immigrant groups, because of their deeply ingrained cultural background, cannot be integrated into the host society. From this it follows that they should not be accorded full citizen rights (particularly suffrage) or, in the most extreme case, be prevented from entering the country altogether. Historically, nativist mobilisation has by and large been of the light variety, predominantly centring on demands for protecting domestic labour against competition from migrant workers. Episodes of full-blown nativist mobilisation have been rare. They occur when a society is subject to profound and extensive moral panic, and populist entrepreneurs seize the opportunities provided by the moral panic to mobilise ordinary citizens against the 'elite' and the 'system' as a whole. This is what happened in the decades before the Civil War in the United States, in response to the massive influx of European immigrants. A large number of them were poor German and particularly Irish Catholics, who upon arrival predominantly settled in the crowded tenements of the big north-eastern cities.

Mass immigration provoked a sharp and drastic backlash from 'native-born' Protestant Americans, which had all the characteristics of a moral panic, as defined by Stanley Cohen (1972, 9): 'A condition, episode, person or groups of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests; its nature is presented in a stylised and stereotypical fashion by the mass media; the moral barricades are manned by editors, bishops, politicians and other right-thinking people; socially accredited experts pronounce their diagnoses and solutions; ways of coping are evolved (or more often) resorted to; the condition then disappears, submerges or deteriorates and becomes more visible.' There is extensive literature chronicling the anti-Catholic frenzy that swept antebellum America, occasionally exploding in violence and destruction (Billington 1963; Anbinder 1992; Knobel 1996). The nativist outburst of religious phobia and ethnic hostility and denigration (cartoonists depicted Irish immigrants with apelike features) led to the formation of secret political organisations founded for the purpose of protecting the republican institutions of the United States against the newcomers, whose religious–cultural background was deemed irreconcilable with the American creed. This anti-Catholic mobilisation culminated with the founding of the American Party, better known as the Know Nothings (founded 1849), a populist movement whose aim (besides promoting anti-Catholic policies) was the fundamental renewal of American politics. Although short-lived – the party broke apart over the question of slavery –, the Know Nothings were instrumental in bringing about the demise of the Whigs and the Jacksonian party system (1828-1854). Many of their ranks joined Lincoln's Republican Party.

To a large extent, the Know Nothings owed their success to their ability to overcome the constraints imposed by America's self-understanding of it being the land of liberty and opportunity, a haven for the 'huddled masses yearning to breathe free'. They did this by couching their nativist rhetoric in terms of 'two clusters of values' fundamental to 'the American mythos': republican patriotism and Protestantism (Carlson 1989, 372). Republican patriotism stood, most prominently, for democracy, liberty and equality; Protestantism for individualism, hard work and the ability to think for oneself and embrace change (Carlson 1989). Against that, they depicted Catholic immigrants as passive, easily manipulated by their priests, and docile pawns in the Pope's machinations to subvert the liberties and free institutions of the United States and subject its citizens to popish despotism. From the nativists' perspective, Catholic immigrants were a vital part of a Manichean struggle: As a prominent nativist pamphlet writer claimed, since the two systems were 'diametrically opposed: one must and will exterminate the other' (Beecher 1855, 29). The Know Nothings and their kindred nativist organisations thus promoted themselves as movements of 'counter-subversion' (Davis 1960) bent on 'unmasking' and exposing Catholicism for what it was: a 'fraudulent conspiracy against the interests of God and humanity' (Beecher 1855, 29) mounting a frontal assault on the country's republican ideals under the guise of religion.

Central to the nativists' campaign to save the United States from the designs of Rome was conjuring up 'the symbol of the pure American woman debauched and ruined by the Catholic priest', which informed popular anti-Catholic writings on convents and the confessional, such as the bestselling *Awful Disclosures of Mary Monk* (1836) and *The Archbishop; or Romanism in the United States* (1854) (Pagliarini 1999, 99). Their readers were shocked with lurid tales of young innocent women imprisoned in the dungeons of convents, subjected to the licentiousness of priests and nuns, the resulting offspring murdered and thrown into pits; and of virtuous wives and mothers compelled in the confessional by lecherous priests to respond to the most indecent questions, if not seduced outright and solicited for sexual favours (Mattingly 2006; Mercado 2013). On the surface, these tales were designed to provoke moral outrage. Just as importantly, however, they also reflected concern over the growing role of convent academies in educating girls and young women from well-to-do Protestant families and thus exposing them to Catholic indoctrination and moral corruption by women who had chosen celibacy and thus forsaken their 'natural' duties as wives and mothers in marriage (Mattingly 2006, 168–70). As Marie Anne Pagliarini has convincingly argued, anti-Catholic nativism's mobilising power derived to a significant degree from its appeal to the 'antebellum "cult of domesticity"', which 'saw the pure American woman in her role of wife and mother raised to the status of a cultural and religious icon', a model allegedly being undermined by Catholicism (Pagliarini 1999, 98).

Despite its vitriolic language and despite the violence it occasionally engendered (leading to loss of life and significant material damage), anti-Catholic nativism promoted relatively moderate policies. There were no demands for halting all immigration from Catholic lands, not even for a moratorium on immigration. Instead, the Know Nothings called for extending the nationwide naturalisation period from five to twenty-one years, a measure designed to deny immigrants the right to vote until they were fully assimilated. The measure was never adopted. Undercurrents of anti-Catholicism, however, persisted well into the second half of the twentieth century, leading one prominent historian of religion to claim that anti-Catholicism represented the 'last acceptable prejudice' in contemporary America (Jenkins 2003).

All this no longer holds true today. What we are witnessing today is a second major wave of hard-core nativism, this time targeting Muslim migrants and Islam in general. Similar to anti-Catholicism in antebellum America, the upsurge of anti-Islamic sentiments across contemporary liberal democracies exhibits all the traits of a moral panic. Today's nativists, in a similar fashion to antebellum Protestants, characterise Islam as a dangerous ideology that is fundamentally incompatible with the values that inform Western civilisation. Moreover, like the Know Nothings, they promote themselves as the vanguard of a counter-subversive movement intent on reversing the 'incursion' of Islam into Western societies. In contemporary anti-Islamic nativism, Islam is characterised as a monolithic and immutable religious doctrine, which is backward and prone to irrationalism, oppression and violence. Muslim migrants are depicted as potentially dangerous fanatics and blind followers of archaic rules that are fundamentally incommensurable with modern enlightened Western values. Anti-Islamic discourse is diffused via traditional and new media by experts on Islam and the Muslim world and publicists who promote themselves as such; and latent fears and prejudices are reinforced by the results of opinion polls, which create the sense that one is not alone in harbouring negative sentiments towards Islam and Muslims. It is the confluence of these factors, extensively analysed in the literature on Islamophobia, which has allowed radical right-wing populist parties to make the question of the place of Islam in Western societies a central issue for populist mobilisation (Hajjat and Mohammed 2013). These developments can be observed throughout liberal Western democracies. Nowhere, however, have they been more striking than in northern Europe, long known for its tolerance and liberalism. This holds particularly true for the Netherlands. Hardly surprisingly, the 'strange death of Dutch tolerance' has been extensively studied as an exemplary case of the discursive construction of Islam as the threatening other and of its exploitation by political entrepreneurs for populist mobilisation (Lucassen and Lucassen 2015).

Unlike both traditional and more recent parties, such as the Greens, successful radical right-wing populist parties depend to a significant degree on strong, ideally charismatic leadership personalities. These are populist entrepreneurs capable of framing complex and contentious issues in an easily understandable form and articulating their essence in a short, catchy slogan or phrase (for example, *Les français d'abord, Roma ladrona*). This has been particularly true with the emergence of Islam as a central issue for the radical populist right. A typical case is Geert Wilders, the leader of the Party for Freedom (Dutch Partij voor de Vrijheid, PVV). In the summer of 2016, polls had the PVV as the leading party in the Netherlands, far ahead of its competitors. This was largely the result of Wilders's ability to combine a resolute populist strategy with an equally unrelenting anti-Islamic discourse (van Kessel 2011; van Kessel and Castelein 2016). At the same time, Wilders established himself as a pivotal access point for, and the centre of, a wide-ranging network of anti-Islamic groups, movements and parties throughout Europe and beyond. In this way, Wilders significantly contributed to a process of 'cross-national diffusion', which was instrumental in promoting the anti-Islamic nativist frame (Rydgren 2005).

Anti-Islamic Frames and Anti-Islamic Mobilisation

Frames and framing are at the heart of the ideational approach to the understanding of populism and its success. 'Frames operate by altering the relative salience of different aspects of the problem' (Kinder and Kam 2009, 40). It is therefore hardly surprising that they play a decisive role in radical right-wing populist mobilisation. The contemporary radical right has always considered the 'metapolitical' struggle over 'cultural hegemony' – a struggle over the perception and interpretation of processes and events and the contestation of the dominant meaning of words, concepts and values – central to its longer-term political strategy. As a prominent New Right activist has put it, metapolitics 'is the prerequisite of politics – the dynamic of power, as it is manifested on the street and computer screen and up to the government and parliament; in the media and the press; in academia, cultural institutions, and civil society; as well as in art and culture. In short, in all the channels which communicate values perceived on an individual and collective level. This is the reason why metapolitical analysis must precede political action' (Friberg 2015). Metapolitics entails both undermining and deconstructing dominant values and redefining them. It represents 'a war of social transformation, fought on the level of worldview, thought, and culture' in preparation for the ultimate assault on 'the established political power – which now finds itself disconnected from public consent' (Friberg 2015).

The case of Geert Wilders provides a textbook illustration of this strategy and its success (Vossen 2011). Wilders's star started to rise in the first decade of the new century, after promoting himself as the heir to Pim Fortuyn, the charismatic political maverick, whose life was cut short by an assassin in 2002. During the last years of his life, Fortuyn established himself as a sharp critic of Islam, famously dismissing Islam as a 'backward culture' that posed a fundamental threat to Dutch society. Weakened by the forces of individualism and 'cultural relativism', the Dutch were on the verge of losing their identity and Dutch society risked being submerged by an alien culture (Fortuyn 1997). In populist fashion, Fortuyn attacked the country's cultural and political elite for their indifference towards the concerns of ordinary citizens and their refusal to acknowledge that Islam threatened the very foundations of the country's liberal political culture, particularly regarding the separation of church and state, gender equality and gay rights (Akkerman 2005). Fortuyn's blunt attacks on Islam, although shocking, proved highly influential. In particular, they reinforced 'new realist' tendencies in Dutch discourse on immigration, which dared to break taboos, gave preference to the experiences of ordinary people over expert opinion and took on the 'progressive elite', which dominated public discourse with its 'politically correct sensibilities' with respect to intolerance and racism (Prins 2002, 369). In the process, Islam assumed an increasingly negative connotation, fuelled by the accounts of first-hand experiences of prominent witnesses, such as Somali-born Ayaan Ali Hirsi, whose claim that Islam was fundamentally incompatible with women's rights made her 'one of the key contributors to the "culturalist" discourse on migrants' (Ghorashi 2010, 14). It was Geert Wilders who made anti-Islamic nativism the basis of his populist project. Perusing key speeches from the first decade of the new century shows that Wilders persistently pursued a populist strategy, pitting 'ordinary people' against the elite. The target of Wilders's populist attacks was particularly the political Left, who he accused of refusing to face up to reality, cuddling up instead to the Muslim minority and its representatives (Mols and Jetten 2016).

At the same time, Wilders integrated the disparate tropes of various Islamophobic discourses promoted in Europe and elsewhere into a comprehensive anti-Islamic narrative, which made him perhaps the most notorious and influential voice of nativism in the world today (see, for instance, Elizabeth Poole's [2012] analysis of his coverage in the British media after he was refused entry to the UK in 2009). Central to this narrative is the notion that Islam is not a religion but 'primarily a political ideology', a system that seeks to control every aspect of human life, thus a 'totalitarian ideology' that 'aimed at establishing tyrannical power over non-Muslims' (Wilders 2012, 67–8; 2016). Characterising the Koran as 'an inspiration for intolerance, murder and terror' comparable to Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, he called for Islam's sacred text to be banned. Central to Islam's political ideology was the 'pursuit of dominance', its ultimate aim 'to exact its imperialist agenda by force on a worldwide scale'. This was the driving force behind the current 'third Islamic invasion' of Europe through mass immigration. Muslim immigrants, in turn, represented a force of 'incursion' bent on conquest, a 'Trojan horse' that, once safely installed, must inexorably open the door to subjugation via 'Islamification' (Wilders 2012, 163). Muslim immigrants were the pawns in a strategy of conquest, illustrated by the example of Paris, 'now surrounded by a ring of Muslim neighbourhoods' (conjuring up images of the siege of Vienna in 1683). It was for these reasons, Wilders insisted, that Islam represented an 'essential threat' to the Netherlands 'as a free nation'. Islam was fundamentally incompatible with liberal values and democratic institutions that guaranteed the rights of women and sexual minorities. Under Islam, Wilders claimed, 'women are not to complain when they're beaten up by their husbands, unfaithful wives should be stoned, homosexuals should be thrown from buildings, apostates and infidels deserve death, and democracy must be subordinate to Islamic Sharia law'.

Nativism, like populism, derives its logic from the construction of a discursive narrative of dichotomisation and polarisation. In the anti-Islamic narrative, nativist entrepreneurs postulate a fundamental conflict that pits identity against multiculturalism and which represents a new cleavage that defines contemporary Western democracies (Betz 2005, 34). In radical right-wing populist discourse, identity refers predominantly to the strengthening of national identity in the service of the defence of national sovereignty against the economic and political forces of globalisation. Against that, in nativist discourse, identity refers to the cultural foundations of Western civilisation – the substrate of values which, as Wilders has claimed, made Western civilisation 'the most advanced and superior civilisation the world has ever known'. For the nativist right, Western civilisation is rooted in Judeo-Christian culture, which defines Western identity. The nativist right's 'identitarian turn' can almost exclusively be explained as an attempt to assert 'the superiority of Judeo-Christian culture over the backwardness of Islamic culture'.[1] The defence of Judeo-Christian culture, however, far from constitutes a defence of Christian faith. The controversy over the display of the crucifix in public schools which erupted in 2009 in several Western European countries is a case in point. Both the Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ) and Northern League (Lega Nord, now Lega) in northern Italy voiced strong support for keeping the crucifix in classrooms – yet not for primarily religious reasons. Both maintained that the crucifix was not merely a religious symbol, but a symbol of the values which informed Western history, civilisation and identity; at the same time, it served as a reminder that Austria and Italy were Christian countries which were prepared to defend their heritage. The way the two parties framed the question of the crucifix supports a central point advanced in a recently collected volume on populism and religion: If the nativist right in Western Europe evokes Europe's Christian identity, it is not because it is interested in promoting Christianity, but because it seeks to impose an identitarian master narrative capable of repelling the Islamic challenge (Zúquete 2008; Marzouki et al. 2016).

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[1] Quotations without references are taken from online articles and websites that, unfortunately, are no longer available at the time of the second edition of this Handbook.

Laying claim to the Judeo-Christian heritage of Western civilisation has opened up new opportunities for the populist right to refurbish their image by reinventing themselves as defenders of a panoply of liberal, republican and secular Western values. What at the beginning of the populist anti-Islamic mobilisation had been a position defended only by Fortuyn, had become the new 'ideological master frame' for the populist right in Western liberal democracies one decade later (Akkerman 2005; Vossen 2011). With a number of radical right-wing populist parties making great efforts to gain a measure of respectability (the most notable example being Marine Le Pen's strategy of *dédiabolisation*), its adoption was hardly surprising.

Context and Opportunity Structures: Public Opinion

There is a second reason for its adoption. Populist entrepreneurs, movements and parties derive their claim to legitimacy from the notion that they represent the common sense of ordinary people, whose voice has been ignored for too long, and their concerns too long denigrated by the elite. One way to support this claim is to point to public opinion. Public opinion, however, has not been particularly kind towards the populist right. In France, for instance, a large majority of voters have consistently rejected the ideas advanced by the National Rally (Rassemblement National, RN, previously Front National, National Front, FN) (even after Marine Le Pen assumed the leadership of the party, only a third of respondents in polls said they agreed with her ideas). This is not the case when it comes to the question of Islam. Over the past decade or so, public attitudes towards Islam and Muslims have been extensively surveyed in a large number of liberal democracies. In most cases, they have proved to be negative; in many instances, they show broad agreement with the nativist case against Islam and Muslim migrants. In Italy, for instance, in late summer 2016, a poll appeared on the newspaper *Libero* stated that more than two thirds of Italians concurred with the statement that Muslim immigrants failed to integrate because of 'a fundamental incompatibility with Western values'. One year earlier, in Britain, a survey conducted by YouGov found that more than half of its respondents agreed with the statement that Islam posed a 'major' or 'some threat' to democracy. In a broad-based study on German attitudes towards Islam from 2012, large majorities associated Islam with discrimination against women, fanaticism, intolerance against those who think differently, a propensity for violence and being backward-looking (Petersen 2012). Hardly surprisingly, four years later, in May 2010, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* revealed that a 60 per cent majority of Germans rejected the notion, propagated most prominently by Chancellor Angela Merkel, that Islam 'belongs to Germany'. Finally, in France, the country with the largest Muslim immigrant community in Western Europe, in 2013 (thus well before the jihadist terror attacks of Paris and Nice), more than 70 per cent of the population believed that Islam was an 'intolerant' religion, which was incompatible with the values of French society; eight out of ten thought that Islam was out to impose its ways on others (Le

Bars 2013). These and similar results in a number of other Western democracies reflect a profound sense of wariness and suspicion pervading public opinion with respect to Islam.

Public opinion polls have played a vital role in fanning the flames of anti-Islamic nativism, their most alarmist results prominently displayed on the front pages of major newspapers. Both surveys and their media coverage have contributed to the intensification of a moral panic, which has proved fertile ground for nativist mobilisation by radical right-wing populist parties. Geert Wilders once again illustrates the point. In 2013, Wilders commissioned a poll on Dutch attitudes towards Islam. The results were striking. Among other things, the survey found substantial majorities who supported halting immigration from Muslim countries, the construction of new mosques and a ban on Sharia law; more than two-thirds of the respondents agreed with the statement that there was 'enough Islam' in the country. Although flawed methodologically, the poll results were published in the country's largest morning newspaper, *De Telegraaf*, and several blogs. The poll was clearly meant to suggest that there was broad support for the drastic measures Wilders had proposed in his speeches to counter the threat of Islamisation, which he himself had conjured up on numerous occasions. In general, surveys addressing the question of Islam which have been conducted during the past decade in Western liberal democracies reflect two developments: the progressive sensitivisation of the public to Islam as an important cultural issue, and the progressive deterioration of the public image of Islam, which is increasingly being perceived as a multifaceted 'problem'. Surveys, and the way they are covered in the mainstream media, have been one important factor in the generation of an emotionally charged socio-cultural climate that has proved conducive to nativist mobilisation by populist entrepreneurs. At least three other factors have contributed to the generation of this climate and particularly its intensification over time: the growing alarmism in media coverage of a range of issues associated with the presence of Muslim minority communities in Western societies in the wake of the terrorist attacks in the United States and Western Europe, and the influx of Muslim migrants in the context of the most recent refugee crisis; the popular success of publications by authors – with or without particular expertise in the subject matter – who are highly critical of, or downright hostile to, Islam; and, finally, and directly related to the former two, the growing visibility and particularly the assertiveness of Muslim communities and their leaders in Western societies.

Context and Opportunity Structures: The Role of the Media

There is a growing body of literature in communications studies devoted to analysing how the media have contributed to the construction and perpetuation of a negative image of Muslim minority communities that is, more often than not, informed by an essentialising, if not openly racialised discourse (Schiffer 2005; Richardson 2009; Poole 2011). Stereotyping and negative representation of Muslims and Islam have been particularly pronounced in the tabloid press, which is generally tailored to lower-class readers and, more often than not, shares an ideological affinity with the radical populist right (Moore et al. 2008). In some cases, even left-leaning journals and news magazines have done their part to reinforce the notion of Islam's fundamental incompatibility with Western values and evoke the spectres of invasion and conquest. In 2004, the German magazine *Stern*, for instance, devoted one of its issues to examining Islam (as part of a series on the big world religions). In the editorial, the author started with the observation that Islam 'frequently conveys the image of an archaic religion, in which women are oppressed, mutilated and stoned to death, where those who think differently are persecuted, and where missionaries with fuzzy beards have incited a "Holy War" against us "infidels"'. This had led to the question of whether or not 'this religion' was dangerous, a notion which the author rejected: Islam 'as such' did not pose a threat, but the frustrated young fanatics who invoked Islam as justification for their use of violence did (Osterkorn 2004). Three years later, the magazine no longer made this distinction. Now the question was no longer whether or not Islam was dangerous, but 'how dangerous' it was.

The same year, Germany's leading news magazine, *Der Spiegel*, devoted the cover and lead article of one of its issues to 'the silent Islamisation' of Germany – under the provocative title 'Mecca Germany'. Ironically, it was *Der Spiegel* which, three years later, warned of a change that was slowly transforming Germany 'from a tolerant society into one dominated by fear and Islamophobia' (Follath 2010). The commentator, however, did not blame the German media for these developments but Thilo Sarrazin, the author of a polemical essay whose provocative title *Deutschland schafft sich ab* (Germany is abolishing itself) proved seductive enough to put the book on top of the bestseller lists almost immediately after its publication. This had less to do with the book's primary concerns, which were economic, than with the relatively limited number of passages that dealt with the question of the place of Islam and Muslims in German society (Meng 2015). It was Sarrazin's charge that, because of their relatively high birth rate, Germany's (predominantly Turkish and Kurdish) Muslim minority population was in the process of taking over the country, and the conclusions he drew from this that caught attention and created a huge controversy. Not only did Sarrazin point out that Muslim immigrants had largely failed to integrate into German society, but he also maintained that their relatively low educational achievements and reluctance to learn German – which were crucial for their integration into the labour market – were the result of their cultural background being shaped by Islam. This, he claimed, accounted for the high level of welfare dependency of Muslim immigrants, which invariably spelled disaster.

Sarrazin's book provoked both a storm of indignation among Germany's political and intellectual elite and widespread applause from the public, who 'was now discussing, with alacrity, his arguments – cultural incommensurability, feeble multiculturalism, demographic anxieties, and failed integration' (Meng 2015, 104–5). The controversy over the book thus generated a populist moment, with Sarrazin in the role of the 'folk hero'[2] breaking down the walls of political correctness and paving the way for the German version of 'new realism' in the debate about multiculturalism and integration. Its impact was reflected in public opinion: Between 2009 and 2016, the number of German respondents favouring a complete ban on immigration from Muslim countries almost doubled, from 21 to 41 per cent (Decker et al. 2016, 50). It also impacted politically, with the foundation of 'Alternative for Germany (Alternative für Deutschland, AfD), a new party which primarily sought to exploit popular discontent with the government's bailout policies during the Euro crisis, and particularly with the emergence of Pegida (Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the Occident) in late 2014 in Dresden, a movement which, within a short period of time, managed to mobilise tens of thousands of demonstrators against 'the Islamisation of the West'. The success of Pegida, in turn, had a strong impact on the AfD, causing it to adopt a radical anti-Islamic platform, based on the premise that Islam does not belong in Germany. The party's dramatic gains in regional elections in 2015 and 2016 were a clear indication that even in Germany, which for historical reasons had been largely immune to far right political insurgency, the new master narrative of the populist radical right represented a winning formula for political success.

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[2] See the cover of *Der Spiegel*, 6th September, 2010.

Context and Opportunity Structures: Visibility

In their recent analysis of Islamophobia, Abdellali Hajjat and Marwan Mohammed evoke a third factor informing the current climate which is conducive to nativist mobilisation – the growing visibility and assertiveness of Muslim minority communities in Western societies. To illustrate the point, Hajjat and Mohammed refer to an observation made by the sociologist Norbert Elias, who noted that resentment rises when 'marginal, socially inferior' groups no longer content themselves with their inferior position but start demanding to be treated equally, not only legally but also socially (Hajjat and Mohammed 2016, 20). This is exactly what has happened over the course of the past two decades, starting with Muslim organisations' requests for the construction of mosques and demands by Muslim parents that schools provide halal lunches and, in some cases, that their daughters be excused from mandatory swimming classes, to occasional demands by radical Islamic preachers for Sharia law (or at least some parts of it) to be implemented. More often than not, these cases have received considerable publicity from the mainstream media, adding fuel to nativist rhetoric about the creeping Islamisation of society and providing justification for nativist movements seeking to prevent the construction of new mosques and minarets (as happened in Switzerland), block attempts to take pork and sausages from school lunch menus (France) or introduce legislation banning Sharia law (several states in the USA). Each of these issues has contributed to exposing the public to the presence of Muslim minorities in Western societies and framing this presence in terms of a 'problem'.

Nowhere has this been more pronounced than with respect to Muslim women's attire – from the hijab and niqab to the burqa. Nothing has provoked an anti-Islamic backlash in Western societies more than encountering Muslim women wearing 'the veil' in public, not only on the nativist right, but also among both Western and Muslim feminists, for whom the veil represents a 'retreat from progressive values' at best, and at worst a symbol of subservience and oppression 'used to alienate and control women under the guise of religious freedom' (Khan 2009; Alibhai-Brown 2015). Identical claims have been made by the radical populist right in their campaign against the headscarf, typically characterised as both the symbol of the 'subordination of women in Islam' and 'the expression of a political aim: the introduction of the Islamic legal system (Sharia)'.

In Islam, as Geert Wilders has claimed, the 'constant fixation on how women dress is the key to a proper society', where women are submissive and subordinate to men (Wilders 2012, 52). It is for those reasons that the nativist right has made the question of women's rights central to their anti-Islamic discourse. Starting in the most liberal democracies in northern Europe (the Netherlands and Scandinavia), this discourse quickly diffused throughout Western Europe, allowing even parties with a long history of right-wing extremism, such as the Rassemblement National and Flemish Interest (Vlaams Belang, VB), to promote themselves as the champions of gender equality and women's rights (Akkerman and Hagelund 2007). Vlaams Belang, for instance, launched its 2012 campaign 'Women against Islamisation' with a book-length pamphlet on the position of women in Islam (authored by the former Miss Belgium Anke Van dermeersch) characteristically entitled 'Whore or Slave' (Van dermeersch 2012). These, the party claimed, were the stark alternatives women were confronted with under Islam: adopt Western ways and be treated as a whore subject to abuse and, in the most extreme case, the threat of being murdered in the name of family honour, or submit to Islam's archaic code of conduct and be treated as a Muslim man's 'exclusive property' (Dewinter 2012, 67).

Legitimising Narratives and Populist Mobilisation Against Islam

The nativist right's adoption of the cause of gender equality and women's rights has served as a justification for the clash-of-civilisation narrative that informs much of the nativist discourse on Islam, pitting 'Western liberty' against 'Islamic intolerance' (Van dermeersch 2012, 139). As Therese Ignacio Bjoernaas has aptly put it, the 'ostensible oppression and subjugation of Muslim women by Muslim men' legitimised by Koranic doctrine, 'makes Islamophobia a self-justifying doctrine' (Ignacio Bjoernaas 2015, 80). At the same time, it fits in nicely with the radical right's populist claims of representing and defending the interests of ordinary people (in this case, ordinary Muslim women) against an elite – Western multiculturalists and Muslim fundamentalists – imposing their ideological views on the rest of society. In the process, the nativist right contributed to a narrative which constructed Muslim women as being fundamentally '"trapped" within their culture' – a narrative that extends far beyond the nativist right and which assumes that Muslim women are the ultimate victims because of their gender and their culture (Ghorashi 2010, 77; O'Brien 2015, 91). This essentialist discursive construction of Muslim women has allowed populist politicians to couch anti-Islamic propositions in terms of liberation and emancipation.

A prominent example is the leader of the Norwegian Progress Party (Fremskrittspartiet, FrP) Siv Jensen, who for more than a decade was the leading promoter of banning the veil in Norway, arguing that the veil represented 'an obstacle to the creation of an egalitarian citizen' (Ignacio Bjoernaas 2015, 82). Jensen's campaign against the veil was part of a larger project that used anti-Islamic discourse shrouded in feminist rhetoric to mobilise the people against the country's 'left-oriented elite', which, 'in its eagerness to appear tolerant', refused to see the oppressive nature of Islam (ibid., 85). Several factors accounted for the effectiveness of this strategy. For one, time series survey data show persistently high levels of scepticism towards Islam among the Norwegian public, with about half of the population considering Islam fundamentally or at least partially incompatible with Norwegian values (data from Integreringsbarometeret 2013). This is particularly notable given the 'strong hegemonic position' of anti-racism in Norway (Døving 2015, 64). The explanation might be found in a second finding: Although the vast majority (almost 90 per cent) of Norwegians agreed that anti-Islamic attitudes are widely shared in the country, substantially fewer Norwegians (roughly 60 per cent) thought this was something that needed to be addressed (Døving 2015, 64). Presumably, a significant number of respondents thought that there were good reasons for the negative views on Islam and Muslims, particularly with regard to the question of gender equality – a 'national core value' in Norwegian political discourse (ibid., 69).

Under the circumstances, Siv Jensen's campaign against the veil was a perfectly rational strategy with which to gain respectability, bring her party into the mainstream of Norwegian politics and broaden its electoral appeal. The strategy proved successful. In 2013, the party entered government as a coalition partner for the first time ever. The Norwegian story is emblematic of the diffusion of the anti-Islamic nativist master narrative during the past decade or so: Although even under Jensen's predecessor, Carl Hagen, the party consistently rejected being associated with the radical populist right elsewhere in Western Europe, it quickly incorporated the anti-Islamic narrative into its political programme. This was also the case with other Scandinavian populist parties, most prominently the Danish People's Party (Dansk Folkeparti, DF) during Pia Kjærsgaard's tenure as party leader, which in 2001 made the alleged threat of a Muslim invasion and the displacement of native-born Danes by newcomers the central issue of its campaign for the national election (Betz and Meret 2009; Yılmaz 2012). The party's nativist turn accounted for much of the party's subsequent electoral gains, which made it a pivotal factor in Danish politics.

Elsewhere in Western Europe, the populist right's transition from xenophobia to Islamophobia – in the context of a general programmatic change of focus in the direction of assimilation – was particularly pronounced in Austria, Flanders, Northern Italy and Switzerland, where in 2009, in a referendum initiated by members of the populist right, a majority voted for a ban on the construction of new minarets (Testa and Armstrong 2012; Betz 2013; Krzyżanowski, 2013). In other cases, the adoption of the anti-Islamic master narrative has boosted the electoral chances of new populist parties (as in the case of the German AfD) or helped revive the fortunes of once successful populist entrepreneurs. A case in point is Pauline Hanson, who in the late 1990s gained international notoriety after she successfully mobilised popular resentment with her claim that Australia was being 'swamped' by Asian migrants. After failing to get re-elected and being ejected from the party she had founded (One Nation, ONP), Hanson more or less fell into oblivion, only to re-emerge in 2016, when her party (One Nation, which she once again led) won four seats in the Australian Senate. Hanson primarily owed this success to outspoken nativist views. Substituting Asians with Muslims, she claimed that the country was once again being swamped, only this time the threat was far more serious, given the incompatibility of Islamic culture and 'ideology' with Australian values. Hanson also partly owed her success to the emergence and evolution of a cultural climate which was increasingly suffused with anti-Islamic sentiment (Dunn et al. 2007; Ho 2007). They allowed Hanson to advance a number of radical measures, including a ban on immigration from Muslim countries, a ban on the construction of new mosques and a ban on the burqa and niqab in public places – measures which provoked significantly less outrage from the political establishment than had been the case with her anti-Asian tirades in the late 1990s (Switzer 2016). Hanson assimilated her anti-Islamic arguments (for example, that Islam is an ideology rather than a religion) and policy propositions from the existing anti-Islamic narrative, which had already proven its effectiveness elsewhere. This is an instance of ideological/programmatic borrowing and imitation, facilitated by the establishment of anti-Islamic organisational networks, such as the initiative 'Cities against Islamisation', which brought together various Western European populist parties and anti-Islamic groups, particularly prominent websites, such as Gates of Vienna, Politically Incorrect or The Religion of Peace, and social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, which have been instrumental in the transnational and transcontinental transmission and dissemination of the anti-Islamic discursive frame (Oboler 2013; Ekman 2015).

Identity Politics and the Future of Anti-Islamic Nativism

The adoption of anti-Islamic nativism by the populist radical right has given these parties new opportunities to further strengthen their (already strong) appeal among lower-class voters while gaining new ground among middle-class constituencies (Oesch 2013). This has put new pressure on the mainstream parties to renegotiate their position with regard to the new 'social line of conflict, which is informed by cultural identities rather than social issues'.[3] In the past, mainstream parties have been largely impervious to programmatic contagion by the radical populist right, even if they have been far less reluctant to employ populist rhetoric (Rooduijn et al. 2014). Given the dimensions of the challenge posed by the growth of Muslim minorities in almost all Western liberal democracies and their increasing visibility and assertiveness, as well as the passions they have provoked (particularly with respect to the 'veil'), the mainstream parties' position is hardly likely to prevail (Joppke 2013). The focusing on the 'challenge of identity' and the question of Islam by leading French conservative politicians, most notably Nicolas Sarkozy, in preparation for the presidential election of 2017, might well prove indicative of things to come given the particularly strong competitive position of the French populist radical right under Marine Le Pen (de Villiers 2016; Fillon 2016; Sarkozy 2016). With popular bestselling commentators, like the French 'polemicist' and former TV presenter Eric Zemmour (2016), conjuring up images of a coming civil war in Europe, and nativist movements and parties evoking the spectre of the 'great replacement' and 'Eurabia', Islamophobia (in the true sense of the word) is likely to prevail in Western liberal democracies for the foreseeable future, continuously fuelling a moral panic that provides fertile ground for populist mobilisation by nativist political entrepreneurs.

The appeal of anti-Islamic nativism opens up new opportunities to analyse a number of aspects of populism that have so far been neglected. The role of emotions in populist mobilisation is prominent among them. Nativist entrepreneurs have proven to be highly effective in arousing and appealing to a range of passions – from fear to anger, indignation and resentment. Passions, as Michael Walzer has noted, are central to theoretical debates about identity politics and nationalism, yet often 'hidden' (Walzer 2002, 617). Identity politics, as we have seen, lies at the very heart of the contemporary nativist agenda. Anti-Islamic nativism provides fertile ground for research which explores the emotive mechanisms that inform successful populist mobilisation. The growing importance of identity as a salient political issue is intimately tied in with globalisation. One of the most striking cultural manifestations of globalisation has been the weakening of traditional territorially grounded identities in favour of new trans-territorial ones associated with migration (Vertovec 2001). From this perspective, the nativist right's preoccupation with the question of Islam and of identity (national or Western) in general follows a certain logic. So far, studies that link populism and globalisation have largely focused on economic issues, such as the impact of de-localisation on unskilled labour and the impact of migration on the welfare state. The integration of culture and emotions into a comprehensive theoretical framework sensitive to the socio-economic and socio-cultural impact of globalisation is bound to enhance our understanding of contemporary right-wing populism.

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[3] The Austrian Chancellor Christian Kern in Kahlweit (2016).

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CHAPTER 32:

POPULISM AND LAW

Manuel Anselmi, Paul Blokker and Oscar Mazzoleni

Introduction

Although research on populism and how it relates to judicial institutions and the rule of law is a marginal concern in political science and sociology, there is a growing awareness that these themes are becoming crucial for the future of democratic regimes. In Europe, but also in the US and other countries, constitutional law, the judicial system, and its rules and actors are facing populist contestation. In the European Union, Hungary and Poland are increasingly undermining the doctrines of the separation of powers and judicial independence. In the US, President Trump's administration often struggled with the judicial system on a range of issues, including immigration and border policies. Trump also vocally contested the 2020 presidential election, describes it as corrupt and sought to circumvent the rule of law in order to stay in power.

In general, one might argue that constitutionalism, law and the justice system deal with some of the core dimensions of populism. For many scholars, populism is a form of attack on pluralism and is supportive of majoritarianism (e.g. Urbinati 2019). It embodies criticism of the elites in the name of the people. In research literature on populism, the elites in question are usually members of the political establishment. However, as an ideology, discourse or style, populism addresses a variety of elites, including journalists, intellectuals, experts and members of the judicial system (Mazzoleni and Voerman 2020; Merkley 2020; Panarari 2020). Judicial elites are framed as being detached from the people and unable to promote justice in line with the people's true interests. This does not mean that populists do not care about the judiciary and that they never respect judicial decisions, but they want the latter to reflect the will of the people. Thus the opposition between the power of the people and the rule of law becomes further entrenched.

This chapter's main objective is to present an up-to-date overview of existing literature on this topic, with particular attention paid to three domains: The first regards constitutionalism and the rule of law. The relationship between constitutional democracy and populism is scrutinised based on both theoretical reflections and empirical analysis (Mudde 2013; Müller 2018; Blokker 2020a). The second aspect is the relationship between politicians, parties and citizens, and judicial power in the context of the so-called judicialisation of politics (e.g. Hirschl 2011). The third aspect is the specific dimension of 'law and order', in particular criminal law, in which a distinctive emphasis is placed on the concepts of populist punitiveness and penal populism as framed by criminologists. The chapter is organised on the basis of these three aspects and highlights contributions from political science, sociology, constitutional law and criminology.

Constitutionalism and Liberal Democracy

The relationship between populism and constitutionalism is an extensively debated and critical topic. Since it has recently been framed almost exclusively by constitutionalist theorists and philosophers, a normatively oriented approach has become widespread. Most contributions tend to view populism as antithetical to constitutional democracy (see, Müller 2016; Halmai 2017; Landau 2018; Müller 2018; Scheppele 2018; Dixon 2019; Roznai and Hostovsky Brandes 2020) and a factor eroding the idea and fundamentals of constitutionalism. This approach to populism is grounded in a normative and distinctive, deductive understanding of constitutionalism – that is, grounded in liberalism and liberal theory in general and liberal legalism in particular. In this approach, populism is considered a clear threat to liberal, constitutional democracy, and the approach raises important and genuine concerns about the potential erosion of, among others, civic and political rights, judicial independence, the separation of powers and political pluralism, especially in democracies where populists wield major influence either on or inside the government. The emphasis in this section is on the relationship between populism and constitutional norms, on the one hand, and constitutions *in toto*, on the other hand. This includes the constitutional politics of populists, which relates to constitutional amendment and constitutional replacement, as well as unconstitutional behaviour by populists. In some of its dimensions, the constitutional politics of populists touches on the basic dimensions of constitutions, that is, populist politics affects the fundamental rules of democracy and, in some cases, even leads to a transformation of the constitution, thus invoking so-called *constituent power*. The emphasis will be less on the dimensions of ordinary politics and policymaking, which is the subject of the following section. It should be noted here, however, that the general direction of populist politics is to reduce the difference between constitutions as higher law and policymaking as an expression of political majorities.

In much of the recent, normative literature, populism is understood as a political manifestation that erodes or negates – or at the very least threatens – constitutional democracy. Populists are seen as impatient with procedures and institutions and loath towards intermediary bodies as they prefer an unmediated relationship between the populist ruling party and the people. In other words, populists prefer direct ‘natural’ or ‘pure’ forms of politics instead of indirect and artificial ones (Urbinati 1998, 111). Constitutional norms, in particular those hindering majoritarian politics, as in the form of a judicial review, are viewed with suspicion. In Wojciech Sadurski’s words, ‘[p]opulist regimes are impatient with freedom of speech for minorities […] they dislike slow, patient deliberation in parliaments, preferring a “winner-takes-all” plebiscitary model of politics, under which the leader (usually a charismatic leader) obtains a carte blanche for the period of his or her parliamentary or presidential term’ (Sadurski 2020, 8). According to many observers, this means that constitutionalism stands in stark contrast to populism. In the view of Gabor Halmai, ‘[t]hose who perceive democracy as liberal by definition also claim that populism is inherently hostile to values associated with constitutionalism: checks and balances, constraints on the will of the majority, fundamental rights, and protections for minorities’ (Halmai 2017, 8–9). In Halmai’s opinion, the term ‘populist constitutionalism’ – like ‘illiberal’ or ‘authoritarian constitutionalism’ – is an oxymoron, in that constitutionalism refers to the ‘legally limited power of the government’, and populist (just like allegedly illiberal or authoritarian) versions fail to live up to the ‘requirements of constitutionalism’ (ibid., 9).

The anti-populist position, which tends to understand the relation between populism and constitutionalism as an anti-thesis, ultimately builds on a rather distinctive understanding of constitutionalism, that is, the post–Second World War paradigm of constitutionalism or 'legal constitutionalism' (Gyorfi 2016; Sajó and Uitz 2017, 9). This understanding regards constitutionalism more distinctively as an anti-totalitarian project that aims to safeguard representative, liberal democracy from radical threats from both left-wing and right-wing forces. The concerns of such 'anti-populist' positions are legitimate and real: Many established constitutional democracies are facing strong pressure (the US, the UK), while more recently established democracies, such as Hungary and Poland, are turning against the anti-totalitarian project (as also embodied by the European Union) and constructing alternative, self-identified 'illiberal democratic' systems (Drinóczi and Bień-Kacała 2019). However, the anti-populist scholarly account has three major problems. First of all, it tends to regard legal forms of constitutionalism, with an emphasis on the judicialisation of politics (see below), as the only historically available manifestation of constitutionalism, which is a highly debatable claim. Second, it often conflates populism with (radical) right-wing, conservative populism, while largely ignoring major differences between populist parties, populist political projects and distinctive societal contexts. Third, the anti-populists are inclined to endorse a normative understanding of legal constitutionalism, which does not particularly seek to engage with and analyse the potential problems and tensions inherent in such a model.

Comparative empirical perspectives contrast the normative view with a more analytical and empirically driven focus. Comparative approaches usually highlight the varieties of both constitutionalism and populism that can be observed and acknowledge the intrinsic problems of liberal constitutionalism and liberal democracy (Kaltwasser 2013; Isaac 2016; Alterio 2019; Arato 2019; Blokker 2019; Bugaric and Tushnet 2020; Koch 2020), such as the 'democratic deficit' and the 'welfare deficit' (Arato 2019). Hence, in this approach, the complexity of the relation between populism and constitutions is made explicit and addressed with an analytical commitment that is sensitive to historical and contextual differences. In this regard, comparative analytical approaches acknowledge that constitutionalism (and not only populism) is a contested phenomenon and that populism frequently engages in criticism of the allegedly hegemonic liberal, legalistic understanding of constitutionalism. Comparative perspectives emphasise that populism as a phenomenon manifests itself in a variety of ways, displaying diverse guises depending on distinctive ideological (i.e. left-wing or right-wing) positions but also showing variety in terms of its positioning of characteristic issues, such as sovereignty, the definition of the political community or relations to constituent power (i.e. the sovereign power to make significant changes to the constitution). Comparative empirical approaches attempt to offer an empirically grounded and nuanced take. Despite the threat against liberal constitutional democracy in many countries, such approaches hold that it is equally important to detect and reveal specific in-built tensions in the post-war legal–constitutional project (Alterio 2019; Koch 2020). Such insights might shed light on the thrust and mobilising force of the current wave of populist 'counter-constitutionalism' and – rather than re-proposing an unlikely return to the *status quo ex ante* – may help us to think in more fruitful and innovative ways about constitutional democracy.

Comparative empirical approaches are still emerging, but important contributions can be identified and include the following dimensions. First, there is an acknowledgement of the important differences between manifestations of populism. Alterio, for instance, distinguishes between different forms of the constitutionalisation of populist politics by emphasising differences in the form (top-down or bottom-up) and the substance of constitutional reforms enacted by populists, as well as distinctive attitudes of populists (Alterio 2019, 276–9). Koch distinguishes between ideological orientations (inclusionary versus exclusionary; cosmopolitan versus communitarian; left versus right) and types of populist contestation in his discussion of 'global constitutionalism' (Koch 2020). Second, populism manifests itself at different stages, ranging from a form's bottom-up mobilisation to organised movements, governmental participation, populist governments and populist regimes (Arato 2019). The state in which the populist manifestation finds itself has important implications for its relationship to constitutionalism and constituent power. Third, some approaches put the comparative dimension to use in both a synchronic and a diachronic sense by studying populist phenomena over time within singular societies or contexts. The case of Italy is of great interest in this respect in that it has experienced not only populism-in-government for longer than many of its peers elsewhere in Europe but also a variety of dissimilar manifestations (Martinico 2021). Moreover, the emergence of populism in Italy coincided with a prolonged 'season of constitutional reform' (Blokker 2020b).

Politicisation of the Judiciary

A second strand of the literature on populism, predominantly produced by political scientists, emphasises how political actors' and citizens' interests deal with constituent power, ordinary laws, courts and judges. These issues are related, directly or indirectly, to the so-called judicialisation of politics. In the past few decades, constitutional courts have become increasingly powerful in almost all democratic regimes (Stone Sweet 1999a; 1999b; 2000; Hirschl 2004; Landfried 2019). This implies an increasing role of the judiciary in interpreting (ordinary) law, with implications for many policy areas relating to religious freedom, equal rights, privacy, reproductive freedom, criminal justice, property, trade and commerce, education, immigration, labour and environmental protection (Hirschl 2011, 253–254; see also Hirschl 2004a, 103–18). The expanding role of the judiciary in fixing political conflicts implies a process of depoliticisation, that is, placing a limit on the power of the government and parliament. However, this 'judicial activism' does not go unchallenged, which creates tension between the judicialisation of politics and the politicisation of the judiciary. The role of populism is relevant in different ways, as is identified by the literature on this subject. First of all, scholars in comparative studies have pointed to the relationship between governmental policymaking and the rule of law once political parties become part of government (Maravall and Przeworski 2003; Morlino and Palombella 2010) and when politicians try to become more independent from the judicial system, for instance once penal legislation is at stake (Weingast 1997; Maravall 2003). Secondly, scholars underline the role of populist rhetoric in governments' retreat from the jurisdiction of international human rights courts (Voeten 2020). This line of research also addresses conflicts concerning the power of judges at EU level in specific domestic arenas, especially in Central and East European democracies (Castillo-Ortiz 2015a; Pócza 2018). In addition, and more in general, debates in international law now focus on how populists frequently mobilise against international institutions, international legal (human rights) regimes and global elites in the name of the common people, claiming that globalism and cosmopolitan forces are too distant from the common people, do not have a democratic mandate and engage in abstract, technocratic governance in the name of the international elites themselves, ignoring the common people's or nation's problems (Koskenniemi 2019; Krieger 2019; Thornhill 2020).

In a related way, the tension with the judiciary – in both domestic and international arenas – has focused on movements which assert that judges are 'judicial activists' lacking independence and neutrality (e.g. Engel 2011; Shapiro 2019). This is particularly the case in those instances where constitutional courts have been summoned to decide on the future of political leaders, for example in relation to impeachment or disqualification trials, which has happened in several countries in recent decades (Hischl 2011). Simultaneously, some politicians try to delegitimise judges by branding them as 'partisan' (Guarnieri 1995). Overall, attempts to delegitimise the judiciary are influenced by the argument that judges are 'unelected, unaccountable' elites. In recent years, theoretical discussions and empirical assessments of these phenomena have emerged, both in terms of research on particular cases, especially the US, and regarding comparative analysis (Russell and O'Brien 2001; Clark 2012). A complementary strand in the literature on this subject focuses on the legitimacy, effectiveness and independence of courts and trials. In this regard, scholars in political and law studies have analysed judicial elections by citizens and examined the impact of such processes, especially in terms of the respect for minority rights (Dubois 1988; Lewis, Wood and Jacobsmeier 2014) but also regarding the public's perception and assessment of judges and the judiciary in European democracies (Castillo-Ortiz 2015b; Navarrete and Castillo-Ortiz 2020) and in the US (Kessel 1966; Caldeiry 1991; Olson and Huth 1998; Ura and Higgins Merrill 2017; Krewson 2018). All these strands of literature show how the (re-)politicisation of the judiciary presents a window of opportunity to different kinds of populists in contemporary democracies.

Punitivism and Penal Populism

One angle from which to assess the populist impact on judicial power is to focus on law-and-order and criminal justice issues. Unfortunately, political science and sociology have rarely considered law-and-order policies in a systematic way (but see Wenzelburger 2014; 2020). There is also a lack of analysis of the role of populist parties, especially those with a right-wing ideology, in influencing law-and-order policies. Moreover, the only comparative analyses that are available focus on Western democracies (Wenzelburger and König 2019). At the same time, because of the large-scale spread of forms of political populism, especially in its right-wing form (Moffitt 2016; de la Torre 2018), attention to populism's relationship with criminal and penal issues has increased in recent years. However, it is criminologists who provide the most relevant insights, thanks to their specific interest in punitive criminal policies.

From a sociological perspective, influential scholars have analysed the rising crime rate and the shift towards a repressive and exclusionary culture of crime and punitive justice, as witnessed by many Western countries from the 1970s onwards (Garland 2001; Monterosso 2009). These changes have led to new politicised forms of justice and crime (Lacey 2008, 22). This has taken place on various levels: the media, with the effects of spectacularisation and the manipulation of public opinion (Mason 2006); political communication, which has generated a central focus on law-and-order issues, thereby reinforcing the idea that crime should merely be repressed rather than comprehensively tackled through rehabilitation policies (Simon 2007); and the promotion of policies enhancing mass incarceration (Bottoms, Rex and Robinson 2004) and the criminalisation of social minorities (Monterosso 2009). These punitive tendencies have been conceptualised not only as 'popular punitivism', which 'commonly refers to how "tough-on-crime" efforts are the result of an intersection between politics, public sentiment, and the media's portrayal of crime' (Campbell 2015, 181), but also as 'populist punitiveness' and 'penal populism'.

Antony Bottoms' concept of populist punitiveness refers to the increase in the number of 'politicians tapping into, and using for their own purposes, what they believe to be the public's generally punitive stance' (Bottoms 1995, 40; see also Anastasia and Anselmi 2018). Some doubts have been raised about the claim that the Western public univocally supports harsher punishments (Hutton 2015). Nonetheless, election campaigns frequently see the endorsement of an instrumental use of justice and the penal system, as well as tougher sentences and criminal policy. This reveals a tendency towards 'a disproportionate use of sanctions and consequently a deviation from the principle of proportionality' (Matthews 2005, 179), which enables 'governing through crime' (Simon 2007). From this perspective, other authors have introduced the concept of penal populism. Julian Roberts and colleagues call penal populists those who 'allow the electoral advantage of a policy to take precedence over its penal effectiveness' (Roberts et al. 2003, 3). Daniel Salas defines penal populism as 'a discourse that is characterised by a call to punish in the name of the victims' (Salas 2005). For his part, John Pratt has a broader theory of penal populism. Focusing especially on the case of New Zealand, Pratt also includes the role of political parties in his analysis to show how the decline in public confidence in the country's traditional left and right parties in the early 1990s led to the spread of the populist far-right New Zealand First Party (NZ First). This decline was accompanied by the spread of penal populism, not only during election campaigns but also in governmental policies (Pratt and Clark 2005).

According to Pratt (2007), penal populism has three main characteristics that contribute to increasing punitive trends in policymaking. First of all, with glamourisation, as a communication style, penal populism expresses an altered modality aimed at achieving a pleasant sense effect through the representation of criminal facts and events, in particular trials, often by using the mass media. In recent years, there have been mass media programmes based on the spectacularisation and dramatisation of real facts where the public is often involved in resolving or attempting to resolve cases. As it is presented, the criminal fact is cloaked in a media appeal (glamour) aimed at satisfying the user/spectator according to a narrative of a more fictional than a real phenomenon. Secondly, penal populism entails forms of de-statisticalisation in rhetorical discourse. This expression indicates the characteristic of a systematic disregard for any reference to real statistical data and any concrete reference to crimes in the public and political debate on justice. De-statisticalisation uses social *clichés* and widespread beliefs, and it shapes the frame of justice discourses in the public debate through emotion and fear. Third, penal populism embraces punitive judicial goals by appealing for restorative and reparative penalties. The goal is to produce verdicts with restorative aims rather than the reintegration and recovery of the transgressor. Violating the norm is conceived as an injury inflicted on the community, and the penalty must correspond to a certain form of social reparation. In this logic, one of the foundations of the Western legal order is lost: the re-educational purpose of a penalty.

Conclusion

By discussing the emerging literature on this subject, this chapter highlighted the relationship between populism and law. It showed how the topic of populism and law implies a large set of themes and a multidisciplinary commitment involving a variety of approaches, including political theory, constitutional law, political science, political sociology and criminology. Under pressure from the increasing success of populist leaders and parties, especially once they prevail in government and policymaking, the debate on populism, the rule of law and constitutionalism is rapidly expanding and reflects a kind of 'reality check' of liberal legal models, liberal constitutionalism and representative democracy. In response to populism's different forms and strengths, an in-depth comparative work can usefully underline the role of contextual and historical dimensions.

Recent emerging topics in law and justice also open up new opportunities in terms of a research agenda. First, a crucial and rapidly expanding collection of literature deals with the sociological and imaginary dimensions of constitutions and constitutionalism. It emphasises how perceptions of law and constitutionalism are embedded in deep-seated societal understandings that are now being called into question, not least by a populist contrary set of ideas (Ezrahi 2012; Priban 2018; Oklopcic 2019). Second, there is a very interesting set of issues regarding authoritarian constitutionalism and illiberalism (Zakaria 1997; Ginsburg and Simpser 2013; Tushnet 2014; Jeffrey 2017), constitutional mobilisation (Bui 2018; 2019), and more generally judicial resistance and 'lawfare' (Prendergast 2019). The latter reflects societal, judicial and academic actors' resistance to populist and authoritarian 'reforms' or 'abuse' of constitutional orders. Third, perhaps the most promising ongoing debate concerns the relationship between populism, on the one hand, and international and transnational law, on the other hand (Koskenniemi 2019; Krieger 2019; Thornhill 2020).

Such new orientations may shed new light on populism's relation to constitutionalism, the judiciary and law-and-order issues. As discussed, the recent literature in political science and political sociology places particular emphasis on the criticism of the judicialisation of politics and the (excessive) power of independent courts *vis-à-vis* political institutions. However, many of the studies focusing on the role of political parties and citizens leave an important question unanswered: To what extent are sceptical views towards the judiciary and constitutional rules specifically led by populist rhetoric or include a broader group of actors, including mainstream parties and leaders. On the specific topic of criminal issues, it is worth mentioning the contribution of criminologists, who have developed the concept of populism in relation to punitiveness and penal sanctioning. As the concepts of populist punitiveness and penal populism are not yet part of populism-oriented scholarship in sociology and political science, integration would be heuristically useful. This could include, for instance, a focus on how emotion and fear are transformed into political weapons in right-wing discourse (e.g. Wodak 2020). In this respect, several crucial questions arise: To what extent does the success of right-wing populist parties and leaders stem from their law-and-order strategies? And how might the crisis of the rule of law and trends towards punitiveness be a condition for and a consequence of their success (Lacey 2019)? Generally speaking, although many so-called populist parties and leaders have been framed as anti-immigrant and nativist, perhaps their strategies over the judiciary, constitutional law and crime have been underestimated (Todd-Kvam 2019), given how right-wing populist movements have managed to frame immigration as not only a cultural and economic but also a criminal threat (Ackermann and Furman 2014).

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CHAPTER 33:

POPULISM AND CLIMATE CHANGE: A MATCH MADE IN HEAVEN?

Robert A. Huber

On the Challenges of Researching the Nexus of Populism and Climate Change

Climate change is one of the most pressing issues we face. Strong scholarly evidence suggests that we are about to fail climate change mitigation and steer towards substantially more than 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels (Masson-Delmotte 2018). Despite this strong pressure to act on climate change, even often cited progress, like the Paris Accord, faces massive criticism in terms of their capability to achieve the 1.5 degree target (Rogelj et al. 2016). While there are various reasons for these concerns, one frequently cited backlash against climate and energy policy are populist forces. Two prominent examples are the Gilet Jaunes and Donald J. Trump's presidency. The former is a protest movement against far-reaching climate measures in France, and populism is often the rationale for their uprising (Financial Times 2018b; Huber and Wicki 2021). The United States' withdrawal from the Paris Agreement is often attributed to Trump's populist positions (Financial Times 2018a). However, both examples already indicate substantial problems that haunt research literature in this respect. *What is it about populism that creates tension between populism and climate change? To what extent is this a function of political ideology, material interest or genuine populism?* Much of the Gilet Jaunes' protest is rooted in material interests, and once policies were changed or abandoned, the protests decreased in size (Chrisafis 2019). Regarding Trump's position, one may be similarly inclined to infer that his opposition is rooted in right-wing ideology, coupled with the strong pressure from his domestic constituency. Against this backdrop of competing explanations, Bart Bonikowski (2017, 182) reminds us that:

> the casual use of populism as an analytical category risks misunderstanding what populism is – thereby inhibiting the ability to recognize the phenomenon's causes and consequences – and downplaying the other co-constitutive elements of radical-right politics, particularly ethno-nationalism and authoritarianism.

This chapter defines populism in line with the ideational approach. Populism is a set of ideas. In this view, populism contains at least two defining sub-dimensions: anti-elitism and people-centrism. The former denotes that populists oppose particular elites. Depending on ideological leanings, those elites are not only politicians and liberal elites, but also potentially business elites or even scholars (Mede and Schäfer 2020). People-centrism refers to populists' perception of the people as upright, honest and good. As a consequence of these two dimensions, populists would generally claim that the elite betrays the good people. Populists do so in a black and white Manichean fashion. While other definitions of populism exist, this definition has the most analytical value *across* different levels of aggregation. Defining populism as a style (Moffitt and Tormey 2014), for example, would not allow an understanding of populism's relationship with climate attitudes on an individual level. In what follows, I will come back several times to this definition to assess whether conclusions on populism actually reflect the content of what populism is. Analytical clarity is essential to correctly attribute what is (and is not) caused by populism. This clarity is even more important in order to mitigate the (potentially) negative effects of populism in the realm of climate policy. If policymakers cannot correctly pinpoint their response to climate scepticism, their responses are likely to fail (for a similar argument, see Beiser-McGrath and Huber 2018). In this chapter, I address these concerns and discuss the most pressing issues in the study of populism and climate change. I start by providing an overview of the current state of affairs in the literature on populism and climate change. After critically reflecting on that research, I identify gaps in the literature and provide explicit ways forward before I conclude.

Literature Review

While the literature on populism and the climate is still in its infancy, several researchers have left a mark on and provided first insights into how populism relates to climate change. I discuss this literature in the subsequent sections. This review is structured into three segments: theoretical work, party-level work and individual-level work. I summarise this work and highlight gaps in the literature. In the next chapter, I discuss ways forward for this literature.

Theoretical Work

Probably one of the most prominent publications on populism and the climate is Matthew Lockwood's (2018) article in *Environmental Politics*. Focusing on right-wing populist parties, Lockwood puts forward two causal mechanisms that could explain right-wing populists' opposition to climate change policy. The 'structural' approach concentrates on who right-wing populist parties usually represent. Lockwood argues that typical right-wing populist parties tend to represent low-skilled manufacturing workers. Climate policies particularly endanger these sectors and, thus, the workers in them. Therefore, parties that represent these sectors should be particularly opposed to climate action. This approach neatly adds to the extant literature on how economic aspects affect climate positions (Kachi et al. 2015). One may criticise that this mechanism is not genuinely about populism but rather about who they represent (Pitkin 1967). Lockwood's second mechanism is not prone to such criticism. The 'ideational' argument focuses on the ideological content of the combination of right-wing ideology and populism. Here, Lockwood puts forward arguments regarding the central actor in climate action: elites. He argues that right-wing populists might oppose climate action because they distrust the cosmopolitan liberal elites at the core of climate action. Much of the subsequent literature builds on this seminal contribution. Fraune and Knodt (2018) edited a special issue in *Energy Research and Social Science* dedicated to populism. In their framework, they provide an additional causal mechanism that links populism and climate change: a post-truth (or anti-science) world view. While most of the issue's chapters only loosely follow conventional definitions of populism, they provide an alternative perspective on the issue at hand.

Party-Level and Elite-Level Work

A growing collection of literature has emerged which focuses on party positions, rhetoric but also governmental action by populist parties. Forchtner and Kølvraa (2015) investigate which positions populist radical right parties (RRPPs) adopt on environmental issues. They argue for distinguishing between environmental protection and climate change. The former is easily consistent with right-wing populist parties' nativist and nationalist outlooks. Protecting the countryside and landscape is embedded in their national world view, which ultimately leads to them '*epitomizing the nation's beauty, harmony and purity over which the people are sovereign*' (Forchtner and Kølvraa 2015, 199). In contrast, climate change is perceived to be more transnational and incompatible with these parties' nativism and nationalism. Working from this argument, both would expect right-wing populist parties to support environmental protection but oppose climate change. According to the authors, the differences between the two concepts might seem logically inconsistent but reflect how nativism and nationalism affect party positions. Analysing the British National Party (BNP) and the Danish People's Party (Dansk Folkeparti, DF), the authors find substantial support for this argument.

In their excellent study, Ćetković and Hagemann (2020) argue that – once in government – RRPPs oppose low-carbon energy, particularly if public concern and international regimes do not exert notable pressure and if they control relevant ministries (which grants them the power to implement policies). However, populist radical right-wing parties will not undermine climate policy if mainstream parties can form governments with social liberal or green parties. If mainstream parties have the option to form coalitions with their alternative partners, they can put pressure on RRPPs not to undermine climate policy. Investigating six European countries (namely, Austria, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden) from 2008 to 2018, the authors find limited adverse effects of RRPPs. While they observe the negative influence of such parties in Denmark, the Netherlands and Norway, increased domestic and international pressure limited their impact on the topic. Partly, this lack of impact may be attributed to these parties' junior partner roles and the lack of the topic's salience for their voters. While PRRPs might oppose climate action, they may not mobilise against it when other issues, such as immigration, are more prominent. Finally, they might even foster climate policy unintentionally. Ćetković and Hagemann (2020) suggest that PRRPs' opposition to climate policy might induce polarisation in the political arena, which could mobilise pro-environmental actors.[1]

Żuk and Szulecki (2020) distil the core content of populist climate and energy discourse by analysing Law and Justice (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, PiS) and the right-wing pro-government media in Poland. Using a more explorative approach, the authors convincingly demonstrate how the PiS's energy and climate discourse has distinct features. The PiS relies heavily on anti-elitism and conspiracy thinking to refute claims that energy and climate politics are mandatory and important. Particularly given the strong coal industry in Poland, the PiS pits the 'evil' European Union against Poland's good national treasures and people. Thereby, the party emphasises fairness considerations in the process of energy transition to water down far-reaching climate and environmental policies. This 'just transition' debate, however, does not extend beyond the domestic arena; the PiS rejects international commitments. While the discourse is clearly populist, nationalism plays a decisive role in the PiS's behaviour.

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[1] Studies on populism and other issues make similar arguments on indirect effects in this respect, see e.g. the Chapter by Huber and Schimpf in this volume.

Following in Ćetković and Hagemann's footsteps and taking up lessons from Żuk and Szulecki, Huber and colleagues (2021) also investigate energy and climate discourse, policy positions and the actions of six populist parties. However, their starting point substantially differs from previous work as much of the literature discussed in this sub-chapter focuses exclusively on the populist radical right. Underscoring Huber's (2020 see below) criticism of the literature, Huber et al. (2021) make the underlying variation in the host ideologies of populist parties explicit and assess whether populism or the parties' ideologies shape their climate discourse, policy positions and policy actions. Given the extensive literature on political ideology and its relevance for climate and environmental positions (Neumayer 2004; McCright et al. 2016), being able to understand whether right-wing populist parties oppose climate change because of their ideology or populism is critical to understanding how populism relates to climate change politics more generally, particularly because some evidence suggests that social dominance and authoritarianism (Jylhä and Hellmer 2020) are important predictors of climate change attitudes. At the same time, evidence from the US in particular emphasises the economic implications of ideological leanings; in essence, right-wingers oppose climate action because they oppose state interventions in the market (McCright and Dunlap 2003).

Consequently, the authors focus on three established types of populist parties. Right-wing populists combine a populist world view with nativist and authoritarian tendencies (Mudde 2007), thereby constructing the people in cultural terms. Some of these parties additionally adopt pro-market positions (Kitschelt and McGann 1995; Zulianello 2020). Left-wing populist parties emphasise economic inequalities in their definition of the people. Finally, valence populists lack a clear ideological position and mainly rely on their populist appeal to campaign (Havlík and Voda 2018; Zulianello 2020). The authors criticise the lack of cross-ideology comparisons of populist parties. To this end, they explore the extent to which the parties vary in their climate discourse, policy positions and actions. Particularly, they focus on the extent to which variation in these dimensions is a function of populism and ideology. The empirical evidence stems from six European countries (namely, Austria, the Czech Republic, Greece, Italy, Poland, and Spain) and the respective populist parties in these countries (Austrian Freedom Party, FPÖ; Action of Dissatisfied Citizens, ANO; Coalition of the Radical Left – Progressive Alliance, SYRIZA; Five Star Movement, M5S; Law and Justice, PiS; Podemos).

Interestingly, the data suggests large variation both in whether parties use populist discourse in their climate discourse and their policy positions and actions. Generally, the evidence on the right-wing populist parties is consistent with the aforementioned studies. Those parties utilise populism and nationalism to justify their climate positions and tend to threaten far-reaching climate policies. However, even for these parties, there is some variation in the extent to which they use populism (high for the FPÖ, somewhat high for the PiS). On the other hand, M5S and both left-wing populist parties are more positive when it comes to energy and climate policy. There is substantial variation in their actions (mainly induced by government participation) and the extent to which parties utilise populism to justify their positions and actions. SYRIZA is ambitious in its climate positions but not in its actions. This lack of policy output is mainly a function of the burden of government and Greece's economic circumstances. Podemos and M5S strongly rely on populism to proclaim pro-environmental positions.

While not strictly on a party level, MacArthur and Matthewman (2018) follow Laclau's definition of populism by focusing on identity (Laclau 2007) and investigate the role of social identity (which they label populism) in New Zealand's energy transition debate. In their view, identity induces different perceptions which materialise in the conflict over the decentralisation and globalisation of energy transition. Thereby, identity substantially matters for the feasibility of energy transition. Barry, Ellis and Robinson (2008) explore the rhetoric surrounding the renewable energy debates in the UK. While not focusing on populism specifically, their findings provide important insights into how populism is utilised to undermine or foster environmental positions. According to the impeccable empirical evidence, the 'anti-wind energy positions also present themselves as defending democracy, often along populist lines of the "people's democracy" needing to be protected from the pervasive influence of non-elected, non-local corporate and bureaucratic elites and special business and environmental interest groups' (Barry et al. 2008, 78).

In the same vein, Zulianello and Ceccobelli (2020) confront existing claims that the Fridays for Future movement is essentially populist. Those who label the movement populist claim that a populist-style discourse is the best way forward for the movement (Beeson 2019) or argue that Greta Thunberg has explicitly redefined a new 'people' by putting forward populist demands (Ruitenberg 2020, 561–562). Using a similar definition of populism as that proposed here, the authors demonstrate that the movement does not rely on people-centrism, anti-elitism or references to a *vox populi*. Rather, the movement is characterised by ecocentrism, technocracy and *vox scientifica*. All these three dimensions directly contradict a populist world view. Thereby, Zulianello and Ceccobelli plausibly emphasise why populists tend to oppose the Fridays for Future movement (and do not support it). The findings of Barry et al. (2008) and Zulianello and Ceccobelli (2020) suggest that environmental politics generally suffers from certain elitism, which allows populists to mobilise against it (see also Morrison and Dunlap 1986). Particularly, this branch of work establishes the extent to which the current climate movement is perceived to be elitist, an important characteristic for individual-level work on populism and climate.

Individual-Level Work

Combining both elite-level and individual-level evidence, Kammermann and Dermont (2018) assess how elites and citizens think about climate change. Thereby, they aim to understand whether populism matters for climate scepticism on an elite and citizen level. By and large, the authors find that partisanship is the central aspect that explains why elites object to climate change. Particularly, the populist Swiss People's Party (Schweizerische Volkspartei, SVP) is the only major opposition to far-reaching climate policy, which is clearly a function of its pro-business positions. Individuals, in return, react to the influence of the elite. Particularly, elites with ties to industry that are climate sceptics utilise this influence to suppress public pressure. According to the authors, the element of populism is key in this respect, given how elites and citizens interact. Batel and Devine-Wright (2018) investigate the role of populism in public beliefs on energy issues. Particularly, the authors operationalise populism through social identity. They distinguish between regional, national and European identities. According to the authors, energy transition policies might induce intergroup tensions, and thereby identity becomes a potential barrier for far-reaching energy policies. They additionally emphasise that the level of policies' implementation plays an important role in the acceptability of those policies. Europe-wide policies are more likely to be acceptable to individuals with a strong European identity.

Mainly building on Lockwood's work, Huber (2020) assesses whether populism relates to climate and environmental attitudes in the UK. He particularly focuses on disentangling ideology and populism. Proposing an ideational argument, Huber argues that climate and environmental politics' nature makes them ideal targets for populists. Populists oppose climate politics because climate change is cognitively distant, temporally vague, international and mainly communicated through a top-down elite-driven discourse. This nature also invites conspiracy theories, something that populists are quite prone to (Castanho Silva et al. 2017; Fraune and Knodt 2018). This evidence stems from the British Election Study and allows us to explicitly assess whether an individual-level measure of populism, i.e. populist attitudes, actually drive climate attitudes. The evidence suggests that populism adds a novel (and orthogonal) dimension to political ideology. In follow-up work, Huber, Fesenfeld and Bernauer (2020) combine observational and experimental evidence to assess how populist attitudes relate to climate attitudes and whether populist discourse causally affects these attitudes. The survey data and the correlation of populist attitudes and climate attitudes indicate that this relationship is highly conditional on partisanship in the US.

In contrast, the role of polarisation is much more limited in the UK which explains why partisanship is less relevant for Huber (2020). In the US, a context with strong polarisation between Democrats and Republicans, populist attitudes amplify the effects of partisanship on climate attitudes. Democratic populists are more pro-climate than non-populist democrats, whereas for Republicans we see that populism is increasing scepticism about climate change. This clearly taps into how populism constructs good (the people) and evil (the elites). Their experimental evidence is strongly rooted in arguments on the activation of populist attitudes. According to the literature which addresses these arguments, populists particularly react to responsiveness and the lack thereof. If political elites are perceived to be detached from citizens, populists would react negatively to this (Busby et al. 2019). Treating individuals on whether elites are responsive or not, and in general or in the realm of climate politics, the authors find the effects of the treatments are limited. However, there is some evidence that responsiveness could mitigate the adverse effects of a populist predisposition.

Jylhä and Hellmer (2020) investigate the role of anti-establishment and right-wing authoritarian attitudes on climate denial and find little support for the relationship. Using a sample of Swedish students, structural equation models suggest that the correlation of populist attitudes (captured by anti-establishment sentiments) vanishes, as soon as we control for exclusionism, right-wing authoritarianism and social dominance orientation. While not explicitly discussed, the results could indicate that populist attitudes may affect climate attitudes indirectly through other variables. This issue directly relates to an additional study investigating the causal ways in which populism and climate attitudes might relate. Huber, Eberl and Greussing (2020) investigate two causal mechanisms: through institutional trust and science attitudes. Utilising high-quality survey data from Austria and structural equation models, they find that populists' climate scepticism is mostly rooted in their anti-science stances (see also Mede and Schäfer 2020). Thereby, they provide additional evidence and specific tests of two common mechanisms in the literature on this issue. To summarise, research has taken major steps in the last five years. Inspired by important theoretical work, the literature on this subject mainly focuses on how right-wing populists relate to climate change on different levels. Few studies additionally tried to disentangle populism and ideology. All in all, this literature establishes core causal mechanisms: attitudes towards elites, scientists and conspiracy theories. I will now discuss the literature's shortcomings and ways in which the nexus of populism and climate change can be researched better.

Shortcomings and Ways Forward

Having summarised the existing literature on populism and climate change, I will now discuss its shortcomings. In the following sections, I identify four shortcomings and how future research should address these problems. I focus on problems of a) the conceptual uncertainty of populism, b) the conflation of populism and political ideology, c) the lack of good data and d) causal inference.

Conceptual Uncertainty

The literature on populism has seen extensive debates on how to define populism. Some authors have defined populism as a strategy (Weyland 2001) and thus focused on the way populist actors structure the movement. While this is a useful definition and has been successfully applied (see, for example, Kenny 2019), it contains no information about the ideological content of populism. This makes it hard to identify causal pathways linking this definition of populism and climate attitudes. Additionally, this definition does not allow populism to be measured on an individual level; it is entirely but solely suited to the party and movement levels. Others have defined populism as a style (Moffitt and Tormey 2014). According to them, populism is best understood by assessing the style of the political leader and they identify the following core features: appeal to 'the people'; crisis, breakdown, threat; and 'bad manners' (Moffitt and Tormey 2014, 381–382). Again, this information tells us fairly little about the content of populism (beyond a particular style) and would not transfer to the individual level. In contrast, the ideational approach, irrespective of whether populism is a discourse (Jagers and Walgrave 2007) or an ideology (Mudde 2004), clearly establishes the ideological content of populism. It contains anti-elitism – that is, opposition to elites – people-centrism – that is, the appraisal of the people as upright and good – and other dimensions, such as a Manichean outlook (see, e.g. Hawkins and Rovira Kaltwasser 2017; 2018) – that is, a black and white world view – or the proclamation of popular sovereignty (see, e.g. Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2013).

From this perspective, it is fairly easy to make clear causal predictions about how populism relates to climate change. As discussed above, climate change has a strong elitist appeal, is cognitively distant and allows for conspiracy theories. Most of the work discussed above is rooted in the ideational approach to populism. Others use populism more casually. Batel and Devine-Wright (2018), for example, use populism as a synonym for nationalist, conservative and identity-driven politics (see also MacArthur and Matthewman 2018). Similarly, Fraune and Knodt (2018) mix a variety of approaches, mostly the ideational approach but also others, e.g. attitudes towards strong leaders, traditional values and anti-pluralism (Norris and Inglehart 2018). This deviation from an ideational approach is not necessarily problematic. However, scholars should invest time to make the role of populism in their argumentation explicit. Definitions have to be clear and causal pathways should relate to the concept, not to co-constituent terms, such as nationalism for right-wing populist parties. Therefore:

Commandment 1: Future research should make the definition of populism explicit and explain how it relates to climate attitudes.

This point is directly linked to the next shortcoming of the literature on populism and climate change, the conflation of political ideology and populism.

The Conflation of Populism and Political Ideology

In relation to the opening quote by Bart Bonikowski in the introduction to this chapter, too often, it is unclear whether the findings are a function of populism or co-constituent ideologies, such as nationalism (for right-wing populists) or economic stances (for left-wing populists). This problem also exists for studies that use an ideational approach. To illustrate, while seminal in and by themselves, Lockwood's (2018) and subsequent studies such as those by Ćetković and Hagemann (2020) or Żuk and Szulecki (2020) focus empirically on right-wing populist parties and actors. They put forward evidence of whether right-wing populist parties are a threat to climate action or not. Similarly, Forchtner and Kølvraa (2015) attribute RRPPs' opposition to climate change entirely to their nationalism. Descriptively speaking, the inference based on the data is perfectly fine. Right-wing populists tend to be a threat for far-reaching climate policy. These conclusions largely fall into what King, Keohane and Verba (1994) call descriptive inference; they describe the world.

The more important question, however, is *why* are they a threat? Is it because these actors have a right-wing ideology? Or is it because they are populist? Or do both dimensions interact? Theoretically, it is fairly clear that populism is not associated with a certain host ideology but can appear either on the left, in the centre or at the right end of the political spectrum (Rooduijn and Akkerman 2017). The focus of the aforementioned studies limits understanding of the extent to which populism and/or political ideology cause opposition to climate change policy. Precisely because of the large literature on political ideology and climate positions (see Dunlap et al. 2001; McCright and Dunlap 2003; Neumayer 2004; McCright et al. 2016; for an overview), it is mandatory to disentangle the two concepts to understand which causal role populism plays in climate positions. This also has practical reasons. Policymakers need to understand the underlying causal mechanisms of why citizens oppose climate change policy. Responses to populism and far-right ideology are potentially quite different.

To this end, we would need to compare populist and non-populist parties across the political spectrum. This is obviously hard for various reasons, most notably due to the lack of good data on party positions. Thus, research comparing populists across political views is scarce. Huber and colleagues address this gap and try to disentangle thick ideology and populism on both an individual and a party level. While their findings are mixed, all these studies suggest that ideology plays a massive role in how populists approach climate action. According to Huber, Fesenfeld and Bernauer (2020), the role of populism is entirely different when assessing Republicans and Democrats in the US. This could indicate that polarisation might matter substantially for populists. Similarly, Huber and colleagues (2021) suggest that left-wing populists support climate and environmental action more and likewise apply populist rhetoric to justify these positions, which is in line with Barry et al. (2008)'s argument. At the same time, it is likely that there is variation within ideologies. For example, Zulianello (2020) emphasises substantial differences in right-wing populists, ranging from neo-liberal to RRPPs. The difference is obvious: the former are much more focused on a free-market paradigm than the radical right, which regularly adopt more statist economic positions. Similarly, Gomez and colleagues (2016) suggest substantial variation among left-wing populist parties. While traditional left-wing populists particularly focus on economic positions but remain less progressive in cultural terms (e.g. the Socialist Party in the Netherlands, SP), progressive left-wing populist parties (such as Podemos) are more post-materialist and, thus, environmental policy is of greater importance to them. In view of this literature, it seems essential to equally consider ideology and variations within ideological leanings when making judgements about the role of populism in positions on climate change.

What is potentially more decisive is that ideology is multifaceted. While right-wing populists combine populism with right-wing ideology, nativism and authoritarianism are co-constituent terms (Mudde 2007; Bonikowski 2017). These might also have an independent effect. Forchtner and Kølvraa (2015), for example, demonstrate that right-wing populist parties more positive relationship with environmental protection is as equally rooted in nationalism as their opposition to climate policy. Ideology, however, is not the only potential moderator that might matter. Ćetković and Hagemann (2020) and Huber et al. (2021) demonstrate that government participation might substantially alter how populist parties act on climate change. For example, Syriza, while putting forward a pro-environmental discourse heavily support energy from coal when in government. Huber and colleagues (2021) attribute this inconsistency to economic circumstances and the burden of being in government. Similarly, the Austrian Freedom Party's support for renewable energy is a function of the longstanding anti-nuclear power stance in Austria. This stance does not necessarily reflect a pro-environmental position, given the context. Therefore, considering national energy mixes and economic circumstances seems vital. Finally, elites and citizens interact. Unsurprisingly, public opinion matters in the formulation of policies (Anderson et al. 2017), but elites can also influence citizens' attitudes (Kammermann and Dermont 2018). Considering the societal appetite for climate and environmental policies deems understanding whether and how populist actors might approach the issue necessary.

All in all, thus:

Commandment 2: Future research should disentangle effects of populism, accompanying ideological positions and other contextual factors that might matter, such as government participation of parties, societal preferences and issue salience.

Lack of Good Data

Essentially, data – in combination with theory – is quintessential of empirical political science research. Some criticism on the previous two points stems from the lack of good data needed to understand populism. For example, useful conceptualisations of populism on an individual level, including properly designed and validated scales, has only started more recently, with the earliest item batteries dating back to the beginning of 2010s (Hawkins et al. 2012; Akkerman et al. 2014; Castanho Silva et al. 2019). What is more, even though different scales exist, they are rarely included in general publicly available surveys, such as the European Social Survey or the World Value Survey. Utilising vote choice as a proxy for populist attitudes essentially neglects the fact that citizens vote for these parties *because* of their mix of populism and ideology. In other words, some voters of right-wing populist parties might entirely vote for these parties because of their immigration stances, regardless of their level of populism. Thereby, researchers might misattribute the relationship between populism and climate attitudes. Similarly, questions concerning opinions on environmental or climate issues are rarely specific and scarce.

Similarly, on a party level, we know fairly little about the level of populism (but see the recently published study by Meijers and Zaslove 2021) and environmental and climate positions. Currently available sources only include large categories. For example, the Party Manifesto Project provides insights into how often parties mention environmental protection (Krause et al. 2020). Similarly, the Chapel Hill Expert Survey poses one question on party positions on the nexus regarding environmental protection *vis-à-vis* economic growth (Polk et al. 2017). We currently lack a multifaceted, cross-country database on policy preferences and party positions. Schaffrin, Sewerin and Seubert (2014; 2015) provide a first step towards conceptualising and measuring policy output for governments. Voting patterns might also offer an interesting way forward. Ramstetter and Habersack (2019) assess the gender gap in voting for environmental legislation. This approach could help identify positions. Similarly, Schaller and Carius (2019) evaluate key statements by right-wing populist parties to capture their climate positions. Thus,

Commandment 3: Future research should use data that allows for the inferences you wish to make when studying populism and climate attitudes. If you cannot make such inferences, at least discuss it.

Causal Inference

While this criticism of the current literature is not limited to the study of populism and climate change, we also need to take causal inference seriously in this field of research. Given the lack of high-quality data, we often rely on correlations to understand the relationship between them. By definition, our ability to make nuanced statements about the causal mechanisms linking the two variables is limited. Particularly, causal inference has two facets. On the one hand, my points on the conflation of populism and political ideology explicitly refer to an omitted variable bias. Not including all relevant variables in the analyses might lead to bias. This problem applies equally to qualitative and quantitative research. Qualitative research requires detailed evidence (or several cases) to disentangle differences between the nuanced groups. Similarly, quantitative analyses might suffer from imperfect measurements and the lack of good data and thus not be able to disentangle different concepts. Beyond this omitted variable bias, we need more and stronger empirical evidence to make claims about the causality of the relationship between populism and climate attitudes. Experimental designs would allow for a more causal interpretation, like that applied in Huber, Fesenfeld and Bernauer (2020). However, some questions are hard to assess through these methods. While most of the literature assumes that populism influences stances on climate, marginalised positions on climate could equally induce populism, or the two concepts could strengthen each other.

Commandment 4: Future research should take causal inference seriously when investigating populism and climate change.

Conclusion

Are populism and climate denial a match made in heaven? Most of the literature on this issue would agree. In this chapter, I have discussed the current literature in this subfield and summarised my findings. While particularly strong with regard to right-wing populists, this research suggests that populists oppose climate change through a couple of causal mechanisms. Drawing on this review, I identify several core ways forward to consider for future research: conceptual clarity, separating ideology and populism, using and generating high-quality data and striving for causal inference. This literature review has its own limitations. First of all, the literature on climate change is notoriously scattered among different disciplines, ranging from environmental psychology to the study of environmental systems and issue-specific fields like energy research. Therefore, omissions in this growing collection of literature are possible, maybe even likely. Second, this review applies a standard definition of populism. While this definition is established in the political science study of populism, other disciplines might vary in their definition. As outlined before, there are good reasons to utilise an ideational approach, as it allows populism to be understood on different levels, namely those of political actors like parties and individuals. Additionally, I adopt a political economy perspective in my strong focus on causal inference. Some research does not meet these standards but might meet the standards in its respective field. However, this does not mean that these studies are not important or irrelevant. More interaction between fields and scholars in terms of their different dimensions is essential.

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CHAPTER 34:
POPULISM FACING THE CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

Cecilia Biancalana, Reinhard Heinisch and Oscar Mazzoleni

Introduction

Populism has already received much attention in academic literature since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. While the role of populism in the pandemic has been examined particularly from the perspective of political parties (Gugushvili et al. 2020; Katsambekis and Stavrakakis 2020; Kavakil 2020; Mayer 2020; Wondreys and Mudde 2020; McKee et al. 2021), some contributions have also addressed voters holding populist attitudes (Barnieri and Bonini 2020; Ebler et al. 2020; Vieten 2020). Although the behaviour of populist actors in opposition has been the subject of few studies (Katsambekis and Stavrakakis 2020; Wondreys and Mudde 2020), the debate has generally focused on the policy responses of populist government officials (Gugushvili et al. 2020; Kavakil 2020; Mayer 2020; McKee et al. 2021). Other work has been devoted to the populist attitudes prevalent in society, focusing on the perception of lockdown measures (Barbieri and Bonini 2020), the belief in conspiracy theories (Eberl et al. 2020) and the mobilising effect of the pandemic on populist sentiment in society (Vieten 2020).

For anyone embarking on research on the COVID-19 pandemic, the literature on populism provides an important starting point. The clearest nexus between populism and the pandemic is the fact that, in this field, policy decisions typically rely on experts, especially medical and health policy professionals. To the extent that populism is defined by its inherent hostility to elites, the tension between decision-making informed by scientists and experts on the one hand, and the sensibilities of 'common people' struggling with an unfamiliar threat on the other is an important factor. In this chapter, we review the literature on both populists' responses to the ongoing crisis, and on established concepts and theories that can be related to the link between populism and the pandemic. Finally, we provide an empirical case study based on a survey from Austria focused on the connection between populist attitudes and attitudes toward the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Coronavirus Outbreak and Populists' Responses

The pandemic represented a worldwide social, political, and economic challenge. Governments have faced significant pushback on and criticism about almost every decision regarding

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lockdowns and distancing measures, financial support for the economy and vaccination policies. Instead of upstaging populists for their seeming lack of evidence-based and responsible policy solutions in a pandemic, the crisis represented an opportunity for many parties and leaders to spread populist messages. As such, these actors tried to create or maintain an active and visible role in the pandemic landscape to achieve electoral and political advantages. The opportunities to spread populist messages were not the same in every phase of the pandemic. For parties in opposition, the first lockdown was the most difficult moment in terms of public visibility, as many of them aligned themselves with government decisions, at least in Europe (Bobba and Hubé 2021). The pandemic reshaped the agenda and some of the key right-wing issues of populist discourse were temporarily relegated to the margins. However, as soon as it became possible, leaders and parties tried to reinsert their traditional issues into the national agenda. Uncertainty about whether to open or close schools, shut down or reopen businesses, and trade off local, national, and supranational interests opened windows of opportunity for anti-establishment formations, including populist ones.

In particular, linking with their legacies, many right-wing parties reacted to the pandemic by rallying against open borders and illegal immigrants, framing them as spreaders of the virus and a menace to the welfare state, and by criticising the EU's handling of the pandemic and the way it undermined national sovereignty (Betz 2020; Wondreys and Mudde 2020). At the same time, new issues such as medical-related conspiracy theories and criticisms against expertise emerged. Conspiracy theories on the origin of the virus or its use as a bioweapon by the Chinese regime gained support among right-wing populist grassroots factions and leaders. Denial and scepticism towards medical authorities became a way to counter official expertise and denounce them as elite machinations. Especially in Western countries, populists called for personal freedoms and individual rights to be defended against the excesses of state power (Bialasiewicz and Eckes 2020). Since populist actors usually claim to protect the people from collective and typically external threats, populist advocacy on behalf of individual freedom seems rather unusual. However, in some cases the mistrust towards the establishment prevailed (Brubaker 2021).

The first wave of studies addressing this topic from a supply-side perspective showed that populists' response to the pandemic, inside and outside Europe, strongly differs in terms of framing and impact (Katsambekis and Stavrakakis 2020; Meyer 2020; Bobba and Hubé 2021). Populists' responses vary between right-wing and left-wing actors, but also within the same ideological field. During lockdowns and restrictions, two prevalent tendencies arose. In countries such as the Netherlands and Sweden, populist parties asked that more restrictive measures be taken; in others, such as Germany, right-wing populists denounced what they called authoritarian decision-making by an establishment headed by experts. Differences also emerged regarding the timing of the lockdown, the use of masks and vaccines. While the positions of Matteo Salvini, leader of the Italian League (Lega), have been ambivalent (as at times he favoured more restrictions and at others he did not), the Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán was clearly in favour of restrictions both in the first period of the pandemic and later. The Alternative for Germany (Alternative für Deutschland, AfD) and Nigel Farage of the UKIP (UK Independence Party) criticised the lockdowns and similar measures for going against citizens' freedom and economic stability (Wondrey and Mudde 2020).

This variation in populist discourse and behaviour also depended on mainstream parties' responses to the pandemic and the role played by populists within institutions. In Europe, for populist parties being in opposition or in government matters. Oppositional parties tended to use the pandemic as a weapon against government and mainstream parties, accusing them of being incapable of responding to the pandemic, as cases from France (Baloge and Hube 2021) and Spain (Magre and Pano 2021) show. By contrast, when in government, and especially in a dominant position within a coalition, populists have tried to capitalise on the pandemic to enhance their power. First, they decided in favour of strict lockdowns such as in Hungary under Viktor Orbán, the Czech Republic under Andrej Babis, Slovakia under Igor Matovič and eventually Slovenia under Janez Janša. By politicising the pandemic and pushing for massive state intervention in support for the economy, these leaders sought to portray themselves as national father figures protecting their countries from an imported disease (Buštíková and Baboš 2020; Guasti 2020). On the other hand, Donald Trump and Brazil's Jair Bolsonaro sought to maintain power by downplaying the pandemic and avoiding restrictions in a strategy intent on delegitimising expertise and offering comparatively less public support in fighting the pandemic (Agnew 2020; Brubaker 2021).

In Austria, the populist Freedom Party (Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs, FPÖ) used the COVID-19 pandemic to rebuild its flagging support following the FPÖ's collapse in government a year earlier. Realising that the number of sceptics about the virus was actually larger than its electorate at the time, it repositioned itself in opposition to anti-COVID measures. However, the Austrian government headed by the Conservative Chancellor Sebastian Kurz was also not immune to engaging in populist rhetoric when he suggested that to fight the pandemic effectively one could not always respect all 'constitutional niceties'. As such, the Austrian case seemed to follow the pattern in which populist opposition tended to play down the pandemic, whereas the Conservative-led government, at least during the first wave, adopted extremely restrictive measures and a menacing public discourse. According to a comparative study by Bobba and Hubé (2021), European right-wing parties did not benefit from the COVID-19 crisis, although this is difficult to evaluate at least in the short term. Beyond Europe, it is impossible to argue that populism failed in terms of electoral performance: despite denialist strategies, lacklustre containment measures, and very high rates of COVID-related deaths, the 2020 local elections in Brazil saw Bolsonaro's party and allies do reasonably well. Also, the 2020 US presidential election was not the spectacular failure for Donald Trump that his detractors had hoped for and expected.

Turning to the political demand side, we see that initial attempts to understand the public's opinion about the pandemic in connection with populism yielded mixed results. A survey conducted in four European countries and in the US in September 2020 showed that economic concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic exerted a positive effect on the probability of voting for the Natonal Rally (Rassemblement National, RN) in France as well as the Lega and Brothers of Italy (Fratelli d'Italia, FdI) in Italy, the AfD in Germany and the Swiss People's Party (Schweizerische Volkspartei, SVP) in Switzerland. By contrast, US voters most worried about the economic consequences of the pandemic were significantly less likely to support Donald Trump (Ivaldi and Mazzoleni 2020). A survey of Austrian citizens conducted in May 2020 showed that populists tended to exhibit low trust in political institutions as well as science and research and that these orientations were positively related to COVID-19 conspiracy beliefs (Eberl et al. 2020). However, radical right ideology seemed to play only a marginal role in populist attitudes, despite the Freedom Party of Austria being the most sceptical of COVID-19 in the Austrian party system. Likewise, a survey conducted in May 2020 in the US provided evidence about the polarisation of public values towards scientists involved in the country's COVID-19 policy responses. The analysis confirmed the existence of a divide between Democrats, Republicans and Independents, and showed that working-class men and people living in non-urban areas were more sceptical towards experts. The opinions expressed by Trump's supporters seemed to fit well with the scepticism expressed by the US president vis-à-vis experts (Evans and Hargittai 2020).

Old Concepts and New Directions in the Research on Populism and Pandemics

While it is true that, in some respects, the coronavirus outbreak disrupted a previously consolidated balance of power and that populist actors faced (and were trying to adapt to) unforeseen circumstances, there are several established concepts and theories we can readily apply in order to understand the relationship between populism and the pandemic. These concern the relationship between populism and expert-based knowledge, the way in which populists typically address medical and health-related issues, and the connection between populist discourse and conspiracy theories.

Populism and Expert Knowledge

The coronavirus outbreak has brought experts to the forefront. We know that populism is based on a certain form of opposition between 'the people' and 'the elite'. However, the 'people' and the 'elite' are not addressed in the same way by every populist actor, and these opposite categories are not monolithic. Populist notions of elites include not only politicians or, more generally, members of the political elite, but also experts of various types, such as scholars, academics and intellectuals (Caramani 2017; Merkley 2020). Indeed, scientific knowledge production with its long-established gatekeepers and formal criteria is often part of populists' stereotype about the 'out-of-touch elites' (Mede and Schäfer 2020). The antagonistic relation between 'ordinary people' and the 'academic elite' may be defined as a struggle for epistemic authority, that is, for sovereignty over how 'true knowledge' is produced. For populists, the knowledge generated by experts represents an unaccountable restriction on the power of the people (Turner 2001; Collins et al. 2020): for instance, Donald Trump very publicly disagreed with the findings of his intelligence experts, climate scientists and health policy advisors. Several scholars present empirical evidence of the discourse of populists combining the denigration of criticism of professional expertise with the elevation of people's 'common sense' as superior and authoritative (Saurette and Gunster 2011; Oliver and Rahn 2016). Others have pointed out that populists not only suggest relying on what has been called 'folk wisdom' or 'epistemological populism' – i.e. practical knowledge that common people have access to through everyday experience – but also advocate alternative forms of knowledge produced by authorities outside 'the mainstream' (Tuukka Ylä-Anttila 2018). Here, populists can tap into grievances of people who perceive the professionalisation, economisation and academisation in many areas, especially in health-related fields, as overly technocratic and instead turn to non-mainstream and esoteric explanations. In all these cases, the underlying assumption is that allegedly evil, arrogant or uncaring elites (whether they belong to the political or the scientific domain, or both) are hiding the real truth from the good people.

On a structural and systemic level, social, economic and political changes have paved the way for the diffusion of this kind of discourse that is sceptical of experts by populist actors. In some respects, the crisis of the cultural authority of science began in the 1970s (Collins et. al 2020), resulting in the rise of alternative epistemologies (van Zoonen 2012). This offered populist actors alternatives to the dominant scientific epistemology and tools for attacking organised science. More recently, the enormous spread of digital media and the increasingly lower cost of accessing communication have given populists a channel through which to express their ideas directly to the 'people', bypassing traditional media, which are considered to be close to the elite. In this way, populists can gather a like-minded support base online (Gerbaudo 2018). Nonetheless, the relationship between populism and knowledge remains far from settled and is still significantly under-researched, in particular from a comparative European perspective. After all, populists are not blind to the prestige that scientific breakthroughs, feats of engineering, Nobel prizes and world class universities can bestow on a country. Thus, as with everything in populism, the discourses are full of ambivalence and situational flexibility.

Populism and Healthcare Issues

Scholars have recently started to scrutinise the relationship between populist ideology and discourses on medical issues, especially with respect to anti-vaccine movements (e.g. Żuk and Żuk 2020). Due to the enormous salience of medical and health-related issues at this time, we can expect literature on this topic to grow substantially in the near future (see, for instance, Lasco 2020). Here, the point of departure is populism's hostility to elites and thus the rejection of medical experts and their influence on policy. Lasco and Curato (2019) use four examples from Africa and South East Asia to illustrate how populists mobilise health crises by emphasising threats to public health, through the simplification and spectacularisation of complex public health issues and by creating a shared image of the people as the victims of diseases at the hands of their enemies, who range from 'the state' to medical experts and to 'big pharma'. This is what the authors define as 'medical populism'. More specifically, in their investigation of the linkages between anti-vaccine movements and right-wing populism in Poland, Żuk and Żuk (2020) point to several features the two have in common, such as the rejection of scientific and medical elites, the claim to defend the health of ordinary people from a conspiracy of doctors and pharmaceutical companies, and, among others, the aversion to international organisations and experts. Indeed, both anti-vaccine movements and right-wing populist actors favour a simple narrative and distrust 'official' science. The connection between populism and health can also be approached from a different angle, that is, an examination of citizens' opinions. An analysis of 14 West European countries suggests a positive correlation between the percentage of people in a country who vote for populist parties and the percentage of citizens who believe that vaccines are not important or effective (Kennedy 2019). Nonetheless, except for some tentative and initial studies, the link between populist attitudes and citizens' opinions on these issues remains largely underexplored.

Populism and Conspiracy Theories

The COVID-19 pandemic has been the subject of numerous conspiracy theories about its origins, spread and the allegedly malevolent intentions of pharmaceutical companies. Indeed, we can expect that there will be many more such claims in the future, especially in connection with vaccine development and distribution. Conspiracy theories have been widely propagated by populists too, such as Matteo Salvini, the Italian Lega's leader, who suggested in March 2020 that the virus had been created in a laboratory. Also, Donald Trump made numerous unsubstantiated claims on this issue, including suggesting that it had been created by the Chinese. Although scholarship on populism has so far relatively rarely addressed conspiracy theories, we have long known that populists peddle such theories in their discourses. Here, it is useful to remind ourselves of the seminal reflections by Edward S. Shils (1956), whose book *The Torment of Secrecy* underlined how 'hyperpatriotism' (i.e. nationalism) and (especially right-wing) populism employed conspiracies allegedly implicating political elites and also scientists in the 1950s (Shils 1996: 44*ff*; see also Hofstadter 1964 on the 'paranoid style' in American politics). A more recently perceptive insight into the use of conspiracy theories is their 'function as a form of populist discourse' (Fenster 2008). Conspiracy theories can be defined as a proposed explanation of events that cites as the main causal factor a small group of persons (the conspirators) acting in secret for their own benefit and against the common good (Keeley 1999). Indeed, populism and conspiracy theories are said to 'walk hand-in-hand' (Castanho Silva, Vegetti and Littvay 2017: 423). Both assume an elite that is morally corrupt and authorities who are malevolent towards people (Albertazzi and McDonnell 2008): elites are suspected of 'concealing their evil-doing, and that official explanations for major events may be lies' (Sutton and Douglas 2014). Both narratives are based on Manichean logic and anti-elitism (Bergmann 2018: 14). These world views are firmly dualistic: Neither of them leaves much room for individuality or differentiation within the categories of us versus them (the people vs. the elites; the unknowing people vs. the conspirators). Both present simple narratives and are 'rooted in general animosity toward anything official' (Castanho Silva, Vegetti and Littvay 2017: 427). However, not all populist discourse refers to a conspiracy theory, and not all conspiracies point to an antagonistic divide between ordinary people and corrupt elites (Hameleers 2021).

Although there is an important strand of the literature devoted to the spread of conspiracy beliefs in public opinion—defined by Uscinski et al. (2016) as an individual's belief in a specific conspiracy theory—, the demand-side literature on populism in political science has rarely shown an interest in dealing with the impact of conspiracy theories (Oliver and Rahn 2016). With regard to party preferences and ideological orientation, research shows that (both left-wing and right-wing) political extremism predicts belief in conspiracy theories (van Prooijen et al. 2015). Moreover, although still very rare, some studies on the impact of conspiracy theories have also examined electoral behaviour. For instance, in an exploratory analysis on the Italian case, Mancosu et al. (2017) show that conspiracism is more widespread among the supporters of populist parties. Several relevant factors that have been found to predict conspiratorial beliefs, such as authoritarianism, powerlessness and low interpersonal and political trust, are also typical of the populists' world view (Mudde 2004; Ivaldi 2017). For instance, Uscinski and Parent (2014) argue that conspiracy theories 'are for losers' in the sense that they tend to resonate when groups are suffering from loss, weakness or disunity and, in general, when they face a loss of power or the threat of losing it. This resonates with Betz's well-known claim that supporters of far-right parties are 'the losers' of the transformation from an industrial to a post-industrial economy (Betz 1994). Nevertheless, there are a few studies that bridge the two strands of literature.

Basing his analysis on a review of the empirical literature on this subject, van Prooijen (2018) shows the connection between some dimensions of populism and the belief in conspiracy theories. The belief in conspiracy theories is related to some core dimensions of populism, including a) anti-elitism, namely an aversion to those in power and a feeling of powerlessness; b) anti-pluralism, that is, a tendency to perceive simple solutions to complex problems and a propensity to respond with hostility if one's beliefs are challenged; and c) an inclination to believe in the superiority of one's nation and the perception that a valued but vulnerable in-group is under threat from external forces. An empirical analysis conducted by Castanho Silva, Vegetti and Littvay (2017) takes into account the specific link between populism and conspiracy beliefs as it demonstrates that populist attitudes correlate with some sub-facets of belief in conspiracy theories: Populists tend to believe in malevolent global conspiracies, according to which a small but powerful group controls world events, and a few individuals with access to information control how it spreads and does so for private material gain at the expense of the public. Hameelers (2020) also shows that exposure to populist communication can activate or prime populist attitudes. Yet, it should be abundantly clear from this short overview that much empirical work, both qualitative and quantitative, remains to be done to understand this crucially important research area, which has garnered so much attention during the pandemic.

Making the Empirical Case: Populism and Individual Perceptions of COVID-19's Effect

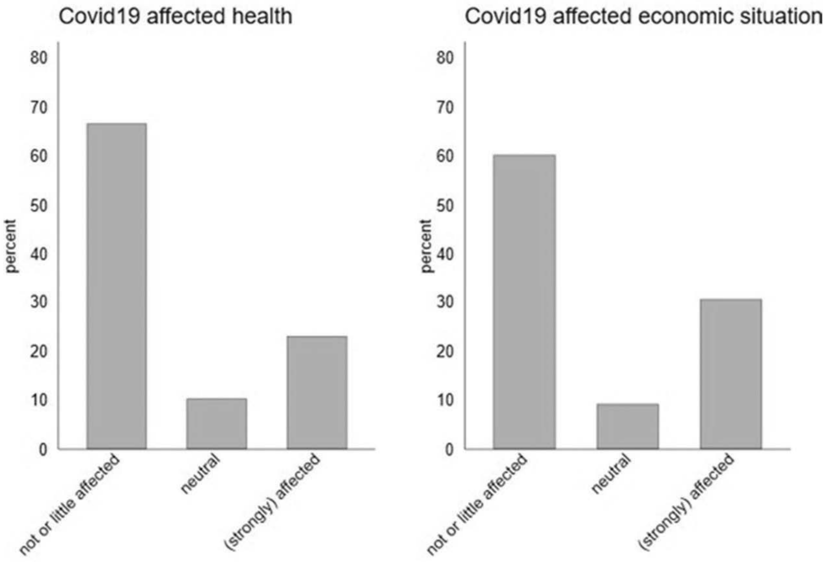
In this segment, we present the results of an original survey and survey experiment conducted in Austria between the first and second waves of the pandemic, which is intended to show how populism affected individual perceptions of the disease in terms of health and economic well-being. Another aim was to ascertain to what extent people were willing give up democratic principles in favour of greater effectiveness in counteracting the pandemic. Austria initially reacted quite resolutely to the COVID-19 outbreak and instituted a strict lockdown as early as the beginning of March 2020. This came about largely under the impression of the increasingly dire situation in neighbouring Italy. The Conservative–Green coalition government under Chancellor Kurz clearly saw this as an opportunity to demonstrate resolve and leadership, whereas Germany, always the key reference country for Austria, exhibited a more disorganised initial response. Since the refugee crisis of 2015, the Austrian chancellor had been critical of both German and EU leadership when dealing with crises, and this time was no exception. Kurz also framed the virus as a threat coming from abroad to Austria with the result that border closures along with a strict lockdown became early means of combating the pandemic.

Austria's relative success in coping with the first wave and its disproportionate dependence on tourism led to a rapid and nearly complete opening up of the country in June, which made it difficult to adopt stringent measures when in early autumn the daily numbers of new infections climbed beyond even the highest figures in the first wave. The government seemed paralysed and unsure about how to respond. A structural problem for the government was that Austria's constitutional court had retroactively ruled that several of the anti-COVID measures adopted were unconstitutional. Moreover, the fact that the health ministry was controlled by the Greens created friction the longer the pandemic lasted. The messaging by the coalition was increasingly confused and in the context of regional elections, the Conservatives blamed the Social Democratic government in Vienna for aggravating the pandemic. This not only ignored similar problems in Conservative-governed provinces but also politicised the pandemic. The opposition no longer saw any need to show restraint and the Freedom Party especially went on the offensive. Whereas the Social Democrats accused the government of doing too little too late and the Liberals denounced its incompetence, the FPÖ took the opposite tack, criticising what they called the high-handed and authoritarian nature of the decisions. It was in this context, shortly before the second wave, that we conducted a survey about political attitudes and their effect on the perceptions of COVID-19.

In this survey, we follow the idea that populism is characterised by a belief in an antagonistic relationship between the good people and the corrupt elite, whose power must be broken (Hawkins et al. 2018; Mudde 2004; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2018; Rooduijn 2014; Taggart 2004). Since populists imagine that 'the people' are always right, common sense forms the basis for all decisions (Mudde 2004). However, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, governments introduced stringent measures that severely restricted the lives of many citizens, but these were primarily based on expert assessments of the situation rather than popular demand (Bruhaker 2020; Katsambekis and Stavrakakis 2020) and were often selective in their application (Bruhaker 2020). At the same time, there is no comprehensive scientific consensus on the proper way to deal with the coronavirus (Katsambekis and Stavrakakis 2020). Specifically, the scientific practice of mutual criticism and the formulation of statements based on probabilities and risk assessments are very unfamiliar to a population with a high need for safety. In addition, access to alternative information is very easy, especially via social media, so the prescriptions of experts can be constantly questioned and seemingly easily refuted (Bruhaker 2020; Katsambekis and Stavrakakis 2020; Mede and Schäfer 2020). Despite potential similarities, such populist notions are conceptually distinct from attitudes due to the distrust of government, political and ideological disagreements, and/or differences in interest (Caramani 2018). Feeling unrepresented or abandoned by the government or not trusting its judgement may also be reasons for people feeling negatively affected, but they are different from populist rejections of the elites. Thus, we hypothesise that the subjective feeling of being affected by COVID-19 should be higher among individuals with populist attitudes than among individuals who do not hold these attitudes. The reason for this is the lack of belief in the countermeasures taken and the political and scientific actors seen as responsible for them.

To test this hypothesis empirically, we designed a representative survey in Austria that went into the field in early September 2020 with a sample size of 1,200 people. Since – as acknowledged by the World Health Organisation, and the World Economic Forum – the COVID-19 pandemic has a clear health and economic dimension, the data gleaned provide information on both the degree of health and economic concern that was prevalent in Austrian society at that time. As we focus exclusively on the subjective perception of people, health affectedness is not limited to contracting the disease itself, but it is left to respondents and their subjective assessment whether and to what extent they felt affected. This subjective feeling of being affected was measured with the following questions: On a scale of 0 to 10, how much did you feel negatively affected [in your health well-being] or [economically] by the COVID-19 crisis?

Figure 34.1: Health and Economic Feelings of Being Affected by the COVID-19 pandemic



Source: own survey, Austria, Sept. 2020, n=1200.

Figure 34.1 indicates that 23.9 per cent of respondents thought their health was affected and 30.5 per cent felt economically impacted. The large share of people claiming to have experienced health effects was a surprise given the relatively low number of officially reported cases in the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in Austria. Among the political factors we queried, populist attitudes, distrust of the government and authoritarian tendencies show up as widespread among Austrians. After all, 73.92 per cent of respondents agree with the statement that 'in our country, the powerful listen far too little to the common people'. To test our hypotheses about how populist attitudes shape subjective feelings about health-related and economic well-being, we use OLS regression models, as depicted in Table 34.1. These allow us to examine not only the effect of populist attitudes but also the possible influence of other factors on subjective affectedness by the COVID-19 pandemic. Among the control variables, we include socio-demographic factors such as gender, age, education level, and the subjective assessment of the respondents' own income as well as political attitudes such as left–right self-ranking, trust in the government, and party preference in the previous national election.

As with the descriptive statistics, the explanatory models show both health and economic concerns. The results of the four regression models, two with and two without trust in the government as a control variable, are displayed in Table 34.1. The dependent variable is the subjectively perceived level of affectedness, both health-related (middle column) and economic (right column). The explanatory variables are listed in the left column. The populism variable was measured by the response to the question 'In our country, the powerful listen far too little to the common people', with a response scale ranging from 0 (strongly disagree) to 10 (strongly agree). For each type of impact—health effect and economic effect—two regression models were calculated: one that also took into account a respondent's trust in government. This was necessary to show that the effect of populist (anti-elite) attitudes is different from a lack of trust in a specific government, which may have different sources. This concept was measured through respondents evaluating the statement 'On the whole, you can trust that the government wants only the best for the country' (response scale: agree very much [0] to disagree completely [10]). This way, we are confident that we have not measured merely opposing attitudes to the government.

Table 34.1: Regression Models for the Degree of Perceived Affectedness by COVID-19

	Health situation				**Economic situation**			
	Model without trust		Model with trust		Model without trust		Model with trust	
	Coef	se	Coef	se	Coef	se	Coef	se
Populist	0.51***	(0.19)	0.51***	(0.20)	0.71***	(0.20)	0.61***	(0.20)
No trust in government			0.02	(0.19)			0.63***	(0.20)
Left-right Self-placement	-0.00	(0.05)	-0.00	(0.05)	0.06	(0.06)	0.06	(0.06)
Female	-0.20	(0.17)	-0.21	(0.17)	-0.11	(0.18)	-0.11	(0.18)
Age	-0.01**	(0.01)	-0.01**	(0.01)	-0.04***	(0.01)	-0.04***	(0.01)
Education (base: low)								
medium	-0.02	(0.22)	-0.02	(0.23)	-0.10	(0.24)	-0.06	(0.24)
high	-0.69**	(0.29)	-0.69**	(0.29)	-0.58*	(0.30)	-0.56*	(0.30)
Vote (base: non-voter)								
SPÖ	-0.28	(0.30)	-0.28	(0.30)	-0.62**	(0.32)	-0.61*	(0.32)
ÖVP	-0.60**	(0.27)	-0.60**	(0.27)	-0.68**	(0.28)	-0.53*	(0.28)
FPÖ	-0.32	(0.37)	-0.32	(0.37)	0.13	(0.39)	0.06	(0.39)
Greens	-0.70**	(0.30)	-0.70**	(0.30)	-0.65**	(0.31)	-0.61*	(0.31)
NEOS	-0.55	(0.37)	-0.54	(0.37)	-0.60	(0.38)	-0.51	(0.38)
Other party	-0.19	(0.54)	-0.19	(0.54)	0.40	(0.56)	0.25	(0.56)
Does not cope with income	0.02***	(0.01)	0.02***	(0.01)	0.01	(0.01)	0.01*	(0.01)
Constants	3.98***	(0.51)	3.98***	(0.52)	5.68***	(0.54)	5.42***	(0.54)
N	1.177		1.177		1.177		1.177	
R-squared	0.04		0.04		0.09		0.10	

Standard errors in parentheses; *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

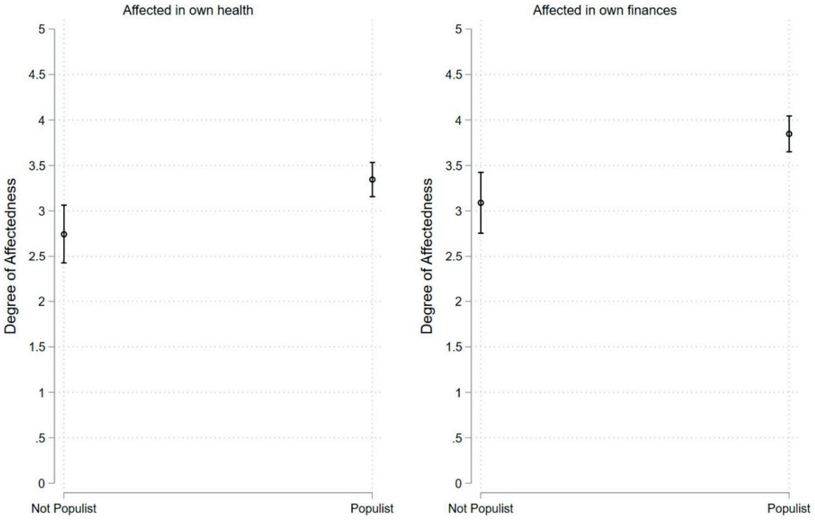
Note: 0 not affected, 10 very affected
Source: own survey, Austria, September 2020.

The variables showing a significant effect on Austrians feeling negatively impacted in their health due to the COVID-19 pandemic are populist attitudes, age, low education level, and the subjective perception of income scarcity. Thus, in terms of political factors, we notice that populist individuals feel more affected by the crisis, but at the same time it is also evident that voters for the current governing parties feel significantly less impacted compared to non-voters. The fact that the variable 'perceived income scarcity' (as opposed to actual income level) turns out to be highly significant in explaining the perceived negative health effects among the Austrians surveyed underscores also the subjective dimension of individual affectedness. In the adjacent model with the variable trust in government, all previously measured effects remain de facto the same. Crucially, ideological orientation and lack of trust in the government have no effect, but populism does and is highly significant in both models. This shows us that populism is a decisive and stand-alone factor and not merely the result of political opposition or general distrust in the government. Regardless of ideology and political preferences, people with populist orientations view themselves as significantly more affected in their health.

With regard to the perceived economic concerns, a similar picture emerges. Once again, populist attitudes, age and a high level of education emerge as significant explanatory factors. We see that, compared to non-voters, party supporters of larger mainstream parties (ÖVP, SPÖ, Greens) show less concern than those of other parties. Political calculous plays a larger role in this question than one would expect, given that voters and parties differ according to defined economic preferences and philosophies. Accordingly, one's own economic concern is also evaluated on the basis of someone's level of trust in the government, which becomes evident once the variable trust in the government is included in the model. The role of subjective income scarcity is also smaller than in the case of health-related concerns, presumably because objective rather than subjective factors have more influence on the degree of economic concern. Nevertheless, the explanatory variable 'populism' is also central in these models, both in terms of significance and effect size.

The effect of populist attitudes can also be represented graphically by plotting the estimated mean values. Figure 34.2 shows that the degree of concern is significantly higher among people who, in our scale, show up as populist (from a value of 6 on the 0 to 10 scale) compared with other Austrians. In general, health concerns are 6 per cent higher on average among people with populist attitudes, and economic concerns are 7.6 per cent higher compared to other people. Thus, our survey data support the hypothesis that people with populist attitudes feel more affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 34.2: Populist Attitudes and the Degree of Subjective Affectedness by the COVID-19 Crisis

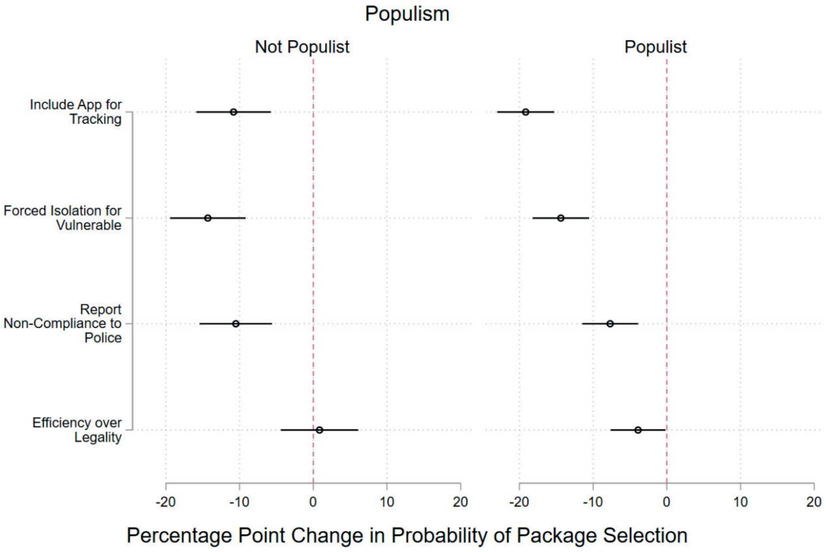


Note: graphical representation of the effect of populism based on the regression model in Table 34.1
Source: own survey, Austria, September 2020, n=1200.

Attitudes towards COVID-19 are not only dependent variables but can themselves also be the causes of political choices and thus be independent variables. For example, fear of the pandemic or subjectively perceived threats may heighten illiberal or authoritarian attitudes (Ignazi 1992; Kitschelt and McGann 1995; Mudde 2007; Wodak 2015). In this case, we were investigating the assumption that, in the interest of combating the COVID-19 pandemic more effectively, respondents might be willing to sacrifice certain constitutional rights and protections. Specifically, we wanted to find out whether populist and non-populists differ in their support for such unconstitutional policies. Thus, in conjunction with our survey, we conducted a conjoint experiment. Such methodological designs are used to gauge questions where researchers suspect that respondents may be more likely to conceal their real positions (Gaines 2007; Druckman et al. 2011; Campbell and Cowley 2014). In such a conjoint experiment, the survey respondents are asked to select one of two packages of options in accordance with their preferences. As each respondent cannot simply pick a single option but has to weigh the pros and cons of two entire packages each containing something he or she likes and dislikes, the researcher learns about how individuals in the survey respond when faced with such trade-offs; in this case having to decide between liberal democratic but less effective measures to fight the pandemic versus options that promise greater effectiveness but at the expense of democracy.

In our experiment, the respondents were presented with a hypothetical scenario of a second COVID-19 wave and asked to select packages of policy responses to combat the crisis. Each respondent was thus presented with sets of measures in four policy areas: a) having a mandatory tracking app installed (violating privacy protection), b) supporting the forced isolation of vulnerable groups (violating personal freedom), c) wanting people to act as police informers to report behaviour not compliant with containment measures (civilians acting as police), and d) supporting trading away constitutional protections for a more efficient implementation of the government's measures (violating the rule of law). Each policy area included an unconstitutional option or the opposite, a constitutionally sound alternative option. Each of the respondents was then shown two randomly selected sets of measures (policy packages) side by side. Each package had four pieces of information, one for each policy area, consisting of a random combination of unconstitutional and constitutional preferences. The respondent then had to choose the policy package that held the greater appeal overall.

Figure 34.3: Conjoint Experiment Showing the Change in Probability of Selecting Unconstitutional (towards right margin) Versus Constitutional (towards left margin) Anti-COVID Measures When Comparing Populist and Non-Populist Respondents



Source: own survey, Austria, September 2020, n=1200.

Figure 34.3 presents the results of this conjoint experiment. It indicates the change in the probability of populist versus non-populist respondents selecting a policy package that includes any of the unconstitutional policies. The closer the group mean is to the left margin, the less likely it is the group selected the constitutionally suspect measures, whereas placement further to the right indicates relatively greater support for those policy measures. The findings show that although these measures may be considered equally suspect from a rule of law standpoint, respondents clearly treated them differently. Even more perplexing at first sight is that non-populists seem to show a somewhat greater inclination to support unconstitutional and illiberal policies than populists. How can this be? If we consider that respondents were asked to back government policy measures and given that we must assume that populists distrust governments, it follows that they are probably less likely to support giving the government more power if they themselves are not in office. Thus, populist respondents appear especially sceptical of the government's ability to track people and dislike placing efficiency ahead of legality. Only with respect to reporting non-compliance to the police, do populists seem slightly more inclined to support this measure. Overall, this is merely a snapshot of a multistage analysis in which populism can be combined with perceived effectiveness and other variables to understand policy support in a pandemic.

Conclusions

In this chapter, we surveyed the emerging literature on the COVID-19 pandemic and its connection to populism. As these lines were written, in early 2021, this theorising was still very much a work in progress. Nonetheless, the contours of this relationship were already clearly visible as the COVID-19 outbreak evoked a significant growth in medical populism (Lasco and Curato 2019; Lasco 2020). This included in some cases the simplification and banalisation of the pandemic, and in others the dramatisation of the crisis, the conflict between the people and powerful elites (e.g. pharmaceutical companies, supranational bodies, the 'medical establishment'), and controversial knowledge claims about the origin of the virus and related aspects. What is more, populists often responded differently when they were in opposition than when they were in government. Indeed, a significant part of the literature has thus far been devoted to policy responses by populists versus non-populists. There is also an emerging set of literature on the demand side, in which people coping with the pandemic or, increasingly, its side and after-effects evaluate different political actors and their policies. It is here where the above case study from Austria helps us to understand the link between populist attitudes and people's perceptions of being affected by COVID-19. It also shows how party-political preferences (mainstream parties versus a populist party) are correlated with a person's willingness to forego constitutional and liberal democratic principles in favour of a more effective means to fight the pandemic. The Austrian case provides an example of types of research which we would hope to see more of in order to better understand the effect of the COVID-19 crisis on populism and democratic governance.

Overall, the role of populism is likely to grow at this time, as people's willingness to accept restrictions erodes, and governments and the European Union become embroiled in critical discussions over vaccine distribution and vaccination policies, continued lockdowns, social burden sharing, and financing the economic recovery. There are potentially many 'COVID-losers' who perceive themselves to be the victims of decisions by political and medical elites. Populists are versed in grievance politics and, especially when in opposition, may attack governments from both sides for not having done enough and having done too much. Moreover, it seems likely that, in particular, 'the negative economic fallout of the pandemic is going to persist for years to come' (Betz 2020). Thus, the mix of health-related and economic existential fears, the increased role of technical innovation, and intense international competition over effective crisis management will presumably provide populists and conspiracy theory movements around the world with a fertile agenda, which needs to be explored. Reflections on the use of the crisis by right-wing populists leave many questions open, above all the relations between populism and authoritarianism (Halikiopoulou 2020), populism and science, and their impact on the evolution of democratic regimes. In any case, we can state that the COVID-19 outbreak represented a stress-test for many democracies, radicalising ongoing trends: giving populist leaders room for manoeuvre to enhance their power and fostering scepticism towards science and medical expertise. For the academic community, this will provide a rich and relevant field of study.

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INDEX

activists 22, 38, 72, 74, 93, 96–98, 100, 103–105, 117, 311, 313, 353, 372, 420, 500, 501, 505, 506, 510, 547
ambivalence 112, 115, 117, 119, 121, 123, 124, 274, 366, 404, 505, 507, 510, 573
attitudes 24, 34–37
audiences 32, 35, 315, 329, 383, 384, 386–388, 391–395, 419, 458
Austria 17, 25, 26, 28, 79, 84, 87, 141, 184, 205, 206, 227, 229, 232, 236, 271–273, 275, 278–285, 287, 289, 334, 365, 433, 451, 475, 477, 478, 482, 521, 524, 532, 538, 557, 558, 560, 563, 569, 571, 575–579, 581, 582
authenticity 383, 384, 394, 433, 515
authoritarianism 24, 37, 53, 121, 151, 152, 157–159, 177, 178, 213, 257, 258, 322, 390, 424, 426, 555, 558, 560, 563, 574, 582

body 37, 99, 311, 316, 384, 390, 443, 448, 452, 501, 515, 516, 518–525, 534

candidates 30, 37, 94, 118, 122, 198, 271, 291, 294, 309, 322–327, 329, 330, 341, 342, 349–351, 403, 432, 460, 499–501, 505–507, 511
Central and Eastern Europe 26, 27, 84, 86–88, 198, 221, 239, 240, 242, 248–251, 257–260, 262–266
centrist voters 277, 287
charismatic leadership 102, 106, 281, 353, 355, 364, 366, 450, 530
civil society 77, 94, 97, 101, 104, 152, 157, 159, 160, 228, 311, 313, 317, 364, 417, 419, 422–425, 451, 474, 531
climate change 38, 442, 447, 555–565
communication 32, 33, 35, 36, 48, 53, 57, 60, 66, 103, 105, 112, 120, 121, 124, 183, 293, 300–302, 355, 383, 384, 386, 387, 389–391, 393, 394, 399–404, 407–409, 417–419, 423, 425, 430, 432, 434, 436, 447, 449, 450, 452, 457–464, 515–520, 524, 547, 548, 573, 575
conflicts 27, 80, 83, 86, 87, 95, 98, 153, 218, 251, 294, 417, 449, 474, 475, 546
conspiracy 29, 36, 52, 53, 175, 307, 315, 393, 395, 435, 436, 448, 449, 461, 474, 529, 557, 560, 561, 569–575, 582
COVID-19 18, 38, 118, 120, 222, 262, 293, 301, 318, 435, 436, 569, 571, 572, 574–582
– vaccines 570, 573
crisis 18, 19, 23, 26, 28, 35, 37
cultural hegemony 105, 447, 531
Czech Republic 18, 239, 244, 248, 253, 257, 262, 264, 265, 271–273, 275, 276, 278–289, 475, 478, 480, 483, 558, 571

demand side 24, 113, 177, 183, 185, 186, 195, 198, 208, 213, 221, 407, 571, 582
democratic representation 49, 65, 72, 266, 361–366, 371, 375, 376, 515, 521
descriptive representation 31, 362, 365, 368, 372, 375, 515, 520
digital environment 457–460, 462, 463
discourse 20, 21, 28, 29, 31–33, 35, 37

economic nationalism 151, 152, 312
elections 17, 18, 33
– electoral basis 26, 220
– electoral relevance 245, 254
Entrepreneurial Populism 272, 278
Europe 17–19, 21–23, 25–28, 30–34, 37
European integration 38, 66, 87, 118, 172, 195–201, 203–209, 214, 220, 234, 263, 279, 298, 471, 473
European Social Survey 187, 473, 476, 564
Euroscepticism 26, 28, 87, 183, 195–206, 208, 209, 220, 221, 237, 265, 267, 268, 286

fear 24, 28, 37, 85, 86, 122, 295, 309, 316, 435, 473, 474, 524, 535, 539, 548, 549, 579
formal representation 363–366, 368, 369, 371, 372, 375
frame 31–33, 58, 72, 97, 103, 112, 117–121, 123, 124, 132, 139, 197, 200, 240, 241, 259, 308, 322, 330, 363, 401, 420, 421, 430, 442, 443, 447, 499, 500, 516, 530, 533, 538, 548, 550
framing 35, 95, 99, 102, 104, 118, 119, 240, 247, 316, 364, 387, 388, 400, 420, 434, 443, 448, 452, 502, 530, 531, 536, 570

gender 214, 215, 244, 283, 311, 316, 364, 369, 371–373, 375, 442, 447–449, 451, 452, 478, 499–511, 518, 519, 523, 531, 536, 537, 564, 577
– femininity 316, 500, 504, 508, 510, 511
– masculinity 316, 500, 504, 507, 508, 510, 511, 519
generative contexts 149, 157
globalisation 26, 27, 31, 37, 38, 49, 66, 70, 79–81, 84, 87–90, 93, 95, 101, 106, 120, 153, 154, 156, 157, 183, 216, 221, 248, 259, 310, 312, 325, 326, 330, 333, 475, 509, 532, 539, 559
government 17, 18, 23, 26, 28, 31, 32, 38
Greece 17, 18, 28, 59, 74, 82, 88, 171, 172, 179, 213, 227, 263, 291–296, 301, 476, 510, 558
– SYRIZA 18, 28, 74, 82, 89, 213, 216, 227, 291–296, 301, 510, 511, 558

health 18, 143, 300, 302, 312, 373, 435, 471, 483, 506, 519, 569, 572, 573, 575–579, 582
history 17, 19, 20, 25, 27, 30, 47, 49, 50, 52, 56, 58, 60, 61, 68, 75, 80, 81, 87, 144, 272, 279,

291, 293, 296, 307, 308, 323, 328, 344, 348, 353, 357, 415, 423, 425, 449, 532, 536
hsw
– Italy
Five Star Movement

Italian populism

ideational theory 183, 184, 186
identity politics 27, 61, 86, 311, 435, 539
ideology 21, 31
– host ideology 82, 131, 136–138, 177, 195, 197–200, 208, 209, 365, 385, 562
– political ideology 59, 82, 93, 177, 206–208, 321, 323, 532, 555, 558, 560–562, 564
illiberalism 263, 549
impact 22, 23, 34–36, 79, 80, 84, 87, 90, 95, 100–102, 104–106, 119, 120, 131, 135, 136, 159, 163, 164, 173, 186, 205, 215, 218–220, 222, 227–235, 242, 262–265, 340, 362, 364–369, 371–375, 387, 400, 402, 457, 476, 487, 488, 499–501, 505, 535, 539, 547, 557, 570, 574, 578, 582
incivility 459, 462, 463
inclusion 31, 82, 86, 89, 134, 136, 152, 156, 179, 240, 241, 335, 336, 350, 351, 358, 365, 368, 371, 372, 401, 423, 426, 445, 478, 487, 500
institutionalization 361
interests 19, 23, 29, 34, 37, 38, 54, 56, 58, 65, 120, 132, 137, 149, 150, 155, 157, 158, 177, 200, 228, 240, 247, 272, 274, 314, 315, 336, 338, 363, 365, 385, 389, 403, 414–418, 422, 423, 426, 443, 445–447, 450, 502, 510, 528, 529, 537, 543, 546, 555, 570
intermediary bodies 104, 544
Islamophobia 37, 80, 85, 86, 530, 535–539
Italy 17–19, 25, 26, 48, 70, 74, 79, 88, 89, 99, 101, 102, 151, 155, 171, 180, 205, 206, 213, 227, 234, 236, 271–273, 275, 291, 292, 297, 299, 300, 302, 337, 341, 347, 389, 400, 405, 406, 432, 433, 458, 460, 464, 471, 477, 483, 532, 533, 538, 546, 558, 571, 575

Latin America 20, 23, 28, 30, 31, 34
– Argentina 31, 55, 150, 156, 158, 167, 333, 334, 337, 339–342, 347, 349, 351, 354, 357, 368, 372, 413, 416, 418–421, 423–425, 503, 505
– Cristina Fernández de Kirchner 351, 354, 413
– Ecuador 31, 171, 333, 337, 340, 341, 347, 353, 354, 357, 370, 371, 375, 413, 416, 418, 420–425, 508
– Evo Morales 31, 115, 165, 340, 341, 354, 365, 372, 413, 416, 504, 521
– Hugo Chávez 30, 31, 136, 141, 150, 165, 228, 340, 354, 365, 370, 372, 413, 416, 435, 504, 516, 523
– Latin American politics 338, 357, 358
– Peronism 73, 111, 150, 341, 347, 349–353, 356, 357, 505
– Rafael Correa 31, 228, 340, 341, 347, 352–354, 357, 370, 413, 416
leaders 20, 22, 24, 26, 27, 30, 31, 37
left-right ideology 373
left-wing populism 21, 59, 82, 115, 151, 153, 178, 294, 295, 365, 371, 507, 510, 517
legal reform 418, 419
legitimacy 19, 49, 67, 76, 83, 88, 93, 94, 101, 102, 104, 132, 139, 154, 155, 157, 199, 202, 234, 235, 241, 294, 312, 317, 322, 338, 344, 376, 394, 416, 420, 426, 429, 444, 516–518, 533, 547
liberal democracy 22, 23, 82, 83, 132, 133, 140, 143, 144, 151, 228, 229, 231, 232, 253, 262, 274, 321, 322, 334, 335, 361, 364, 366, 389, 417, 545

measurement 136, 140, 141, 143, 144, 163, 165, 169, 177, 178, 183–187, 200, 368, 431, 446, 473, 479
media 17, 19, 20, 22, 32–36
– anti-media populism 389, 390, 444, 446, 449, 452, 453
– journalism 36, 315, 316, 389, 390, 401, 413, 417, 442–444, 446, 451–453, 462
– media institutions 384, 386–389, 400, 413, 415–417
– media logic 75, 121, 124, 387–390, 394, 399, 403, 408
– media policy 413, 420, 424
– media populism 388–390, 400, 441, 442, 444, 446, 449, 451–453, 458, 517
– new media 32, 75, 99, 116, 299, 383, 387, 390–394, 402, 444, 463, 530
– social media 22, 32, 36, 121, 122, 235, 315, 323, 326, 330, 383, 387, 390–393, 403, 429, 434, 436, 449, 457–464, 527, 538, 576
methods
– comparative analysis 49, 106, 119, 151, 220, 413, 506, 547
– content analysis 117, 124, 164–166, 169, 170, 173, 174, 181, 240, 248, 250, 254, 368, 462
– expert survey* 114, 167, 173, 179–181, 183, 186
– multilevel analysis 476, 479, 480, 483–485, 487, 489
– quantitative analysis 165, 431
migration crisis 79, 198, 262
minimal state 250
misinformation 383, 393, 461

nativism 24, 32, 52, 90, 101, 113, 177, 183, 184, 213, 257, 263, 292, 293, 322, 327, 527, 529–532, 534, 539, 557, 563
new populism 294, 299, 301

opportunity structure 88
organizations 313
out-groups 314, 445–449, 453, 458

parties 17, 18, 20, 22–28, 32, 33, 35, 37, 38
– party literature 163, 164, 166, 167, 169, 173

penal populism 543, 548, 549
plebiscitary democracy 82
pluralism 23, 34, 52, 59, 61, 70, 72, 105, 132, 133, 178, 181, 257, 313, 416, 418, 419, 425, 426, 453, 543, 544, 562, 575
polarization 318
policies 18, 20, 24, 34, 37, 38, 66, 68–70, 74–76, 90, 98, 106, 116, 124, 135, 137, 149–152, 155–159, 178, 183, 185, 186, 196, 197, 200, 209, 213, 220, 227, 229, 231, 233, 234, 240, 247, 248, 260, 262, 265, 275–278, 281, 286–288, 301, 302, 308, 310, 312, 318, 323–325, 330, 336, 337, 340, 354, 357, 363, 374, 388, 399, 413, 414, 416–418, 425, 426, 445, 451, 500, 501, 503, 505, 510, 528, 529, 535, 543, 547, 548, 555–560, 563, 570, 580–582
political linkages 156
political movements 29, 49, 50, 59, 60, 344, 347, 353
political parties 22, 24, 27, 32, 61, 66, 76, 79, 82–84, 88, 94, 95, 99, 121, 122, 155, 184, 196, 197, 199, 200, 213, 219, 231, 235, 243, 253, 258, 259, 261, 264, 266, 275, 280, 292, 295, 299, 300, 312, 333, 339–342, 344, 347–351, 355, 388, 389, 405, 406, 448, 507, 546, 548, 549, 569
– populist parties 17, 18, 20, 22, 23, 25–28, 32, 33, 37
political representation 65–67, 70–72, 76, 88, 155, 157, 251, 300, 321, 322, 326, 327, 330, 368, 421, 463, 515, 518–520, 524
political style 21, 82, 83, 89, 163, 180, 299, 307, 321, 322, 430, 431, 435, 515, 524
populist actors 19, 22, 23, 26, 34–36, 48, 49, 59, 111, 112, 117, 119, 120, 123, 131–137, 139, 140, 143, 144, 197, 240, 265, 274, 322, 363, 365, 367, 385, 392, 405, 408, 433, 435, 436, 442–446, 448, 450, 451, 453, 457, 459–462, 464, 490, 561, 563, 569, 570, 572, 573
populist appeal 24, 558
populist attitudes 36, 94, 114, 144, 145, 178, 183–187, 195, 198, 201, 202, 205–207, 214, 215, 217, 219, 389, 392, 393, 462, 463, 560, 564, 569, 571, 573, 575–579, 582
populist performance 390, 435, 436, 524
populist style 35, 88, 299, 301, 388, 394, 431, 434, 508
protest 17, 20–22, 25, 27, 28, 52, 57, 65, 66, 75, 81, 88, 89, 93, 95–97, 101–103, 105, 106, 112, 121, 177, 219, 233, 243, 254, 271, 274, 279, 281, 288, 291, 293, 295–298, 300, 301, 308, 352, 421, 452, 472, 555
provocation 35, 433, 434, 436, 444–446

racism 28, 53, 74–76, 80, 83, 85, 86, 90, 106, 310, 422, 435, 448, 528, 531, 537
radical left 17, 21, 172, 198–200, 202, 205, 208, 213–220, 229, 233, 250, 264, 291, 295, 296, 318
radical right 17, 18, 20, 21, 24, 26–28, 37, 38, 53, 79–90, 93–95, 98, 101, 104–106, 164, 172, 181, 198–200, 202, 203, 205, 208, 213–221, 227–229, 231, 233, 240, 242–248, 253, 254, 257–264, 271, 272, 274, 276, 280, 288, 289, 292–294, 366, 406, 500, 509, 527, 530–534, 536, 537, 539, 557, 558, 563, 571
representation 20, 21, 23, 31
representative democracy 23, 29, 56, 58, 76, 82, 87, 88, 116, 132, 133, 145, 250, 299, 300, 335, 366, 441, 549
right-wing extremism 60, 83, 178, 257, 258, 263, 265, 451, 536
right-wing populism 34, 54, 58–60, 82, 150, 153–156, 178, 218, 258, 263, 264, 266, 295, 298, 309, 311, 316, 322, 431–433, 441–443, 447, 448, 452, 510, 517, 521, 523, 524, 539, 573
Roma minority 260, 265

scandalisation 434, 445, 446
societal malaise 471–473, 476–480, 482–485, 487, 489
Spain 17, 18, 28, 59, 68, 72, 76, 82, 151, 155, 171, 180, 213, 217, 219, 227, 240, 291–296, 301, 334, 460, 477, 483, 510, 558, 571
– Podemos 28, 72, 74–76, 82, 89, 151, 155, 156, 180, 213, 216, 217, 219, 227, 240, 291–296, 301, 391, 506, 510, 511, 558, 563
substantive representation 362–365, 367, 369, 373, 375, 376
supply side 24, 156, 177, 178, 183, 198, 200, 201, 207, 208, 214, 407

technological revolution 153, 154, 156, 157
terminology 83, 400

USA 48–50, 52, 56, 80, 185, 314, 523, 536
– 2016 presidential election 32
– Trump 17, 18, 22, 24, 27–31, 48, 53, 107, 116, 118, 119, 122, 128, 151, 153, 156, 159, 232, 272, 307, 308, 310–318, 321, 324–330, 334, 399, 403, 408, 429, 430, 432–436, 459, 461, 501, 510, 521–523, 543, 555, 571, 572, 574

voters 18, 19, 23–26, 30, 32, 36, 38
voting 23, 57, 75, 76, 85, 86, 94, 95, 100, 183, 185, 186, 198, 202, 213–220, 243, 252, 279–281, 284–287, 291, 298, 300, 318, 447, 463, 473, 511, 564, 571

Western Europe 19, 21–23, 25–27, 30, 32