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Imagining the Peoples of Europe

Populist discourses across the political spectrum

Edited by
Jan Zienkowski and Ruth Breeze

Imagining the Peoples of Europe

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Volume 83

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Edited by

Jan Zienkowski
Université Saint-Louis - Bruxelles

Ruth Breeze
University of Navarra

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Introduction

Imagining populism and the peoples of Europe

Jan Zienkowski and Ruth Breeze

The political landscape in Europe is going through a time of rapid change. Established political parties and ways of doing politics are being challenged by a multitude of new movements and players that claim to articulate the will of the people. Opponents of these movements often use the label of populism in order to disqualify these actors and projects. Whereas some actors reject this imposed label outright, others embrace it as a name connoting real or proper democracy as opposed to what they see as a decadent or corrupt mode of politics pursued by politically correct elites.

As populism has become a common term in contemporary political debates it has also generated wide academic interest (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2013; Moffitt 2016; Aalberg et al. 2017; Laclau 2005; Wodak 2015; Yilmaz 2012). In the public sphere at large as well as in the confines of the tiny corner called academia, debates about populism abound (Stavrakakis 2017: 523; see Chapters 1 and 2, this volume). These debates often become needlessly convoluted as the signifier populism is deployed alternately – and sometimes simultaneously – as a descriptive or analytical term, as an insult or disqualification and/or as a democratic value to be pursued. The fact that the label is being deployed in order to designate ideological projects across the political spectrum does not make things easier from an analytical point of view. For instance, the anti-Islamic anti-immigration discourses of Trump in the US, PEGIDA in Germany or Geert Wilders' Freedom Party (PVV) in the Netherlands have little in common with the projects of Syriza in Greece, Podemos in Spain or Nuit Debout in France. Whether such parties and movements are to be labelled populist is not only an academic question, it is a question that is part and parcel of the debate itself.

It is therefore imperative for discourse scholars to disentangle themselves from this conceptual and linguistic confusion and to take an analytical view of what these parties are actually claiming, how these claims involve appeals to

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"the people", and how their different political styles and stances really coincide or overlap. Moreover, the category of populism itself cannot be used in an unreflexive manner as social-scientific analytic uses of this term may or may not overlap with the way this category is used in everyday political language.

This volume brings together a collection of analyses that focus on the core issue of populism, namely, the question how 'the people' can be imagined, constructed and interpellated in political projects that aim to mobilize majority populations with programs of radical change in opposition to supposedly minority and/or elite interests. The authors contributing to this volume base their analyses on textual and discursive evidence from a wide variety of sources within Europe and its nearest neighbors. The analyses on display rely on overlapping and diverging theoretical and methodological approaches in the fields of discourse studies and populism studies. They range from macro-analytical discursive analyses focusing on the large-scale interpretive logics structuring contemporary discourse to micro-analytic linguistic analyses focusing on the grammatic and lexical choices made by actors engaging in 'populist' rhetoric. This volume also contains contributions seeking to approach populism in a hybrid manner by analyzing the way large-scale interpretive patterns crystallize in empirically observable patterns that can be discerned with a more linguistically and/or textually oriented toolbox. As a whole then, this book presents a hybrid collection of articles that rely on largely compatible but distinct disciplinary, theoretical and methodological frameworks, that offer a prismatic view of varieties in populist rhetoric within Europe and Europe's immediate vicinity.

In what follows, we will explain our understanding of the nexus between political populism(s) and representations of the people and outline the thinking that underlies our choice of contributions.

First of all, it is essential to avoid the un-reflexive adoption of a strictly pejorative definition of populism. As Stavrakakis argues, it is extremely important not to reify populism, and to avoid equating populism with the "irrational, unthinkable, abnormal, even monstrous" (Stavrakakis 2017: 525). As he points out, we do not merely need to analyze populism, we also need to understand talk about populism, both within and outside of academia, and this requires a reflexive attitude (Stavrakakis 2017: 526). According to Stavrakakis, there is an "emancipatory potential" within "certain populist discourses in representing excluded groups and facilitating social incorporation against oppressive and unaccountable power structures". At the same time, it is important that one "remains alert to the fact that, due to the irreducible *impurity* of every relation of representation, due to the sliding capacity of signification, even genuine popular grievances and demands can end up being represented by illiberal and anti-democratic forces or becoming hostages of authoritarian institutional dynamics" (Stavrakakis 2017: 528–529).

Even though there is certainly no consensus over the definition of populism – either within or outside of academia – there is an interdisciplinary consensus that populism involves a systematic appeal and interpellation of 'the people' through the construction of a supposedly homogeneous will and identity of a group linked to a particular region and/or nation, by means of a strategic exploitation of selected ethnic and socioeconomic criteria. As we will see, not all authors consider mere appeals to the people a sufficient reason to label a particular political project as 'populist', but this homogenizing tendency, and the projection of some form of antagonistic opposition ('the enemies of the people') is nevertheless a recurring element in populist projects (Moffitt 2016). In short, although all politicians and parties try to attract supporters and build solidarity by making rhetorical claims to represent 'people', political projects are frequently called populist when they claim to embody and express the homogeneous will of 'the people' while opposing this will to an antagonistic 'other', which usually includes some kind of 'elite'.

Nevertheless, those who seek to understand the recent rise of populisms across the globe need to come to terms with the fact that in spite of many similarities, no two populisms are completely alike. There is no such thing as a prototypical populism. Rather, we seem to be dealing with a series of political discourses (Wodak 2015), styles and performances (Moffitt 2016; 2015; Moffitt and Tormey 2014; Krzyżanowski and Ledin 2017), strategies and logics (Laclau 2005; De Cleen and Carpentier 2010; see Chapter 1, this volume) that share a series of family resemblances. Regional differences exist with respect to these 'populisms' as well as with respect to the connotations the term 'populism' has acquired over time. Differences can be observed in the way populism is understood and practiced in the US, Latin America, Asia and Europe. But as this volume demonstrates, even within Europe the category of populism covers a wide range of projects that are often at odds with each other.

Here, we will be concerned first and foremost with current European manifestations of and debates on populism. It is fair to say that in Europe, left-wing populist projects have traditionally received less academic attention than right-wing projects, and left-wing political discourse has seldom been analyzed under the header of populism. This is not to say that the distinction between inclusionary and exclusionary types of populism overlaps with the distinction between a Latin American (left-wing) and a European (extreme right-wing) model (Stavrakakis 2017: 530). Many people active in projects such as that of Podemos have embraced the term populism in order to revindicate this notion for left-wing purposes. It should also be noticed that the signifier populism tends to be connoted differently by political actors in the South and in the North-East of Europe. Whereas radical left-wing actors in countries such as Spain frequently equate populism and democracy with participatory and emancipatory modes of politics (see Chapters 3

and 5, this volume), left-wing thinkers in the North of Europe tend to use the term to mean the opposite. But as the article by Óscar García Agustín demonstrates (see Chapter 6, this volume), even within Northern Europe we find left-wing articulations of the populist logic. Most Anglophone critical discourse analysts refer to racist and anti-migration right-wing political projects when writing about populism (e.g. Wodak 2015). But as this volume shows, more and more scholars of populist discourse are turning their attention to left-wing (re-) articulations, constructions and interpellations of the people and its will.

Not only is the notion of populism a site and object of ideological struggle. The same goes for the notion of 'people'. People-related signifiers have inherited many country and language specific connotations that complicate debates about populism further. All democratic modes of politics need to address the people living in a particular constituency to construct a demos and to let it shape the public realm, its identities, practices and institutions. If the notion of populism is to bear any analytic weight, we need not only to specify what sort of projects may be labeled populist, we also need to answer the question how they may be distinguished from other modes of politics. Based on the studies collected in this volume, the construction of antagonistic political relationships that comes with many contemporary appeals to the people may be one of the most compelling arguments for keeping the concept of populism in spite of the complexities of its use in academic and political discourse.

Comparative studies are needed in order to find commonalities and differences in the way the label of populism is used, as well as in the ways in which the people is being addressed and interpellated in contemporary politics. However, comparative discourse studies of populist projects across the ideological and international spectrum are relatively rare. We are therefore glad to provide a volume containing articles that highlight and explain the different ways in which notions such as 'people' and 'populism' are used across a variety of national contexts.

This volume contains articles that problematize and analyze both the label of 'populism' and the notion of the 'people' in a variety of European contexts from a wide variety of different discourse analytical and discourse theoretical perspectives. Considering the fact that the meanings of signifiers such as 'people' and 'populism' emerge through complex articulatory practices that should always be studied *in situ*, taking different layers of linguistic, interactional, social, historical, economic and political context into account, the authors in this book argue either that a single definition of populism will not do, or that the definition proposed should be flexible enough to account for the different forms populist projects may take. With the exception of the theoretical chapter provided by Benjamin De Cleen, all chapters included in this volume provide case studies of the way the people(s) of Europe and/or the notion of populism are imagined in a variety of political projects.

De Cleen's chapter offers an overview of the theoretical field of populism studies and an argument for studying populism as a discursive and political *logic* (see also Glynos and Howarth 2007). In Chapter 1, De Cleen reminds us that no two populisms or images of the people are completely alike and argues in favor of an understanding of populism as a political logic. He agrees with Laclau that the populist logic implies the construction of a down-up opposition between a people and an elite whose identities are mutually constitutive. However, he also suggests that more attention needs to be paid to the particular ways in which this opposition is being constructed if we are to acknowledge populism in its complex diversity. For him, populism is not to be equated with *the* political logic as Laclau suggests in his later works. Rather, we are dealing with *a particular* political logic as suggested in Laclau's earlier work and as suggested by contemporary Essex style discourse theorists (see Chapter 1, this volume).

De Cleen reminds us that the mere presence of the signifier 'people' is not a sufficient reason to distinguish populism from other political discourses. Liberal, communist, green and nationalist political projects all refer to the people on a regular basis. Instead of thinking about populism in binary terms by asking whether a particular political project or discourse is populist or not, we should ask to what extent a particular project is articulated with and within a populist logic. The question of populism then becomes a question of degree: to what extent is the identity and will of the people (re-)articulated through a discourse marked by a populist logic? De Cleen makes his point as follows: "the definition [of populism] proposed here considers only politics that revolve around the construction of a political frontier along the down/up, powerless/powerful axis as populist. The construction of a political frontier between a nationally defined 'people' and its outside for example is not in itself populist" (see Chapter 1, this volume). De Cleen's understanding of populism has implications for the way in which the signifier 'the people' needs to be studied in the field of discourse studies. Rather than assuming that the meaning of 'the people' is stable across all varieties of populism, we need to investigate empirically how this notion is articulated with elements from other political projects in complex and varying ways.

Several of the authors in this volume take a Laclauian perspective on populist discourse, but interestingly, they apply this perspective to different degrees, on different levels of analysis, using different methodological approaches. As de Cleen explains, Laclau proposed an understanding of populism as a political logic and even as the essence of the political itself (Laclau 2005).

In order to understand the different articulations and modes of populism within Europe while taking the shifting meanings of the label 'populism' into account, it is useful to consider populism as a communicative style, as a performative strategy, and even as a mode of politics with a logic of its own. In this edited volume,

we want to shed light on the surprisingly different ways in which the populist logic can manifest itself. For instance, in her analysis of the way the Turkish AKP has imagined and constituted the 'millet' or people since its inception, Hariye Özen argues that we are dealing with a form of Islamic conservativism infused by a decidedly populist logic (see Chapter 4, this volume). Wodak and Krzyżanowski describe right wing populism as "a hybrid political ideology that rejects the post-war political consensus and usually, though not always, combines laissez-faire liberalism and anti-elitism with other, often profoundly different and contradictory ideologies". They consider such ideologies to be populist because of their "appeal to the 'common man/woman', as to a quasi homogeneous people, defined in an ethno-nationalist way" (Wodak and Krzyżanowski 2017: 475). Whereas this definition of populism accurately captures key features of many right-wing populist projects, hybridity itself is a feature shared by all forms of populism, and upon closer examination, by all forms of ideological discourse, a point raised explicitly by De Cleen and exemplified by several other authors contributing to this volume.

With some notable exceptions (see Chapter 1 and 2, this volume), most authors in this collection focus on 'the people' rather than on (debates about) populism as such. This focus on signifiers such as *de mensen* (Dutch), *das Volk* or *die Menschen* (German) or *la gente* (Spanish) allows for a cross-European and cross-linguistic perspective, sidestepping some of the inconclusive arguments that beset studies of what populism might mean in terms of policy or ideology. Taken together, the articles in this volume show how these signifiers are being articulated with different identities, concepts, practices and performances in different political contexts, thus exemplifying the contingency, agility and adaptability of populist discourse. The authors also focus on how friends, allies, adversaries and opponents of the people are being constructed. This volume allows us to address the question as to what this variety of articulatory practices tells us about the dynamics of democratic and/or populist politics within Europe and at its borders.

It is useful to shed some more light on the diversity of perspectives taken in this volume. The authors who contributed to this volume agree that the people-elite distinction is key to any definition of populism, but not all of them understand populism in exactly the same way or believe that this is the only criterion at play. Neither do they analyze their data – discourses about the people and/or populism – from the same disciplinary and theoretical point of view. As such, the collection provided here exemplifies convergences as well as divergences in the contemporary field of populism studies. Among the convergences it is possible to distinguish a tendency to refer to an emerging canon of populism studies. Authors such as Mudde and Laclau are frequently cited even though their understandings of populism may be operationalized in rather different ways (see Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2013; Laclau 2005). The diversity in disciplinary, theoretical and

methodological takes on 'populist discourse' as well as on discourse about the peoples of Europe not only reflects the heterogeneity of the field of populism studies, it also exemplifies the transdisciplinary complexity of the field of discourse studies.

The field of discourse studies is emerging out of a convergence of multiple disciplines and schools with partially overlapping interests regarding issues of power, knowledge, subjectivity, context, language use, practice and reflexivity. It is not our intention to provide a mapping of this complex movement here. Such mappings exist elsewhere (see Angermuller, Maingueneau, and Wodak 2014; Angermuller 2014). Nevertheless, it is useful to consider how the way in which populism is understood by the authors contributing to this volume reflects key disciplinary, theoretical and methodological assumptions regarding discourse. Broadly speaking, the field of discourse studies emerges out of a partial convergence of discourse theory and discourse analysis. Whereas discourse theoretical approaches tend to reflect on the way knowledge, power, subjectivity, reflexivity and critique are shaped in and through discourse, discourse analytical perspectives focus more on discourse as a cover term for heterogeneous and contextualized linguistic – and sometimes multimodal – practices that should always be studied *in situ*. Discourse theory is thereby frequently considered to be a denominator for more abstract approaches to discourse popular in political science, macro sociology, history and philosophy. Discourse analysis is usually associated with approaches such as conversation analysis, linguistic pragmatics, linguistic ethnography, as well as with a variety of approaches in critical discourse analysis (see Angermuller, Maingueneau, and Wodak 2014; Angermuller 2014; Zienkowski 2017b).

It may be said that discourse analytical perspectives gravitate more to meso and micro perspectives on discourse, focusing on situated interactions and texts as well as on the way these draw on wider ideological and hegemonic structures, whereas discourse theories take a more macro perspective in order to shed light on large-scale patterns in a society's structures of knowledge, power, subjectivity, ideology and hegemony. However, such a distinction is far too simplifying and bypasses the fact that even the most micro-oriented perspectives on discourse do have a theoretical basis with implicit and explicit assumptions about social actors, communication and social reality at large. At the same time, discourse theorists frequently engage in analytical practices by examining concrete texts, imagery and practices, even though they may often be less explicit about the heuristic and methodological procedures taken. In this light, it should be noticed that as the dialogue developing between discourse theoretically and discourse analytically oriented scholars unfolds, more and more transdisciplinary theoretical and methodological cross-overs take place. In this volume, for instance, we encounter discourse theoretical and discourse analytical insights in order to provide a grounded and theoretically astute approach to the way signifiers such as 'people'

and 'populism' are being imagined across Europe's public spheres. This is not to say that every article integrates linguistic and non-linguistic insights into discourse to the same degree. Whereas some authors are clearly to be located on either end of the continuum between discourse theory and analysis, others engage in elaborate attempts to integrate both perspectives.

The authors in this volume frequently combine different approaches to discourse and populism in order to come to grips with the topic and with the data under discussion. Since not all authors rely on the same sources this leads to different understandings of populism that overlap and diverge in varying degrees. We consider this partial heterogeneity to be instructive as well as problematic in a productive sense of the word. It is problematic because of a key difficulty with populism research: the fact that the signifier populism – like its focal concept, 'the people' – is decidedly empty and has become a major object and stake of contemporary political struggles (Laclau 1994). Like every politicized and abstract signifier, the category of populism operates as a value (Zienkowski 2017a). The notion is valorized positively by some and negatively by others. As a result, it is being associated with a wide range of discursively constructed actors and practices across the political spectrum.

An exemplification of the way populism operates as a Laclauian political logic is provided by Borriello and Mazzolini who see populism as a politicizing alternative to the depoliticizing tendencies of neoliberal governance and governmentality. For them, the rise of the Italian *Movimento Cinque Stelle* (M5S) and the rise of *Podemos* in Spain "epitomise the populist logic as Ernesto Laclau has defined it, namely as a mode of construction of the political – which involves the dichotomization of the social space through the construction of a common enemy – rather than as a specific ideology or rhetoric" (see Chapter 3, this volume). To say that populism is a discursive *logic* is to say that it is a political rationality or structure that can manifest itself through widely diverging semiotic forms. A political logic structures the relationships between subject positions, statements, practices, identities and institutions in a non-arbitrary but contingent way. It partially fixes meanings in a way that allows people to make sense of themselves and of the world they live in.

Not only the signifier 'the people' and understandings of 'populism' differ across Europe's political contexts. The same goes for the specific forms the logic of populism takes in a particular discourse. The paper by Borriello and Mazzolini explicitly reflects on this issue by tracing the populist political logic in the discourses of Podemos and the Movimento Cinque Stelle (M5S) while reflecting on the similarities and differences between these two political projects. They ask themselves explicitly if we are dealing with two examples of the same phenomenon, answering this question positively by pointing out that both projects represent populist

counter-discourses that position themselves antagonistically in opposition to a neoliberal hegemonic order with post-political pretentions. At the same time however, they point out that "Podemos and M5S display strong differences with regard to the specificities of their national context, their ideological background, the identity of the new political subject they attempt to shape, as well as their strategy and organisational structure, which could prove to be decisive when it comes to building an alternative to the hegemonic order they challenge" (see Chapter 3, this volume). In alignment with De Cleen, they conclude that "it is precisely in the articulation of a populist logic with a new hegemonic horizon where the key to these political movements' outcome lies" (see Chapter 3, this volume).

The paper by Montesano Montessori and Morales-López provides an in-depth analysis of the way Spanish left-wing party Podemos articulates notions such as *gente* (people), *pueblo* (people/village) and *patria* (homeland) into its populist strategy. Drawing – partially – on Laclau and other Essex discourse theorists, they seek to identify the political logics of equivalence and difference at play by focusing on figures of speech such as synecdoche and metaphor. Combining a textually grounded analysis with poststructuralist discourse theory and narrative analysis, they show how Podemos "created a counterhegemonic narrative based on the demands and interpretations of 15M, in which it decodes the discourses and practices of the traditional parties and recodes and enacts those of the new politics while claiming the need to reverse the power structures in a desired opposite direction (bottom up and from the periphery to the centre)" (see Chapter 5, this volume). This analysis thus provides an interesting counterweight for those authors who consider populist discourse to be an exclusively right-wing phenomenon and shows how Laclauian theory can be applied to European 'new left' parties.

De Cleen warns against academic attempts that aim to define populism once and for all. Degano and Sicurella's paper demonstrates that debates on populism are not limited to the confines of academia and that the debate about populism as conducted in newspapers is equally – if not more – tantalizing in its vagueness. The authors argue that "a full understanding of the dynamics and impact of populism requires investigating not only the contents of populist rhetoric, but also how populism itself and populist identities are framed, evaluated and represented in the public sphere" (see Chapter 2, this volume). In order to provide such a much-needed account, they analyze the commentaries on populism elicited around Brexit in the UK and Italian press in 2016 newspaper opinion pieces. By focusing on the use of the term populism in these articles, they aim to answer the question to what extent such articles contribute to an open and constructive dialogue on populism and issues considered to be populist. They are worried that "if no space of dialogue is opened at all, the people who share some of the key concerns leveraged by populist political discourse might feel excluded from the 'official' debate,

and thus become more receptive (or vulnerable) to radical populist propaganda" (see Chapter 2, this volume). This concern testifies to a more consensus-oriented normative stance towards the public sphere than the one taken by authors who ground their understanding of populism in conflict-oriented perspectives such as those of the post-Marxist account of the public sphere advocated by Laclau.

Degano and Sicurella operationalize the notion of dialogical space where the notion of populism can – in principle – be negotiated. Their analysis shows that most commentators do not work with explicit definitions of the term and that the meaning of the concept is mostly "'defined' by the company it keeps, through semantic prosody or through the effects deriving from 'populist' decisions or actions, so that a definition of sorts can only be inferred on the basis of evaluative elements connected with the concept" (see Chapter 2, this volume). They therefore conduct an analysis that seeks to identify different definitional clusters in order to come to grips with editorialists' use of the term. Such clusters include: populism as a threat; populism as identity politics; and populism as a reaction to justified grievances. They then proceed to examine the space for dialogic heteroglossia questioning to what extent the editorials broaden or narrow the space for a dialogue on the meaning and legitimacy of populism and the meaning of 'populism' itself. Through a detailed analysis of the different ways in which commentators define, evaluate and discuss populism, they conclude that "in terms of dialogicity the situation is best described as one of entrenchment, with each party focusing on reiterating its own standpoints rather than on challenging the assumptions made by the opponent" in the Italian sample (see Chapter 2, this volume). In the UK sample, they distinguish a "greater willingness than in Italian newspapers to discuss the merits of views antithetical to one's own, thus expanding to a certain extent the dialogical space" (see Chapter 2, this volume). These differences are noteworthy, and regardless of the normative and political lessons one may or may not draw from this observation, it is worth taking such differences in public discourse into account when studying populist phenomena across Europe.

One of the chapters that may shake us out of our established comfort zone when thinking about the different forms that populism may take is the paper by Hariye M. Özen. Like the first three authors discussed above, Özen draws on Laclau's understanding of discourse in her analysis of the Turkish AKP as a manifestation of Islamic conservative populism in Turkey. In addition to her insightful analysis of the way the AKP has embraced a populist logic, Özen makes at least two important points. Firstly, she shows that the AKP's embrace of a populist logic does not mean that its 'populist' discourse has always remained the same. She shows how a single political actor's populism may change over time by arguing that the AKP moved from a democratic to an anti-democratic mode of populism. She states that "populism may assume highly different forms depending on the

changes within its content, that is, the way the people and power categories are discursively constructed" (see Chapter 4, this volume). Taking this principle seriously, she engages in an analysis of the way the AKP initially used the signifier *millet* (people) that crystallized a series of political demands of heterogeneous social groups into an equivalential chain. According to her, the AKP's discourse was initially agonistic regarding the powers-that-be. As the AKP failed to fulfil its democratic promise it would gradually attempt to retain the loyalty of its conservative and religious electorate, progressively reserving the signifier *millet* for these groups alone: "the reconstitution of the people in a narrow way to signify Islamic/conservative segments was simultaneously accompanied by the reconstitution of the power or the common enemy, which became any entity who was not with the AKP" (see Chapter 4, this volume). Özen demonstrates how a single political project's populist logic may evolve from a democratic to an anti-democratic mode of politics – an observation that complicates an all-too-easy distinction between left and right-wing modes of populism.

Even though many European critical discourse analysts have long tended to equate populism with exclusively right-wing forms associated with xenophobia, racism and extremism, there is an increasing awareness of the fact that the populist logic can also be deployed by political actors that find themselves elsewhere in the ideological spectrum. This can be exemplified with reference to the paper by Óscar García Agustín who analyses an attempt to deploy a populist strategy by the Danish left-wing Red-Green Alliance (RGA). He focuses specifically on the way this party articulates elements of socialist and populist discourse, exploring the implications for the way it aims to constitute a new inclusive collective subject named 'community' that is always in-the-making as a counterweight to antagonistic elites. García Agustín points out how difficult it can be to construct a strong 'us' or 'people' in a way that can include a broad range of groups including unemployed citizens and refugees. According to him, the way the RGA defines the antagonistic camp is more clearly delineated than the new collective subject it proposes. García Agustín argues that we are dealing with a hybrid attempt at populism that is haunted by several difficulties including its ambiguous relation towards social democracy and its relationship towards nationalism. He points out that "all parties, from left to right, participate in the nationalist framework, which the Danish People's Party has made hegemonic" and that the search for an alternative framework remains a challenge, also for the progressive and inclusive project of the RGA (see Chapter 6, this volume).

The article by Andreas Önnerfors draws our attention to the fact that all forms of populism are historically grounded in highly specific contexts of social and political development. He does so by examining the discourse of the German PEGIDA movement tracing its emergence back to the GDR citizen movement and

to the idea of resistance against a dictatorial system still awaiting final redemption. He shows how this movement presents itself as the only legitimate representative of a German *Volk* (people) threatened by "a toxic combination of evil-minded domestic elites and trans-national migration" (see Chapter 7, this volume). He then proceeds to connect the linguistic and performative strategies of PEGIDA with the ideas circulating in the European New Right networks. As such, he demonstrates how historical contextualizations of populist projects can contribute to a better understanding of the specific directions in which specific populisms develop. He draws our attention to the fact that all too formalistic approaches to populism based on the people-elite distinction should not make us lose track of the fact that any ideology and any form of populism is always much richer than abstract models suggest. One important lesson to be drawn here is that to understand an ideology is to understand its history.

The paper by Naomi Truan provides sound empirical support for De Cleen's argument that mere mentions of the signifier 'people' in political discourse alone are not enough to distinguish populist from other political projects. Comparing the different ways in which 'the people' is articulated in German, French, and British parliamentary debates by means of a cross-linguistic corpus analysis, she raises the question to what extent people-related signifiers in different languages (e.g. *people* (English), *peuple* (French) and *Volk* (German)) can be treated as being equivalent to each other. To begin with, she points out that the lexeme *Volk* in contemporary German political discourse is underused in comparison with the relatively common *people* and *peuple*. Both of these terms are used commonly by parties across the political spectrum in the UK and in France respectively. Referring to Retterath (2016), Truan points out that as an alternative to *Volk*, German talk about the people takes the form of 'fellow citizens', 'people all over the country', ungendered phrases such as 'the ordinary person' or gendered individualized phrases such as 'the Swabian housewife', the 'nurse' and so on (see Chapter 8, this volume). The papers by Andreas Önnerfors and Miguel Ayerbe Linares provide some historical context for the historically particular (non-) use of the German label *Volk* (see Chapters 7 and 11, this volume).

Truan's paper argues that *Volk*, *peuple* and *people* are not simple equivalents in the contemporary political landscape and asks whether this implies that all or none of the speakers who use these terms should be considered populist. In the same vein, she suggests that one has to ask whether the attempt by the French far left to connect to the people by calling for referendums also constitutes a populist stance. Essex style authors would answer that the mere use of people-related signifiers is not a sufficient condition to identify the operation of a populist logic. However, this observation aside, this paper clearly demonstrates the importance of the specific ways that discursive and lexical choices carve out social meaning

and serves as a warning to anyone who naively believes political discourse to consist of elements that can be translated unproblematically and unreflexively into other languages and exported to other contexts of use. The paper shows clearly that not only 'populism' but also the notion of 'people' itself is a site of struggle, "a discursive construct subject to controversy and metadiscourse" (see Chapter 8, this volume).

Samuel Bennett's paper focuses on the way the UK Independence Party (UKIP) constructed the people during the 2016 Brexit referendum campaign via the official UKIP Twitter account. Considering populism in terms of a repertoire of performative, linguistic and non-verbal strategies aiming to mobilize a population, he combines the Laclauian concept of the 'nodal point' that fixes meaning with a discourse analytical approach based on CDA. He argues convincingly that the centrality of 'the people' is what distinguishes populist discourse from other political discourses. He also illustrates how populism implies an antagonistic bifurcation between an 'us' and a 'them' whereby the people gets homogenized into a uniform bloc with a collective and unambiguous will. Highlighting the importance of charismatic leadership in many right-wing forms of populism, Bennett analyses a multimodal form of communication and points out that the contemporary populist revival in Europe relies to a large extent on social media. Bennett provides a conceptual map of the way UKIP imagined the people in relation to sister concepts such as nation, working class, sovereignty, and borders, as well as in relation to counter-concepts such as immigrants, domestic elites and EU institutions. He concludes that UKIP's Brexit campaign is an example of prototypical right-wing populist discourse (see Chapter 9, this volume).

Raluca Levonian draws our attention to the way the people was imagined in the discourse of the Romanian government and of the opposition parties between 2011 and 2012. She is correct in pointing out that Eastern European discourses have rarely been investigated in populism studies. Nevertheless, she argues that "the end of the Soviet Union and 'the crisis of socialism and communism as ideologies of subordinate social groups' (Filc 2015: 274) may represent conditions for the emergence of populist tendencies in post-communist states" (see Chapter 10, this volume). In addition, the unstable party systems, widespread corruption, and the socio-economic contexts in these countries favor the emergence of discursive tropes that have been studied elsewhere under the header of populist discourse. At the same time, Levonian demonstrates that the label 'populism' is widely contested and is used as a way to delegitimate political opponents in Romania. She investigates the conflict between a governing coalition formed around the Democratic Liberal Party (PDL) and a coalition of opposition parties called the Social-Liberal Union (USL). The analysis focuses on the way both actors position themselves in relation to each other, to 'the people' and to the notion of populism

itself. The analysis focuses on political statements and speeches delivered in the Romanian Senate between 2011 by members of the governing parties and the political alliance formed in opposition. The latter were frequently called populist by the governing party. The governing party engaged in austerity politics and asked for sacrifices from the population, labelling the parties opposing these policies as 'populist'. Referring to Stavrakakis and Katsambekis (2014: 133), Levonian points out that the USL's discourse illustrates the fact that "parties resisting austerity measures, especially those representing the Left, tend to be criticized for being 'populist'" (see Chapter 10, this volume) even though the USL opposition could also be interpreted as a form of democratic resistance in the face of an increasingly authoritarian discourse.

The next two chapters take bottom-up linguistic approaches to addressing representations of the people in political discourse. These text-level studies shed light on the nature of populist discourse in a very different way from the preceding chapters by systematically interrogating the lexical and syntactic features that characterize the language used by populist politicians, thereby helping to fill in the details that complete our picture of populist discourse. First, the chapter by Miguel Ayerbe Linares focuses on the way the people is imagined by the new German right-wing political party *Alternative für Deutschland* (AfD). In this paper, the author asks who 'the people' are who the AfD claims to represent, by focusing on the words that are used to describe them and the way they are represented in relation to other players such as government parties, the EU, immigrants and refugees. He focuses on the lexemes used to refer to the people in the bulletin *AfD-Kompakt*, in AfD election manifestos and in the Twitter accounts of the party and its former leader Frauke Petry. Special attention is thereby devoted to the historically loaded German term *Volk*. Pointing out that this is not the only term used in order to talk about the people, Ayerbe Linares argues that the party's alternating use of signifiers such as *Volk* or *Bürger* is meant to address different sections of the party's potential electorate. Offering a linguistic analysis of the properties attributed to the German *Volk*, he shows how the party attempts to present itself as the only possible alternative to what it holds up as a supposedly problematic status quo supported by traditional political elites (see Chapter 11, this volume).

Also taking a rather micro-oriented and linguistic point of view, Maarten Van Leeuwen argues that merely talking about the people is not enough to distinguish populism from other political discourses. Even though so-called people-centrism is one of the most frequently analyzed characteristics in discourse analyses of allegedly populist discourses, he points out that there are significant differences in the grammatical place Dutch populist politicians such as Geert Wilders attribute to the people and the syntactic position granted to this term by politicians who find themselves elsewhere on the political spectrum. By contrasting the syntactic

choices made by Geert Wilders and Alexander Pechtold, he shows how insights gained from linguistically oriented modes of discourse analysis can contribute to wider discussions on the characteristics and features of populist discourse. As such he provides convincing empirical support for the claim that "the frequency in which politicians refer to 'the people' is not the only relevant measure for assessing people-centrism in (populist) political discourse – as is suggested in much of the political-scientific literature" (see Chapter 12, this volume).

The last chapter in this volume is written by Peter Furko, who conducts a case study of Hungarian parliamentary speeches in the debate on the implementation of immigration quotas in 2016. Combining insights from linguistic pragmatics and critical discourse analysis, Furko applies a taxonomy of strategies developed by Wodak et al. (2009) to the discursive strategies deployed by parliamentary actors. The analysis shows that from a linguistic point of view, pro-government and opposition MPs deploy similar discursive strategies including antagonization, selective presentation, patronizing, polarization, dramatization, and emotional appeals. However, it is also possible to identify differences in the frequencies with which particular linguistic and discursive resources are used by different political actors. For instance, Furko notices that members of centrist and left-wing political parties make more use of conversationalizing pragmatic markers than members of the conservative right-wing party Fidesz. Overall, Furko shows how different attitudes regarding the public debate on the issue of immigration manifest themselves in the way people make strategic use of pragmatic markers (see Chapter 13, this volume).

The thirteen chapters in this volume thus make an important contribution to the literature on contemporary populism. First, they provide up-to-date evidence about the way 'the people' is used in political discourse across the spectrum, showing how this term is employed to project homogeneous identities and establish antagonisms. The discursive strategies used by (potentially) populist parties or leaders are explored across a wide range of European countries, from Italy to Denmark and from Spain to Romania, with an important chapter from Turkey that opens the door to understanding how populism works in the Middle East. Left-wing parties like Podemos and the Danish Red-Green Alliance can thus be compared with movements that are harder to classify in terms of the familiar left-center-right spectrum (M5S), with right-wing parties like Alternative für Deutschland or leaders like Geert Wilders, and with Turkey's Justice and Development Party. These chapters show how populist signifiers and logics antagonize the democratic consensus, relying on political incorrectness in order to generate public outrage and guarantee media attention. Populist projects may advocate equality as well as justifying inequality, often up to the point where xenophobia and hate speech structure large chunks of discourse. Moreover, 'pure' populism does not exist,

as every populism relies on a complex articulation of ideologies. The populist logic may articulate anything from progressive neo-Marxist thought, through anti-socialist sentiments, to Islamic conservatism.

To those interested in the workings of discourse, this collection offers a useful collection of case studies including detailed linguistic studies informed by corpus evidence, studies of argumentation and dialogicity informed by Appraisal theory, as well as more theoretically-oriented discourse studies. On a comparative level, these chapters also include cross-linguistic studies taking in two or three languages and parties in different countries (France, UK and Germany, Spain and Italy).

As a whole then, this volume testifies to the fact that academic and political debates on the meaning of signifiers such as 'the people' and 'populism' are manifestations of a much broader problematic, namely the question how we should organize democracy and/or politics itself. As such, the debates about populism are decidedly metapolitical debates (Zienkowski 2019). By this, we do not mean that we are dealing with debates that stand apart from politics or seek to move beyond politics – this would be in line with the way the New Right uses this notion (Capra Casadio 2014; Bar-On 2012, 2015). Rather, we consider populism as a metapolitical strategy in the sense that we are dealing with a mode of politics that potentially transforms the face of the public sphere, mutating the identities that populate it along the way (Zienkowski 2019; Zienkowski and De Cleen 2017). Populism does not amount to politics-as-usual but to a political logic that potentially impacts on the way we relate to and shape the political itself, and the studies in this volume go some way towards showing how we can approach this important phenomenon.

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CHAPTER 1

The populist political logic and the analysis of the discursive construction of 'the people' and 'the elite'

Benjamin De Cleen

Aiming to provide some theoretical context to this edited volume on *Imagining the Peoples of Europe*, this chapter argues that a discourse-theoretical definition of populism as a political logic is the best basis for discursive analyses of populist politics. In identifying what makes populist politics across the political spectrum populist, the chapter strongly builds on Laclau's work. But it more explicitly limits populism to a particular political logic that revolves around the claim to represent 'the people', discursively constructed through a down/up opposition between the people-as-underdog and 'the elite' as a small and illegitimately powerful group that is argued not to satisfy the needs and demands of the people. This definition also emphasizes how populism constructs not only 'the people' but also 'the elite', and how it *presents* certain demands as the will of the people. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the proposed definition's implications for the empirical analysis of populist politics across the political spectrum, suggesting that we need to analyze the ways in which populists construct the down/up opposition between 'people' and 'elite' as well as how this opposition is articulated with other elements of populists' particular programs and strategies.

Keywords: populism, discourse theory, political logic, Laclau, articulation

Introduction: Populism and the discursive construction of 'the people'

As the title of this volume, *Imagining the Peoples of Europe*, suggests, populist politics revolve around the construction of 'the people'. The best way to grasp this process, I argue in this chapter, is by approaching populism as a particular discursive political logic – as a particular way of formulating political demands in the name of 'the people' and of interpellating citizens as members of 'the people'. The construction of 'the people' has been the central concern of the discourse-theoretical

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approach to populism (Laclau 1977, 2005a, 2005b; Stavrakakis 2004; Stavrakakis and Katsambekis 2014; De Cleen and Stavrakakis 2017), rather more so than in for example conceptualisations of populism as a communication style (e.g. Jagers and Walgrave 2007) or as a thin ideology (Mudde 2004; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2017) that are dominant in mainstream political science and communication research.

My argument starts from a discussion of how the discourse-theoretical perspective provides a solution to two major limitations in debates on populism. A first section looks at how the discursively constructed character of 'the people' has been and continues to be ignored or under-theorised in much academic work on populism, and largely overlooked in journalism and political rhetoric. A second section deals with definitional issues: the inability to cover the diversity of populisms across the political spectrum (from Podemos to the Front/Rassemblement National, and from Chávez to Trump) and the inability to distinguish populism from other concepts (nationalism, for example, as illustrated recently by debates on Brexit and Trump).

The definition proposed in this article is strongly inspired by Laclau's conceptualisation of populism in *Politics and ideology in Marxist theory* (1977) and in *On Populist Reason* (2005). But it also takes into account some of the criticisms of Laclau's work, which has focused mainly on two related issues: conceptual imprecision (the concept of populism is too close to the concepts of hegemony and politics) and insufficient empirical applicability (the concept is too broad to be empirically useful) (Arditi 2007; Beasley-Murray 2006, 2010; Moffit and Tormey 2014: 384; Mudde and Rovira-Kaltwasser 2012: 7; Stanley 2008: 97; Stavrakakis 2004).

Building on the discussion of limitations of other approaches and considering criticisms of the discourse-theoretical approach, section three proposes a somewhat refined discourse-theoretical definition of populism. The article goes along with Laclau's main conceptual move: to define populism as a political logic that can be used to formulate potentially any demand, defend or contest any political project, ideology or regime. At the same time, as against the tendency in Laclau's later work to treat populism as *the* political logic, this chapter, in line with Laclau's earlier work, stresses explicitly that populism is characterised by a *particular* political logic. This revolves around the claim to represent 'the people', discursively constructed through an antagonistic pitting of 'the people' against 'the elite' along a down/up axis, with 'the people' as a large powerless group and 'the elite' as a small and illegitimately powerful group that frustrates the elite's legitimate demands (see also De Cleen 2017; De Cleen and Stavrakakis 2017; De Cleen, Glynos and Mondon 2018; Stavrakakis 2004; Stavrakakis and Katsambekis 2014).

This chapter does not attempt to formulate a *new* definition of populism, but to add to the precision of the discourse-theoretical conceptualisation of populism,

and to its empirical applicability. To this end, in the last sections of the chapter I formulate some reflections on how the definition of populism as a political logic can inform concrete discursive analyses of a broad variety of populist politics through the analysis of the discursive construction of 'the people' and 'the elite', and of how the populist logic is articulated with other elements of populists' particular programs and strategies. In this manner the chapter contributes to the growing academic consensus on a precise and empirically applicable concept of populism, whilst stressing the advantages of a more thoroughly socially-constructionist perspective than is common in non-discursive approaches.

Ignoring the populist construction of 'the people'

In *Politics and ideology in Marxist theory*, Laclau (1977: 10) identified two main barriers to the development of concepts that allow us to understand the specificity of particular forms of politics in a discourse theoretical way: "the connotative articulation of concepts at the level of common sense discourse and their rationalist articulation into essential paradigms". In other words: a lack of conceptual precision and a lack of constructivism; two issues that have indeed marked work on populism. To identify and overcome them, I follow what Howarth has called a strategy of 'formalisation'. This strategy consists of four related sub-strategies. *Reactivation* and *deconstruction* make concepts that are defined in an essentialist fashion compatible with discourse theoretical constructivist ontology. Moroever, *abstraction* and *commensuration* formalize concepts to a level where they can cover the variety of different but 'commensurate' empirical phenomena that operate according to the same formal logic (Howarth 2005: 327; Glynos and Howarth 2007). By dealing with the category of populism in this way it becomes possible to understand what makes both left-wing and right-wing populist politics populist.

This first section reactivates and deconstructs prevailing accounts of populism. It lays bare some of the deterministic and essentialist presuppositions underlying common approaches to populism and discusses how these prevent the full recognition of populism's political character. Populism is often seen as a particular relation between some political actor and 'the people' (e.g. populism as the aim to appeal to 'the people') or as a particular set of ideas about what the role of 'the people' and 'the elite' in politics should be (Mudde 2004; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser; Müller 2016). Lacking a social-constructivist perspective, such approaches tend to assume that the category 'the people' exists and has a meaning prior to its signification in (populist or anti-populist or other kinds of) discourse, or at least do not explicitly theorise populism's role in discursively constructing 'the people'. There are a number of manifestations of this problem.

Populist as popular and the reification of 'the people'

Populism is often understood as a type of politics that appeals to, or attempts to appeal to the people. In journalism and political rhetoric, populism frequently functions as a derogatory term to criticise the conscious *aim* to appeal to the people (see Taguieff 1998). Quite some academic usage of the concept is not that far from this negative common sense meaning (Jansen 2011: 77). One element here is populism's perceived opportunism or demagogy. The term populism is then used to criticise for example the aim to please the people by lowering taxes right before elections, by making promises to the people that cannot be held, or by promising 'easy' solutions for 'complex' problems. This denunciation of opportunism is part of a broader view of populism as a questionable form of politics. Populist politics is criticized for its emotional (as opposed to rational), simplistic (as opposed to complex), antagonistic (as opposed to reasonable and consensual), and anti-intellectualist message and style that is aimed at the underbelly of the people (rather than their brains) (Mudde 2004: 542; Taguieff 1998: 7).

Beyond the fact that such a definition overstretches the notion of populism (see the following section) and the sometimes simplistic and elitist view of 'the masses' as irrational and easily manipulated by populist leaders, a third, ontological, issue is most relevant at this point in the argument. Definitions of populism as opportunistic politics take 'the people', its tastes and preferences to exist independently of (populist) politics. The preferences of 'the people' exist and populists merely appeal to them. This leads to a lack of attention for the agency of populist political actors in shaping and influencing the preferences of 'the people'. Moreover, the category of 'the people' itself is taken to exist outside of the discourses speaking of and to 'the people'. However, as Bourdieu (1990: 150) has argued: "the 'people' or the 'popular' […] is first of all one of the things at stake in the struggle between intellectuals". The signifiers 'the people' and 'the popular' do not have meaning outside of the discourses that speak of 'the people' and 'the popular'. Populist discourses as well as discourses that criticise populism, then, are not merely different opinions about how politics should relate to 'the people', but construct the meaning of the signifiers 'the people' and 'the popular', and also of 'populism' (on the recurring features of anti-populist discourse see Stavrakakis 2014, 2017).

The populist electorate and the disregard for populist agency

The lack of attention for the construction of 'the people' by populists also becomes apparent in some authors' focus on voters and sociological explanations rather than on populists' politics. Some even define populism on the basis of the 'popular' character of the electorate of populist parties (e.g. Di Tella 1965; Jansen

2011; Roberts 1995). However, it does not seem very useful to treat all parties with a 'popular' electorate as populist, independently of the content or form of their political action.

Even when parties are treated as populist on the basis of their politics, there has been a strong tendency to explain their electoral success on the basis of the sociology of their voters or of broader socio-economic and socio-cultural developments. Insight into the motives and profile of the electorate of populist parties and into the broader sociological context is crucial to explain populist parties' success, but it does not contribute much to the understanding of populist *politics* itself. Indeed, quite some accounts explain the electoral success of populist politics – and particularly their success with 'popular' sectors of the population – with reference to processes independent of populist politics. The structuralist Marxist and modernisation approaches that made up the first wave of scholarship about Latin American populism in the 1960s and 1970s, for example, treated populist politics as a mere consequence of (socio-) economic processes (e.g. Di Tella 1965; Germani 1978; see Weyland 2001: 5–6). The rise of populist radical right parties in Europe also spawned a very considerable number of analyses of the social, economic, and cultural developments underlying their electoral success with the people suffering from these developments (e.g. Betz and Immerfall 1998; Ignazi 1992; Kitschelt with McGann 1995; Norris 2005). These accounts treat populist radical right parties' success as the result of and reaction to phenomena such as post-industrialisation, immigration, globalisation, and detraditionalisation (e.g. Kitschelt 2002) as well as political scandals and corruption (Fieschi and Heywood 2004). From this perspective, populist politicians have done little more than capitalise on an existing sense of crisis, identity loss, dissatisfaction, insecurity, and lack of trust in political institutions among parts of the population that were caused by processes independent of populist politics (Weyland 2001: 5). Almost fifty years ago, Sartori (1968: 1981–1982 cited in Mudde 2007: 4) criticised the 'objectivist bias' of the 'sociology of politics' not only for its focus on 'the consumer' to the detriment of attention for 'the producer' but also for attempting to explain politics by 'going beyond politics' (see also Glynos and Howarth 2007: 114–115). Macro socioeconomic and sociocultural processes are paramount in explaining the rise of certain types of parties, but these processes do not simply generate political outcomes by themselves. The notion of a marginalised mass whose interests are not taken into account by the ruling political elite, for example, only becomes politically relevant if a political movement or party manages to appeal to this group *as* marginalised and to present itself as the representative *of* that group. Moreover, this is not an appeal to 'the people' as an already-existing objective category of people that is affected by certain conditions. Instead, the interpellation of people as members of 'the people' constructs 'the people'.

The nature of populism

There are many different approaches to populism, but only a few of them really put the discursive construction of 'the people' center stage. Populism has been defined as an ideology or doctrine (MacRae 1969); as a thin ideology – a more limited set of ideas about how to evaluate 'the people' and 'the elite' and about what role the people and the elite should play in politics (Canovan 2002; Mudde 2004, 2007; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2012, 2017; Stanley 2008); as a communication style or type of rhetoric that speaks about or appeals to 'the people' (Jagers and Walgrave 2007; Kazin 1995); as a type of movement or mobilisation (Minogue 1969; Germany 1978); as a form of organisation or a leadership style (de la Torre 1998; Di Tella 1965; Roberts 2006); as a strategy (Ware 2002; Weyland 2001); or as a combination of several of the above, as when populism is defined as a syndrome (Wiles 1969). Whilst 'the people' plays a central role in most of these definitions, some of them take for granted that 'the people' exists and none of them really theorise how populists actively construct 'the people'.

Populists' role in discursively constructing 'the people', and the strategic (rather than ideological) dimension of this process, is much more fully recognised in conceptualizations of populism as a discourse or discursive political logic (Laclau 2005a, 2005b; Panizza 2005a; Stavrakakis 2004; Stavrakakis and Katsambekis 2014) and in accounts of populism as a political style that 'performs' the people, which have also been partly inspired by Laclau's work (Moffitt and Tormey 2014; Moffitt 2015, 2016).

Definitional issues

Before turning to a thoroughly social-constructivist definition of populism as a political logic, a second set of more purely *definitional* problems with existing approaches to populism needs to be considered. Two related problems have long stood in the way of a clear definition that can serve as a firm basis for empirical analysis: (a) the inability to cover the diversity of populisms, (b) the failure to distinguish populism from other concepts.

Laclau's work has been central to the resolution of these problems, even if in his later work he also expanded his definition in such a way that it became difficult to distinguish populism from the concepts of politics and hegemony. In the discourse-theoretical strategy of formalisation, *abstraction* and *commensuration* are aimed at developing formal definitions that are able to distinguish a concept from related concepts *as well as* to move away from the particularities of a certain manifestation and to remove traces of particularity that hinder the application of a concept to a variety of or comparable phenomena (Howarth 2005: 327; Laclau

1977: 10–12). Dissatisfaction with imprecise definitions of populism also underlies a significant and still growing body of conceptual work outside of the discourse-theoretical tradition. This includes the abovementioned 'minimal' definition of populism as a 'thin' ideology as well as a number of other efforts (e.g. Jansen 2011; Kögl 2010; Moffitt and Tormey 2014; Weyland 2001).

Covering varieties of populism

First, the term populism is often used as a (critical) label for a certain group of parties and political leaders – usually located on the outskirts of the political spectrum, both on the Left and on the Right. Whilst it is among such parties that we can find the clearest examples of populist politics, using the term populism to refer to a certain family or families of parties risks losing sight of the populism outside of parties and movements that call themselves (which is rare) or are called (which is common) populist. The focus on the categorization of parties (typical of mainstream political science), in such cases, goes to the detriment of grasping the similarities across parties.

Second, definitions of populism have struggled with covering the diversity of the politics of the parties, movements and leaders that *are* considered populist by most. Despite the absence of a full consensus on what *makes* them populist, there is little discussion about the populism of a 'core' group of populists. This list includes the Russian Narodniki and the American People's Party of the late 19th and early 20th century, the Latin American populism of the 1960s and 1970s, the European populist radical right of the last twenty to thirty years, and, and a more recent wave of left-wing populism in Latin America (e.g. Chávez in Venezuela, Morales in Bolivia) and in Europe (e.g. the Greek SYRIZA, and the Spanish Podemos). (There is much more debate about the populist character of, for example, the neoliberal Latin American 'neo-populism' of the late 1980s and early 1990s, Nazism and Italian Fascism, and the politics of right-wing leaders such as Silvio Berlusconi and Viktor Orbán, but also Margaret Thatcher and Nicolas Sarkozy). These main 'waves' of populism exhibit substantial differences that have not been easy to come to terms with (Taguieff 1998). Perhaps the main reason for this has been the historicist (Panizza 2005a: 2) approach of much of the literature until at least the early 2000s: focus was on the in-depth analysis of one specific case or one 'wave' of populism, rather than on comparative analysis and theoretical development of the notion of populism.

The main cause of this problem has been the empirico-inductive attempt to arrive at a definition of the *concept* of populism based on the analysis of concrete instances of (what is considered) populism. Further developing earlier (1977) work on populism, Laclau (2005b: 42) wrote that:

> Most of the attempts at defining populism have tried to locate what is specific to it in a particular ontic content and, as a result, they have ended in a self-defeating exercise whose two predictable alternative results have been either to choose an empirical content which is immediately overflowed by an avalanche of exceptions, or to appeal to an 'intuition' which cannot be translated into any conceptual content.

One problem is circularity: definitions start from selected cases that are assumed to be populist on the basis of an intuition (i.e. an implicit definition), and then make claims about populism as a more general phenomenon from the analysis of these specific cases, thus proving their own intuition (Laclau 1977: 145). Furthermore, such a definition needs to be continually adapted to the characteristics of the chosen cases. Every time a new party or movement that is intuitively identified as populist makes its appearance and diverges from the definition, the definition needs to change (Jansen 2011: 78; Laclau 2005b: 42; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2012: 7; Panizza 2005a: 2–3).

These difficulties led some authors to give up on a general definition of populism and to opt for a typology or taxonomy instead. A prominent example is Canovan's earlier (1981, 1982) work which concludes that it is impossible to arrive at a definition that covers all forms of populism. Instead, she argues, we need a typology that allows for the analysis of populism's different manifestations. She argues that different populisms – she distinguishes agrarian populism and political populism, each with a number of subtypes – are different "sorts of things, and not directly comparable at all" (Canovan 1981: 298; 1982: 544–552). A typology of populisms is relevant and insightful, but a definition of populism needs first and foremost to make clear why all of these types of populisms are treated as populist. Otherwise, why speak of (different types of) populism in the first place? (Mudde 2000: 215; Panizza 2005a: 2–3).

A related problem is that empirico-inductive definitions of populism tend to stay too close to the empirical instance they are based on; often because their primary aim is to capture the particular instance of populism *in its entirety* under the notion of populism. Problems arise when case-specific elements – the particularities and specific context of certain populist politics – are included in the general definition so that the definition does not hold for other cases (Abts 2004: 451–476). One example are the definitions that – based on particularly the US People's Party and the populist radical right – argue that populism is inherently nativist (e.g. Akkerman 2003; Taguieff 1997), that it propagates a *return* to a heartland (e.g. Taggart 2000, 2002) or that populism is a revolt against modernity and against the idea of progress (e.g. Canovan 2004). Such definitions are problematic because as the list of parties usually included in the list of examples of populism shows, populism can be socialist, agrarian, racist, nationalist, fascist, democratic, authoritarian, progressive, conservative, egalitarian, and inegalitarian

(Jansen 2011: 82; Taguieff 1997: 8–10). A broadly applicable concept of populism needs to be able to cover this variety.

Identifying the distinct character of populism

All the while, the concept of populism should be precise enough to distinguish populism from other concepts. The failure to distinguish populism from other concepts – such as nationalism, democracy, and demagogy – has mainly been due to an inappropriate level of abstraction in defining what role 'the people' plays in populism.

Definitions that are **insufficiently precise** in identifying what 'the people' means in and to populism stretch the concept beyond what is analytically useful (Abts 2004; Jansen 2011). An example is the definition of populism as a "communication style of political actors that refers to the people" (Jagers and Walgrave 2007: 322). Another is the view of populism as an appeal to the masses – as when populism refers to catch-all parties or to catch-all politicians that attempt to appeal to the people as a whole, without the mediation of parties (e.g. Canovan 2004: 243, 2005; Taguieff 1998: 6). The derogatory use of the term to refer to opportunism or demagogy has also led to conceptual imprecision (Howarth 2008: 179–180; Mudde 2004: 542). Populism is also not the same as 'popular'. The popular appeal of a movement or party does not in itself determine the *populist* character of those politics (see Canovan 2005). And whilst populist parties might commonly use 'popular' communication strategies and rhetorics (e.g. Blommaert 2004), so do most other parties. The populist character is best treated as more precise than these popular political styles and forms *per se*.

Whilst it is a central element of populist politics, the claim to *represent* 'the people' as such does not allow us to distinguish populism from democracy either. The ties between both concepts are crucial for an understanding of populism (and anti-populism), but populism and democracy should be carefully distinguished rather than treated as synonyms (as they are in some populist rhetoric) or as opposites (as they are in some critiques of populism), for both miss out on the complexities and ambiguities of the relation between the two (Jansen 2011: 76). Nationalist politics too revolve around the claim to represent 'the people' (as a nation). And populism and nationalism have often been closely related – for example in populist radical right politics and in Latin American left-wing populisms, but the two should be distinguished if we want to understand the specificities of populism (see De Cleen 2017; De Cleen and Stavrakakis 2017).

A different kind of overstretching of populism can be found in the recent work of Laclau (2005a, 2005b). He argues that "populism is the royal road to understanding something about the ontological constitution of the political as

such" (2005a: 67). Populism becomes a synonym for politics (which is itself closely linked to the concept of hegemony), and the question becomes how to distinguish the two (or three) concepts (Arditi 2007; Beasley-Murray 2006; Kögl 2010: 176; Moffit and Tormey 2014: 384; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2012: 6; Stavrakakis 2004: 263).

Perhaps less obviously, **insufficiently abstract** definitions of populism also hamper the identification of the distinct character of populism. By including too *many* characteristics of particular populist politics in the definition of populism, it becomes impossible not only to cover the variety of populisms (see the previous section) but also to distinguish populism from other elements of those particular populist politics, and from concepts such as nationalism and socialism. The key to the problem, again, is usually the complexity of the notion of 'the people'. 'The people' not only means different things across populisms, but can also have several meanings in one and the same populism (see Mény and Surel 2000: 177–222). The definitional problem arises when all those meanings of the signifier 'the people' are treated as populist. Examples are definitions of populism that include the people-as-class (e.g. de la Torre 1997) or that take (exclusionary) nationalism to be an integral element of populism (e.g. Akkerman 2003; Jansen 2011: 82; Taggart 2000; Taguieff 1997: 15).

Populism as a political logic

Let us now turn to the development of a discourse-theoretical definition that overcomes the limitations of the existing literature identified thus far. Following the work of Laclau and others within the discourse-theoretical tradition, my strategy for capturing how populism discursively constructs the category of 'the people' it claims to represent, for covering the variety of populism across the political spectrum and for clearly identifying the specificity of populism is to define populism as a *political logic*. This definition will differ slightly from certain aspects of Laclau's definition. It is more explicitly limited to a particular form of politics, and therefore, hopefully, more easily applicable in empirical analyses of populist politics. And more so than Laclau's it acknowledges explicitly the role of populism in fomenting frustrations among 'the people' and in constructing certain groups of agents as an illegitimate elite that does not represent the people.

By looking at populism through the prism of logics, our understanding of populism is formalized. The focus moves away from the precise contents of populism, to how populism formulates them. As Laclau (2005b: 33) has argued:

> A movement is not populist because in its ideology it presents actual contents identifiable as populist, but because it shows a particular logic of articulation of those contents – whatever those contents are.

Building on Laclau's work, Glynos and Howarth developed the discourse-theoretical notion of logics in their *Logics of critical explanation in social and political theory*. Logics, they argue, are "constructed and named by the analyst" in order to identify and understand the "rules or grammar of [a] practice" under study (2007: 136). To look at populism as a political logic means looking at how populism interpellates and mobilizes people, how this interpellation constructs subject positions people can identify with, and how populist politics are involved in the "construction, defence and naturalization of new frontiers" (Glynos 2008: 278).[1]

I will argue that populism is a political logic *centred around the nodal points 'the people' and 'the elite', in which the meaning of 'the people' and 'the elite' is constructed through a down/up antagonism between 'the people' as a large powerless group and 'the elite' as a small and illegitimately powerful group. Populism is a claim to represent 'the people' against a (some) illegitimate 'elite', and constructs its political demands as representing the will of 'the people'* (see also De Cleen 2017; De Cleen and Stavrakakis 2017, 2019; De Cleen, Glynos and Mondon 2018).

'The people' and 'the elite' as nodal points

As the word populism itself already suggests and as most accounts of populism acknowledge, 'the people' lies at the heart of populism. The difficulty with the notion of 'the people' as the basis for defining populism, it has been argued, is that 'the people' has a different meaning in different populisms and even within one and the same populism. Taggart (2000: 3), for example, contends that a commitment to 'the people' cannot be the basis for a definition of populism "because the people means fundamentally different things to different populists". 'The people' does

1. Glynos and Howarth (2007; Glynos 2008: 278) distinguish between social, political, and fantasmatic logics, which respectively 'roughly, […] offer answers to the 'what', 'how', and 'why' questions. Social logics help the analyst to "characterise practices in a particular social domain" (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 15), for example the Apartheid regime or the practices in a capitalist workplace. They "help characterize practices by setting out the rules, norms, and self-understandings informing the practice" (Glynos 2008: 278). Political logics enable to grasp how these social practices and regimes of practices come into existence, are institutionalized, transformed, and contested. Finally, fantasmatic logics aide in identifying how the contingent nature of practices and regimes of practices is concealed or covered (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 15, 141–152). Populism as I define it in this chapter is first and foremost a political logic, but it also has a fantasmatic dimension. Populism is not a social logic, but can be linked up to different social logics.

indeed mean different things in different populisms, but this is only a problem if we want the definition of populism to cover the *exact and entire meaning* of 'the people' across diverse populisms. Such over-specific definitions of populism, I have argued, are indeed fraught with problems. Taking 'the people' as the centre of the definition is not a problem if populism is defined on a higher level of abstraction. At the same time, we have seen that the presence of the signifier 'the people' as such is insufficient to distinguish populism from other concepts. The task, therefore, is to find the appropriate level of abstraction.

Whilst in public debate vagueness and ambiguity about the meaning of populism still abounds, a growing academic consensus on the claim to represent 'the people' and criticism of 'the elite' as core characteristics of populism has developed. The populist political logic is characterised by the central role of the signifiers 'the people' and 'the elite', and by the particular role these signifiers play in populism. In discourse-theoretical terms, 'the people' and 'the elite' serve as the nodal points of populism. Nodal points – a notion that refers to Lacan's 'points de capiton' – are "privileged discursive points that partially fix meaning within signifying chains" (Torfing 1999: 98) and in relation to which other signifiers acquire their meaning (Laclau and Mouffe 2001: 112).

The presence of the signifiers 'the people' and 'the elite' is not exclusive to populism, however. Populism is structured around a vertical, down/up axis that refers to power, status and hierarchical position (Dyrberg 2003: 8; 2006; Laclau 1977; Mény and Surel 2002: 12; Mudde 2007; Ostiguy 2009; Reinfeldt 2000). 'The people' is located on the down end of this axis as a large and powerless group, and 'the elite' is located on the up end as a small and powerful group. The nature of this power is often political, but can also refer to socio-economic and socio-cultural status. Populist rhetoric often refers to these positions or identities with the words 'the people' and 'the elite' but also uses a range of other labels ('ordinary people', 'common people', etc. versus 'the establishment', 'the caste', and so on).

The presence of a down/up, people/elite opposition is still not in itself enough to speak of populism. Populism is at heart a claim to *represent* 'the people'. Populists argue that a current illegitimate 'elite' does not represent 'the people', goes against their interests, and looks down on them, and promise to represent 'the people' (see Mény and Surel 2000: 12–13; Mudde 2004: 543; Reinfeldt 2000: 51). Populists interpellate citizens as members of the people-as-underdog, offering them the subject position of member of this people-as-underdog to identify with.

The construction of the 'people' through the antagonism between 'the people' and 'the elite' along this vertical down/up axis distinguishes populism from other discourses and logics that are built around 'the people'. Nationalist politics, for example, are structured around the claim to represent the people-as-nation, defined as a sovereign and distinct community with a particular

identity, tied to a particular territory and history, which is constructed through its opposition to (members of) other nations (for a detailed discussion of the conceptual relations between populism and nationalism see De Cleen 2017; De Cleen and Stavrakakis 2017).

Bringing the down/up relation into the definition avoids some of the ambiguity of Laclau's later work on populism discussed above. Whereas Laclau does argue that populism is characterised by the "construction of political frontiers through the interpellation of the underdog" (Laclau 2005b: 44), he also treats populism as a synonym for politics more generally (Laclau 2005a: 67), so that any politics that revolves around the construction of a radical alternative to a current political regime becomes populist. The definition proposed here considers only politics that revolve around the construction of a political frontier along the down/up, powerless/powerful axis as populist. The construction of a political frontier between a nationally defined 'people' and its outsides, for example, is not in itself populist (see also De Cleen and Stavrakakis 2017).

Indeed, for the concept of populism to work, it needs to focus only on the particular way of claiming to represent 'the people' as an underdog, discursively constructed against an illegitimate 'elite'. We should keep out all the specificities of particular populist politics: their ideologies, the other signifiers they draw on (beyond 'the people' and 'the elite'), who they consider to be 'the elite' and why they consider them as illegitimate. All this depends on the political programme the populists in question stand for, not on their populism *per se*. For example, left-wing populists have denounced 'the elite's' neoliberalism, whilst radical right populists have castigated 'the elite' for its multiculturalism and globalism.

From ideology to political logic: The discursive construction of 'the people' and 'the elite'

In highlighting the central role of 'the people' and 'the elite', the definition of the populist political logic resembles elements of, amongst others, the definition of populism as a "a thin-centred ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' and 'the corrupt elite', and which argues that politics should be an expression of the volonté générale (general will) of the people" (Mudde 2004: 543; on Laclau as an inspiration for this definition, see Stavrakakis and Katsambekis 2014: 123). The academic debate continues, but now mainly revolves around important discussions on the *nature* of populism (ideology, strategy, political logic, see above) and, related to this, on how we should *normatively evaluate* populism's relation to democracy (with ideological approaches to populism usually treating populism as inherently problematic and focusing on the dangers of populism for liberal democracy, and

discursive approaches being much more sympathetic to (left-wing) populism's democratic potentials).

What is most important here is that the move from ideology to discursive logics has a number of benefits for the empirical analysis of populist politics.

More so than other approaches, the political logic approach explicitly acknowledges that populism discursively constructs the categories 'the people' and 'the elite'. 'The people' is not an objective socio-economic or socio-cultural category, nor is it simply 'everyone', but, in populism, is a category that is constructed by opposing the underdog to 'the elite' that does not serve the interest of the people (Laclau 1977: 110–111, 2005b: 33; Panizza 2005b).

Laclau (2005a, 2005b) has argued that populism is governed by the logic of equivalence, referring here to a concept developed together with Chantal Mouffe (Laclau and Mouffe 2001). In the logic of equivalence, chains of equivalence are created that articulate a diversity of demands and identities in the same political project by opposing them to another negative identity (or so-called constitutive outside). Such logics of equivalence link together a number of demands and identities, without, however, totally eliminating their differences: Chains of equivalence "can weaken, but not domesticate differences" (Laclau 2005a: 9). This is fundamental, for it means that without the constitutive outside, the chain of equivalence would disintegrate. It thus becomes clear that what allows populists to bring together under the label 'the people' a range of different groups of people with their different identities and demands is not something positive they have in common, but their shared opposition to the same outside, 'the elite'. It is the argument that all of these different groups' interests, identities, rights, and so on are threatened and not taken into account by that same 'elite' that allows populists to construct 'the people'. The antagonistic relation between 'the people' and 'the elite' is thus central to populism's discursive construction of and claim to represent 'the people'. It is this antagonism to 'the elite' that allows populists to bring together different groups, identities and demands in a chain of equivalence, and that gives a sense of coherence to that whole.

The 'elite' can refer to different groups: political elites are particularly common, but journalists, state institutions, supra-national institutions such as the EU, intellectuals, NGOs and business people can also be presented and criticized as 'elite' in populism (Jagers and Walgrave 2007; Mudde 2007: 65–69). It is important to stress here that, like 'the people', 'the elite' is not simply an objective sociological category, but rather a category that is discursively constructed and given a particular meaning in populist rhetoric. The discursive construction of 'the elite' has received much less attention in literature on populism than 'the people' (Moffitt and Tormey 2014: 395). Indeed, the existence of 'the elite' has often been taken for granted, and the same goes for the demands that this elite supposedly opposes or

frustrates. This is the case even in discourse-theoretical approaches that explicitly stress the discursively constructed nature of 'the people'. This has mainly been due to Laclau's view of populism as bringing together (previously existing) political demands that are not met by the 'power-bloc'. To Laclau, populist politics depend on the existence of a number of frustrated political demands. He sees a "crisis of representation" (Laclau 2005a: 39, cited in Moffitt 2015: 191) as a necessary context for the emergence of populist politics. However, as Moffitt (2015) and Stanley (2008: 97–98) have argued, as against Laclau's position, populist politics do not merely mobilise on existing feelings of frustration with the 'power-bloc' (although this of course increases the likelihood of their success). Instead, they actively construct a sense of crisis (Moffitt 2015) and actively "stimulate or re-inforce dissatisfaction with 'the elite' for its (real and/or perceived) frustrating or endangering of a number of demands, interests or identities" (De Cleen and Stavrakakis 2017: 11). Again, the nature of this 'crisis', and who belongs to 'the elite' that is responsible for this crisis depends on the political programme of the populists in question. For the populist radical right most problems boil down to issues with Islam and immigration and the elite is castigated for betraying and going against the will of 'the ordinary people' by allowing or even stimulating immigration and the 'Islamisation' of Europe. For left-wing populists, the crisis is a crisis of capitalism and 'the elite's' betrays 'the people' through its complicity with neoliberalism and its politics of austerity.

The move away from seeing populism as an ideology (i.e. as a set of ideas on the best way to organise society and/or on the ideal role of 'people' and 'elite' in politics) and towards how populists discursively construct and claim to represent 'the people', together with the more explicit focus on the way populists discursively construct 'the elite', allows for a more thorough exploration of the *strategic* dimensions of populist projects (see Stavrakakis and Katsambekis 2014). The populist claim to represent the people structures populists' attempts to become the new, and in their own eyes, legitimate power-holders (although they might not label this position 'elite'). The populist claim to represent 'the people' and their interests should therefore not be confused with *democratisation* in the sense of decreasing the distance between 'people' and 'elite'. Whilst populists indeed make use of the notion of democracy very often, populism does not necessarily demand the annihilation of the differentiation of 'people' and 'elite' as such, the redressing of power balances, but the removal/replacement of a current 'elite' in the name of 'the people'.

Also, parties and movements can turn to populism as a strategy to acquire power, even when they were originally not populist, and they do not necessarily remain populist once they are in power. But populism can also play a role in the rhetoric of existing power-holders when they legitimise their power and delegitimise their opponents by juxtaposing themselves to an illegitimate 'elite'

from which they have taken it (and that wants it back) and/or a competing elite on some other level or in some other societal field (for example international political institutions, economic actors, or a media or cultural elite).

The discursive analysis of populist politics

The concept of a populist political logic captures what is characteristic of populism, and allows us to identify cases of populist politics. But is only the *starting point* for the empirical analysis of concrete populisms. In this final section I want to give a few pointers as to how we can go from this definition of populism to the discursive analysis of concrete populist politics.

The discourse-theoretical definition has so far mainly been used in discourse-theoretical analysis of populist politics, but it could also strengthen other discourse analytical approaches. Critical discourse analysis, especially, has made important contributions to understanding how radical right, ultra-nationalist and racist discourse functions (among many examples see Krzyzanowski and Wodak 2009; Wodak 2015; Wodak et al. 2009). But it has tended to not consider the specifically *populist* dimension of populist radical right discourse in as much detail (see De Cleen 2017b). And it has paid little attention to left-wing populisms, the discursive study of which has been much more present in discourse-theoretical approaches, as exemplified by Laclau's work on Argentina (Laclau 1977, 2005a) and more recently also by the work of Stavrakakis and his colleagues on Greece (e.g. Stavrakakis and Katsambekis 2014).

Constructing 'the people' versus the 'elite'

In analyzing populist politics, we need to study the "means and forms of realisation" (Wodak et al. 2009: 35) of the populist political logic. The question becomes how the populist political logic operates in practice. How do populist politics discursively construct 'the people' in opposition to 'the elite'? How do they dismiss 'the elite'? And how do they make their claims to represent 'the people'?

The populist political logic becomes visible, most obviously, in how populist parties explicitly present themselves as the only true representatives of 'the people'. They are the "party of the people" (as the Flemish Vlaams Belang identified itself), the party who speaks "au nom du peuple" (as the French Front National slogan for the 2017 elections stated). They label their voters as the "People's Army" (a term used by Farage's UK Independence Party in the run-up to the Brexit referendum). And they present themselves as one with the people through slogans such as "we are the people" ("Wir sind das Volk" is a common slogan during Pegida

demonstrations, and “Wij zijn het volk” was used by the Flemish Vlaams Belang). These claims to represent ‘the people’ go hand in hand with explicit arguments about how ‘the elite’ does not listen to the people’, how ‘the elite’ is ‘disconnected’ from ordinary people’s lives and interests. The Podemos slogan “Nunca más un país sin su gente” (Never again a country without its people) clearly illustrates this populist promise of putting an end to rule by an elite that does not represent ‘the people’.

In different languages, the term ‘the people’ is used. For example ‘le peuple’ (French), ‘das Volk’ (German), and ‘el pueblo’ (Spanish) are common in populist rhetoric. But less obviously political references to the mass of anonymous individuals that make up ‘the people’ have also been used. The Dutch ‘de mensen’ and the Spanish ‘gente’ (people) are examples here. The populist interpellation of the ‘down’, or ‘low’, powerless people becomes even more explicitly clear in terms such as ‘*little* people’ or ‘little men’, ‘*ordinary* people’ or ‘*common* people’ and ‘*average* man’ or ‘average Joe’.

A discourse analysis of populist politics also needs to be sensitive to other, more figurative manners, in which populists have constructed ‘the people’ as ordinary. Examples are terms such as ‘Joe six-pack’ (referring to a six-pack of beer, a symbol of blue-collar ordinariness in the US), ‘Jan met de pet’ (literally Jan with the cap, referring to ordinary working men in Dutch) or ‘the man (or woman) in the street’.

This category of people has been opposed to ‘the elite’, or ‘the establishment’, but also to ‘the caste’ (as in Podemos’ dismissal of ‘la casta’). These labels lump together different kinds of opponents under one banner, thus presenting them as one unified and powerful enemy of ‘the people’. More symbolic manners of pointing out the ‘high’ position of this powerful group and its disconnection from the ‘low’ include references to ‘the elite’ in its ‘ivory tower’, or to the well-off neighborhoods where they live, the kinds of houses they live in, and the kind of cafés and restaurants they visit. The Flemish Vlaams Belang for example has dismissed pop artists organizing a concert against the party by arguing that those “who only pass their times in lounge bars in the South [het Zuid, a gentrified area of Antwerp] and live in an expensive loft, will have little trouble from multicultural society”[2] (see De Cleen 2009; De Cleen and Carpentier 2010).

Whilst language is key, there are also are also other “means and ways of realisation” of the populist logic. The populist logic also functions through visual and audiovisual means, for example through the visual representation of ‘the people’ as ‘ordinary’ (via dress style, certain locations, etc.) and of ‘the elite’ as far removed from ordinary people’s lives. But a discourse-theoretical perspective also makes

2. “Wie enkel vertoeft in de loungebars op het Zuid en woont in een dure loft, zal weinig last hebben van de multiculturele samenleving” (VB website, In de media, 29.09.2006).

it possible to analyze the charismatic leadership style that has been prominent in many populist politics as an attempt by the populist leader to incarnate 'the people'. And mass meetings can be seen as discursively constructing 'the people' by making 'the people' visible to themselves as well as to the broader public, whilst also *showing* the populist political actor's connections to 'the people'. Some populists also appeal to 'the people' by performing 'the low' through for example bad manners, coarse ways of speaking or other forms of 'low' behaviour (Moffitt 2016) – think Trump, for example. Such strategies of behaving in an 'ordinary' manner that sets populists apart from 'the elite' and stresses their *similarity* to 'the people' characterises many populists' style. But the claim to represent 'the people' and be different than the current illegitimate elite, does not necessarily require 'low' behaviour. Whilst the two can and do often coincide, the populist claim to represent 'the people' does not require that the populists resemble 'the people'. The analysis of populist politics also needs to carefully consider the broader strategies used by populists to pit 'the people' against 'the elite' by continuously emphasizing problems and scandals, discursively constructing crises of which 'ordinary people' are the victim, for which 'the elite' is responsible, and to which the populists are the solution (see Moffitt and Tormey 2014; Moffitt 2015, 2016).

Articulation and the role of populism in populist politics

Next to the question of *how* populist parties and politicians construct the categories 'the people' and 'the elite' and *how* they claim to be the representatives of 'the people' as against an illegitimate 'elite', we need to ask *who* belongs to 'the people' and 'the elite', *why* the populist parties supposedly are the only ones representing 'the people', and *why* 'the elite' supposedly does not represent 'the people'. Whilst partly similar across different kinds of populism, these questions take us beyond mechanisms that are shared by populist political actors across the political spectrum to the specificities of different strands of populist politics.

A starting point for the analysis of any populist politics is that it is never exhausted by the notion of populism – as is illustrated by terms such as national-populism, right-wing-populism, left-wing populism, or populist radical right. Who belongs to 'the people' and who does not and why, and who belongs to 'the elite' and why this 'elite' does not represent 'the people' depends not on populism *per se*, but on the specific political program of the populists in question.

The key to understanding particular populist politics is therefore to ask how the populist political logic links up with the rest of the program and strategies of the populist political actor in question. The discourse-theoretical notion of *articulation* helps us to conceptualize these connections. Articulation, in discourse theory, refers to the practice of bringing together different elements in a discourse

so as to construct a particular structure of meaning. Howarth and Stavrakakis (2000: 3) point out that:

> A political project will attempt to weave together different strands of discourse in an effort to dominate or organise a field of meaning so as to fix the identities of objects and practices in a certain way. […] [D]iscourse theory investigates the way in which social practices articulate and contest the discourses that constitute social reality.

So, in studying populist politics we need to ask: next to populism, what are the different ingredients of the populist politics in question? Which demands, identities are brought together in the populist chain of equivalence? Moreover, we need to ask exactly how the populist logic and these other ingredients are articulated. How are they brought together in a more or less coherent structure of meaning? How do they reinforce each other? Do these connections create tensions?

The notion of populism as a so-called 'thin' ideology that needs to be combined with 'full' ideologies also points in this direction (Mudde 2004, 2007; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2012; Stanley 2008). The notion of articulation allows capturing this combination more precisely. It makes clear that combining populism with other elements is not a matter of *addition*. Articulation is defined as "any practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice" (Laclau and Mouffe 2001: 105). So, populism is not just added to socialism, or conservatism, or nationalism. Through the articulatory process (the elements of) each of these articulated discourses acquires a particular meaning. It is this process that explains why the populist 'the people' and 'the elite' mean such different things in different populist politics. By looking at the articulation of populism with other discourses we also understand better why 'the people' can have such a complex and layered range of meanings in populist politics.

For example, European and American left-wing populists (e.g. SYRIZA, Podemos, Bernie Sanders) have constructed 'the people' by combining socialist demands for socio-economic equality and opposition to neoliberal policies imposed by unelected elites and by elected elites closely connected to them with demands for gender equality, environmental issues, and anti-racism. Through the articulation of populism with (amongst others) socialism, anti-racism, and gender equality, 'the people' becomes an inclusive term that also encompasses people of foreign descent. And 'the people' becomes an agent for progressive change. This is opposed to 'the elite', which is constructed as a conservative and neoliberal agent that stands in the way of social, ethnic and gender equality (Stavrakakis and Katsambekis 2014; Borriello and Mazzolini, this volume). For the populist radical right in Europe, the US and elsewhere, by contrast, through the articulation of

populism with exclusionary nationalism and conservatism, 'the people' becomes an exclusive term that refers to a sub-group of an ethnic-culturally defined nation. The interests of this group, the argument goes, are betrayed by a 'politically correct' political, media, cultural and intellectual 'elite' (on the national and international level) that imposes multicultural society and globalization on a 'people' that does not want it, that has no respect for traditions, and refuses to properly respond to crime (see De Cleen 2013, 2016a, 2016b for a more detailed discussion of the role of populism in populist radical right politics). The very intricate articulation of populism and exclusionary nationalism in populist radical right rhetoric becomes most visible in the layered meaning of 'the people' in slogans such as "We are the people" or "In the name of the people", with which these parties interpellate citizens as members of both the people-as-underdog and the people-as-nation. Moreover, to a large extent, the interpellation of citizens as a non-represented underdog builds on nativist arguments about 'the elite' not looking out for the interests of the native 'ordinary people'.

Populism plays a crucial role in these left-wing and right-wing populist politics' ability to successfully interpellate citizens. But if we want to grasp exactly what that role is, we need to be very precise about what we consider populism to be, and we need to consider exactly how populism is combined with other elements that are themselves not populist. Discursive analyses of populist politics need to study empirically how these connections are made in populist discourses. I hope this chapter has shown how treating populism as a particular political logic that is articulated with other elements of populists' political programs can help us to consider the role of populism and its connections to the other dimensions of populist politics across the political spectrum.

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CHAPTER 2

A dialogue on populism?

A study of intellectual discourse about populism in the Brexit debate in Italy and the UK

Chiara Degano and Federico Giulio Sicurella

Most works on populism framed in a discourse-analytic perspective focus on the features of populist discourse itself, contributing greatly to the understanding of the phenomenon. However, a full understanding of populism should also consider the ways in which notions of populism are constructed, negotiated, reproduced, and popularised in public discourse, as this contributes to forming public opinion at large and people's responses to populism itself. For this reason, the chapter addresses discourses about populism, with a focus on editorials dealing with Brexit in the British and Italian press. Although their position of supremacy in orienting public opinion has been partly mined by talk shows, blogs, and social media at large, opinion pieces remain one of the most important sites in which intellectuals (generally senior journalists) publicly share their views trying at the same time to influence the opinion of the readers. Based on an original framework integrating categories from critical discourse studies, argumentation theory, and the study of heteroglossia/dialogism, the analysis focuses on the ways in which editorialists define and evaluate populism and populists, the argumentative *topoi* they employ to support their standpoints, and whether and how they engage alternative viewpoints. In our view, all these aspects concur to expand or reduce the space of dialogue created by the text, and hence, we claim, the ability of the readers to feel included, and see their positions represented, in the broader discussion. The risk is that if no dialogue is opened at all with the people who uphold populist views, intellectual discourse will fail to involve them as interlocutors in a critical discussion, thus making them more receptive (or vulnerable) to populist propaganda.

Keywords: populism, editorials, Brexit, engagement, dialogical expansion and contraction

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Introduction

Populism, both as a concept and as a term, has enjoyed remarkable fortune over the past few years, following the ongoing developments in Europe and the United States. Indeed, we are witnessing a proliferation of debates about populism, both within the academic community and in the public sphere at large, with the obvious consequence that the signifier *populism* has been appropriated, and endlessly re-signified, within a variety of different discourses. A sign of intellectual vivacity in itself, this variegation may, however, eventually dilute the substance and usefulness of the concept of populism, unless it is harnessed in a coherent approach able to account both for the fundamental nature of populism and for its diverse manifestations. Much scholarly work on populism has been concerned precisely with this objective. Yet, as argued by De Cleen (this volume), the progression towards a conceptually sound and analytically useful definition of populism still seems to be marred by two main obstacles: first, the critical disregard of the discursive dimension of populism, particularly concerning the discursively constructed nature of the people and the elite, and second, the problem of building a definition of populism sufficiently robust to cover its varieties and, at the same time, precise enough to distinguish it from related concepts.

While the pursuit of a unified scholarly definition of populism is certainly a crucial intellectual task – and De Cleen's proposal to conceptualise and treat populism as a *discursive political logic* seems quite promising in this regard (De Cleen, this volume) – we believe that the vagueness of the category of populism, and especially the continuous struggle that is waged over its meaning in public arenas, are worthy of investigation in their own right. Our assumption, in fact, is that a full understanding of the dynamics and impact of populism requires investigating not only the contents of populist rhetoric, but also how populism itself and populist identities are framed, evaluated and represented in the public sphere. In our view, a more complete picture of populism would emerge if research on populism-as-discourse (as we may put it), which focuses on the discursive construction of the people through specific rhetorical and linguistic strategies, were complemented by a thorough examination of discourses *about* populism, that is, the ways in which notions of populism are constructed, negotiated, reproduced and popularised in relevant sites of public discourse.

Our study begins to address this important gap by looking at the commentary on populism that Brexit elicited in the UK and Italian press in 2016. In this respect, this chapter provides a counterpoint to Bennett's analysis of (one perspective of) Brexit discourse on social media (this volume). Specifically, we have chosen to investigate the intellectual viewpoints on populism that emerge from newspapers opinion pieces, as this genre remains one the key platforms of intellectual

engagement with current affairs, even in the era of digitally mediated communication (Townsley 2015), and hence a site where social norms and practices are continuously articulated and (de)legitimised, with obvious repercussions on the formation of public opinion (cf. Sicurella 2015).

The focus of our study is on the capacity of intellectual discourse, as embedded in editorials and opinion pieces, to foster an open and constructive dialogue on populism and populist issues. One may object that this runs counter to the chief communicative function of the genre, which is to persuade the readers of the validity of the author's standpoint, rather than to offer a balanced or impartial account of the various positions within a given debate. While this is certainly true, it does not necessarily entail that persuasive texts by their nature limit or hinder dialogue. On the contrary, we maintain that editorials and opinion pieces can enable reflection and discussion – on populism and Brexit, in this case – to the extent that the authors, in pursuing their arguments, engage and give credit to alternative viewpoints. In our view, this ability of intellectual discourse to reflect and embody the polyphonic character of public discourse on any particular matter is crucial for the development of a healthy and well-functioning democratic society. As far as populism is concerned, in fact, the risk is that if no space of dialogue is opened at all, the people who share some of the key concerns leveraged by populist political discourse might feel excluded from the official debate, and thus become more receptive (or vulnerable) to radical populist propaganda, dangerously bordering with "illiberal and anti-democratic forces" (Stavrakakis 2017, in Introduction to this volume). This view is in line with a new trend emerging also from other chapters in this book, and elsewhere, which considers populism in Europe not as an exclusive prerogative of far-right discourse, but rather as a collector of unheard grievances and a sense of dispossession felt by social groups who had traditionally been left-wing oriented (see Chapters 3, 5 and 6, this volume). As such, then, discourses about populism connect to the broader issue of political representation, and more generally to the question of how the logic of populism "impacts on the way we relate to and shape the political itself" (see the introduction to this volume).

Building on these assumptions, this study addresses the following research questions: How do editorialists and opinion makers represent, evaluate, and engage with populist viewpoints and attitudes?[1] What possibilities of dialogue do they open among populist and non- or anti-populist positions? In order to

1. In line with this aim, we do not start from a given definition of populism. What is interesting for us, in this paper, is the discourse built around the concept in editorials, a perspective which includes its possible definitions but does not strictly focus on that, In this sense the paper does not wish to contribute to an academic definition of populism, aiming instead to reflect what populism stands for outside academic circles.

answer them a sample was built of opinion pieces focused on Brexit and populism, published in the editorials and comment sections of three national British and Italian newspapers representing different political orientations (see below). The articles were analysed through close reading, relying on a composite framework, which is presented in the following section.

Examining the space of dialogue in discourse about populism: An analytical framework

The approach we adopted for the empirical analysis of opinion pieces revolves around the concept of *space of dialogue*, which captures the above-discussed capacity of argumentative texts to engage with alternative and opposing viewpoints in meaningful and constructive ways. Specifically, we define the space of dialogue (created by a certain text) as the joint result of relevant discursive strategies at the level of definition, evaluation, argumentation, and dialogicity. To put it simply, the ways in which authors define and evaluate populism and populists, the argumentative schemes they employ to support their viewpoints on populism, and how they position themselves with regard to other voices in the debate either contribute to an expansion or to a reduction of the space of dialogue, and may impact – we claim – on the ability of readers to feel included and to see their positions represented in the broader discussion.

Definition and evaluation

Our initial choice was to treat definition and evaluation as two separate analytical dimensions, as we assumed that the discursive representation of populism could be easily distinguished from the evaluative attitudes that the authors adopt towards it. However, a preliminary pilot study revealed that, apart from two isolated exceptions, none of the examined articles contain a proper definition of populism. Instead, authors mostly use the term (typically in its adjective form: *populist*) in strongly evaluative ways to label and categorise certain beliefs, attitudes, people and/or groups. Populism thus comes to be defined through the company it keeps, through semantic prosody, or through the effects deriving from populist decisions or actions, so that a definition of sorts can only be inferred on the basis of evaluative elements connected with the concept. We therefore deal with the analysis of definition and evaluation simultaneously drawing on the approach to evaluation in text developed by Thompson and Hunston (1999). This approach defines evaluation as "the expression of the speaker or writers attitude or stance towards, viewpoints on, or feelings about the entities or propositions that he or she

is talking about" (1999: 5) along a good-bad or positive–negative axis. Crucially, evaluation is conceived of as being embedded in culturally specific value systems. This entails that the analysis of evaluative discourse (which of course includes value-laden definitions) may provide insights into the ideological landscape from which evaluative discourse originated. In our analysis we have therefore identified relevant *definitional-evaluative clusters*, that is, linguistic constructs in which the definition of the concept of populism emerges as a function, as it were, of the specific evaluative meanings that are more or less explicitly attached to it.

Argumentation

Argumentation is in itself a broad and multi-dimensional concept. For the purposes of our analysis, though, attention will be limited to those topoi that gain a prominent position in newspaper commentary about populism and Brexit because of their recursivity. The concept of topoi (or loci) goes back to Aristotle, but still lacks a unified definition (cf. among others Kienpointner 1997; Drehe 2011; Rigotti and Morasso 2010). This ambiguity is often attributed to Aristotle himself. In very general terms topoi can be defined as warrants guaranteeing the transition from argument to conclusion. On the ground of such a relationship they can be classified into a number of categories. In modern argumentation theory some classifications combine formal and content-related matter (cf. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1991; Walton et al. 2008), while others reduce all the possible existing topoi to few content-abstract macrocategories, each subsuming several sub-types. This is the case in the pragmadialectical approach, which classifies arguments as based on causal, analogic and symptomatic relations, irrespective of the content to which the scheme is applied and the context in which the arguments are used.[2] Primacy of context characterises content-related approaches to the analysis of argumentation (cf. among others Reisigl and Wodak 2001), where topoi are considered necessarily content-related and field-dependent, i.e. depending on the configuration of social domains, disciplines, theories etc. (Reisigl 2014: 77). The latter conception underpins the Discourse-Historical Approach, where topoi are defined as "recurring content-related conclusion rules that are typical for specific

2. In the pragmadialectical approach to arguments typical formulations of argumentative schemes rest on general relations expressed in terms of conventions derived from Formal Logic. For instance, the scheme for an argument based on symptomatic relations is represented as follows: Y is true of X [conclusion, also called standpoint], because Z is true of X [premise, also called supporting argument] and Z is symptomatic of Y [inference backing the passage from the premise to the conclusion]. In recent times, the pragmadialectical approach has given more prominence to the notion of context, recognising that different contexts create different conditions for argumentation (cf. van Eemeren 2009).

fields of social action" (ibidem). The identification of topoi in this tradition starts with the identification of attested uses in the discourse under analysis and through a generalisation in terms of an *if-then* structure. For example, the negative version of the *topos of people* in Austrian right-wing populist discourse is formalised as "if the people refuse a political action or decision, then the action should not be performed/the decision should not be taken" (Reisigl 2014: 78).

Our own conception of topoi is eminently content-based. We will focus on recurring propositions that intuitively concur with populism-related claims, irrespectively of whether their form complies with formalised representations of topoi or not.

Dialogicity

The study of dialogicity originated in classical rhetorics. In contemporary discourse analytical research, the notion lies at the interface of issues related to evaluation and polyphony. In this paper, we will study dialogicity mostly with reference to Martin and White's model of appraisal (2005), and their notion of engagement. This notion of engagement rests on Bakhtin's (1981) and Voloshinov's (1995) concepts of dialogism and heteroglossia. It addresses how the speaker/writer positions himself or herself with regard to other views previously expressed on the same issue, particularly when such other views "have established some socially significant community of shared belief or value" (Martin and White 2005: 93). On the one hand, this model of appraisal and engagement accounts for whether and to what extent such voices are acknowledged, with the writers position ranging from opposition to undecidedness or neutrality. On the other hand, the model concerns the "anticipatory aspect of the text" (ibidem: 93), i.e. the clues through which the writer positions the intended reader with regard to the issue at stake. A view can be presented, for example, as if taken for granted, new, or controversial for a given audience (ibidem: 93ff). Based on this assumption Martin and White provide a detailed framework for studying the strategies that allow the speaker/writer to "negotiate relationships of alignment/disalignment vis-à-vis the various value positions referenced by the text and hence vis-à-vis the socially-constituted communities of shared attitude and belief associated with those positions" (ibidem: 95). If positing a relation of agreement between the writer and the reader clearly strengthens solidarity bonds between them, disalignment does not necessarily imply an entrenchment on ones position. Even in the case of disagreement the writer can display tolerance for other viewpoints. Engagement is thus better understood as a continuum between dialogical expansion and contraction. Each proposition is plotted along this continuum by virtue of the extent to which it acknowledges or censures alternative positions. We have maintained all the assumptions of this

model but certain categories have been adapted considerably after a preliminary pilot study in order to cater for our specific research questions.

In this chapter we therefore conceive of and explore dialogicity as the extent to which the examined authors take on standpoints on populism that diverge from their own, as we posit that such choices affect the capacity of the opinion pieces to foster meaningful dialogue among populist and non-populist positions in the public sphere. In this respect, we consider monoglossic stances as being extremely contractive in dialogical terms, since the choice of not acknowledging, let alone engaging, alternative opinions significantly restricts the space for open dialogue. In the analysis we distinguish between *populist* and *anti-populist*[3] *monoglossia* to demarcate the ideological orientation of the authors voice. Heteroglossic stances, on the other hand, can be either dialogically expansive or contractive. Specifically, heteroglossia has a dialogically contractive orientation when it is employed as a rhetorical strategy to reinforce one's standpoint (by selectively including only supporting voices) and/or to discard the opponent's point of view (by engaging opposing voices only to reject them *in toto* as ill-founded or plainly wrong). It has an expansive orientation when, on the contrary, it involves a genuine attempt to resolve a difference of opinion seeking areas of common ground with the opponent. Hence, in the analysis we distinguish three main strategies of heteroglossia/dialogicity: (i) *populist heteroglossia,* when the author only includes populist voices to validate them or non-populist voices to reject them; (ii) *anti-populist heteroglossia*, when the author only includes non-populist voices to validate them or populist voices to reject them; and (iii) *dialogically expansive heteroglossia*, when the author openly engages viewpoints on populism that diverge from his/her own and acknowledges (even if by way of concession) the validity of some of the ideas, concerns, and demands that these convey.

Finally, one further category has been included to account for those cases in which the author ponders on issues related to populism, as if engaged in a sort of objective examination of reality, without taking any definite position towards populism itself. It is labelled *neutral heteroglossia*, as both populist and non-populist views are represented, without endorsing any. While its purported objectivity may be seen as dialogically contractive, all in all the strategy can still be considered expansive, in that either segment of the readership will find their views represented.

3. In using this term we do not take issue with the political significance of anti-populist discourse in Europe (see Stavrakakis 2014), but simply use it for its face-value as the opposite of populist.

The data: Opinion pieces about Brexit in the UK and Italian press

The debate surrounding the Brexit provided an ideal data-set for a cross-national comparison of intellectual discourse about populism, as the UK referendum asking citizens whether they wanted to remain in or leave the European Union was broadly covered both in the United Kingdom and in Italy, and was closely intertwined with populism for two reasons. Firstly, anti-European stances are constitutive of contemporary populist movements across Europe, and secondly, the referendum campaign in the UK was characterised by a polarisation between the establishment leading the Remain campaign, and populist parties with some conservative members of the government campaigning for Leave.

The data sample includes opinion pieces published in three important newspapers for each country. The *Times* and *Il Corriere della Sera* are, broadly speaking, centrist newspapers, the *Telegraph* and *Il Giornale* generally cater for a conservative, right-wing readership, while the *Guardian* and *La Repubblica* are more progressively oriented. All the articles were accessed through the LexisNexis database (except for those from *La Repubblica*, which were retrieved from the newspapers online archive) and their selection rested on the co-occurrence of the words *populist/populism* and *Brexit/referendum* over a six-month period spanning April to September 2016, with the referendum falling on June 23.

The number of articles retrieved in this way from each newspaper varies considerably for the British sample, with 35 documents found in the *Times*, 29 in the *Telegraph* and 81 in the *Guardian*, for a total of about 156,000 words. As for the Italian section, *Il Corriere della Sera* comprises 43 items, *La Repubblica* 21, and *Il Giornale* 11 items, totalling about 66,000 words. Of course this uneven distribution is meaningful. The higher the number of articles retrieved, the more emphasis is placed on the association of populism and Brexit.

The articles were analysed from a qualitative perspective, as the aspects we are interested in cannot be detected through a quantitative corpus investigation, unless suitable indicators are first identified, allowing us to retrieve relevant moves through software interrogation. During a preliminary reading of the material each of us assessed the articles for their relevance for our respective parts of the sample, singling out those articles where populism was actually up for discussion, and not just mentioned incidentally. Analysing a restricted number of these articles through close reading, each drew a list of categories for recursive definitions, evaluative stances, argumentative topoi and dialogical stances. The long analytic lists thus obtained were then compared. A reduced list was then produced by conflating similar items into superordinate categories. Finally, the totality of relevant articles was analysed, identifying occurrences of the categories previously established, and annotating them in a grid developed to provide a streamlined representation of

the articles considered taking the four dimensions of our analysis into account, i.e. definition-evaluation, argumentation, and dialogicity.

Analysis: The British sample

The analysis will now proceed through the dimensions of definition-evaluation, argumentative topoi, and dialogicity.

Definitional-evaluative clusters

From the analysis of the UK newspapers, three definitional-evaluative clusters emerged by grouping together definitions that share a core stance towards populism while differing to a certain extent in content. The first of these clusters can be referred to as *populism as a threat*. Here populism is cast as a political strategy for manipulating public opinion by appealing to fears, instincts and guts, which leverages on nationalism and anti-immigration or xenophobic stances. Populism is thereby characterised as a regressive, dangerous and/or divisive force. This understanding of populism is normally accompanied by an implicit or explicit condemnation of it.

On the other end of the continuum we identified the definitional/evaluative cluster *justified grievances* that construes populism in opposition to mainstream domestic or supranational politics', which is blamed for an unsatisfactory status quo. Its defining traits are euroscepticism and dissatisfaction with EU elites; a reaction to traditional politics failure to govern global challenges; a reaction to social insecurity, social inequalities, economic stagnation, austerity, crisis of welfare; a demand for security and order. Evaluation-wise, framing populism in these terms is generally associated with positions ranging from partial or substantial alignment with populist views to an ambivalent stance, characterised by a rejection of populism as well as by a recognition of populist motives/demands as legitimate.

Sitting halfway between the two clusters above, a third set of definitions of populism revolves around identity issues, with identity shaped either by political beliefs or by national belonging. We will refer to this definitional-evaluative cluster as *populism as identity politics*. Here populism is seen as an expression of political engagement and identity politics but also as a phenomenon associated with a fear of modernity and a revival of traditional values. From the evaluation viewpoint, such a construal of populism opens up a whole range of possible stances devoid of the heated overtone associated with the *populism as a threat* cluster.

Populism as a threat cluster is the most recursive cluster across the newspapers, accounting for about two thirds of the analysed articles. The *justified grievances*

and the *identity* clusters do not occur as frequently, and tend to occur in articles where multifaceted definitions of populism are assumed.

In the *Guardian* definitions falling in the *threat* cluster mainly depict populism as a regressive, dangerous force, and place special emphasis on the manipulative nature of the Leave campaign. Regressiveness is cast both in terms of a contempt for logic and truth (e.g. "It really doesn't matter that it isn't true. For their campaign, facts get in the way" (*Guardian*, May 23)). Logic and truth are thereby seen to be sacrificed in favour of a more emotional and instinctive mode of politics (e.g. "This is the new fact-free politics of identity and emotion, bred in the internet vortex, with its populist paranoias" (ibidem)). Populism is thereby considered in terms of a politics that plays on dangerous instincts, and attention is drawn to the effects that an abandonment of logic, reason and restraint might bring (e.g. "With a long month ahead, will Roma be next?" (ibidem)).

Similarly, in the *Telegraph* "populist coarseness" is seen as a key feature of "authenticism" (quite the opposite of authenticity). It is "first cousin to" truthiness, i.e. the belief that stems from gut instinct, from "common sense". This populist coarseness celebrates certain ideas irrespective of evidence, logic or analysis, on the ground that they "just feel right" (August 27). Equally critical of populism, but also of the EU, is the assertion that "[t]he current approach" (i.e. people having the liberal agenda being "rammed down their throats" by the EU), "fuels resentment and conspiracy theories and is eventually responsible for the emergence of dangerous populism" (April 21). In this way the editorialist separates the case for Leave from the rhetoric of populism, reasserting the Leave option as a reasonable, legitimate position. In doing so, he seems to be addressing those Conservative elites who share an anti-European feeling, but do not identify with the populist style of the Leave campaign (John Major himself defined the campaign as squalid). In other cases populism is implicitly presented as dangerous, by associating it with nationalism (e.g. Brexit would boost "the nationalist ambitions of populist political parties all across the continent"; *Telegraph*, May 13). The danger of populism is often introduced into the discussion by means of presupposition. In the proposition "the EU will face a populist uprising if it fails to control migration" (May 17), for example, the warning against the risk of a populist uprising is only felicitous if such an uprising is viewed as a threat.

Coming to definitions grouped in the *justified grievances* cluster, the *Guardian* tends to select traits that place emphasis on the concerns of traditional Labour voters, who have paid the highest price for globalisation. They are workers who used to feel protected by traditional labour market regulations and who are now exposed to the harshness of global economic, financial and social forces. Their grievances include unemployment, low wages, difficult access to public services compounded by the strain allegedly placed on welfare by immigration. They also

include grievances related to changes in community identity (e.g. "Children emerging from the primary school next door, almost all from ethnic minorities, are just a visible reminder for anyone seeking easy answers to genuine grievance." (June 13)). Delving into these aspects of Brexit related populism, commentators emphasise the existence of large sectors of the working class that do not relate to a Labour Party that has distanced itself from its foundational values and is bent on an uncritical defence of liberalism and the financial interests championed by EU institutions. It is on the ground of such premises that one editorialist complains that the assertion that "the free market is not God after all" (June 8) has been left in the hands of populists of the like of Farage and Trump. As for the *Times,* the *justified grievances* cluster is represented by reference to "the popular and well-founded conviction that multiculturalism is dead", "the tensions caused by the identity crisis of young Muslims", and "the anger directed at blinkered EU elites" (April 27). The *Telegraph* includes the only explicit definition of populism found in the whole set of British editorials. Tellingly enough, the definition is taken from Wikipedia ("What exactly is so bad about populism anyway? Wikipedia defines it as the proposition that virtuous citizens are being mistreated by a small circle of elites, who are depicted as trampling in illegitimate fashion upon the rights, values and voice of the legitimate people"; June 4). This open negotiation of the meaning and connotation of populism is functional to setting it aside from populism-as-xenophobia, which is rejected and, at the same time, to reaffirming the principle that democracy is meant to pursue the good of the many, and not of the few. Following on this line of reasoning, then, populism is construed as a form of politics that is particularly true to the spirit of democracy, a proposition assumed also in another article, in which it is claimed that EU institutions' call to arms against "populism" (scare quotes in the original) "betrays the EUs instinctive distrust of democracy", as allegedly testified by the fact that "its founders were desperate to construct a supranational institution that would ensure that the people are always governed by their betters" (*Telegraph*, May 27).

The cluster *populism as identity politics* can be exemplified by the following excerpt:

(1) [L]iberalism has always been only one strand of Labour, and not its most important one. From its earliest days a very large part of the party has been conservative on constitutional questions, culturally sentimental and nostalgic, cautious on issues of individual freedom, opposed to mass immigration, monarchist, nationalist, patriotic and militaristic. (*Times*, August 17)

That is to say, identity matters when it comes to casting one's vote, and the identity of traditionalist Labour voters is populist at heart. Definitions falling under the

populism as identity politics cluster are not very frequent in the British sample, possibly because the polarised nature of the referendum discourse privileges stark positions. Whereas framing populism either in terms of justified grievances or of a threatening regressive force is functional to backing Leave or Remain positions respectively, defining populism as identity politics does not necessarily contribute in any obvious way to deliberation in either direction.

The editorials in which the clusters discussed above co-exist tend to see populism as a threatening, regressive, xenophobic force which results from the failure of mainstream politics and the EU to deliver to UK citizens. In these cases reasoning often rests on dissociation (cf. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1991; van Rees 2005), a rhetorical strategy whereby a notion that is commonly understood as one thing is divided into two separated notions, which receive a different evaluation. Populism is thus divided into the populism of the leaders and the populism of the people. The negative distinguishing traits are thereby attributed to the former, whereas the latter variety of populism is recognised as being legitimate to some extent. The ensuing representation of reality then reads as follows: the leaders manipulatively exploit the divisive force of populism, finding easy scapegoats in the EU and immigration for the genuine grievances of those who have been left behind. This way editorialists can condemn populism while acknowledging the concerns on which populism thrives. In another case, dissociation is used to make a distinction between left-wing – Bernie Sanders – populism on the one hand and right-wing – Donald Trump – populism on the other hand. This makes it possible to positively assess the former while condemning the latter (*Guardian*, August 13).

An interesting variety of this strategy can be found in the *Telegraph* (June 29, May 27bis), where "new populist" actors are distinguished from old extremist Nazi populists. While the latter must be fought, new populism is that of the losers of globalisation, who are not particularly right-wing and have "pretty normal ideas about politics" (May 27bis).

In the *Times*, the populist leaders *vs* populist voters dissociation is made even more explicitly, as one editorial urges "more centrist politicians […] to master the knack of condemning politics they believe to be foolish or dangerous without condemning those to whom they appeal" (September 13). Evaluation-wise this reveals a singular position, where a condemnation of populism, which would genuinely reflect the writers attitude, is considered dangerous as it would alienate those sectors of the electorate that centrist parties should aim to win back, while a strategic ambivalent position is recommended as more promising (ibidem).

All in all the analysis of definition and evaluation shows that choosing one definition or the other already determines the writer's stance. Conceiving populism as a *threat* clearly calls for a condemnation of it. Definitions falling under the *justified grievances* cluster, on the other hand, tend to be associated with an

ambivalent evaluative stance, resting on the dissociative mechanism illustrated above, or more rarely with a substantial alignment with those Leave positions which are generally equated with populist positions in the Brexit debate.

Argumentative topoi

Taking a closer look at argumentative topoi, a dominant topos in the *Guardian* is the *need to reject populist rhetoric*, a call which rests on the following warrant: if populist rhetoric relies on unfair practices of consensus construction (such as manipulation, scapegoating, and fear-mongering), then sensible people must reject it. As a counterpart to it, though, there are topoi recognising that there is something to the feelings of the people leveraged by populists. For instance, there is also a *topos of populism as inadequate response to global issues* at play. This topos dismisses populist agendas as simplistic and misguided attempts to solve real and complex global issues (such as the crisis of liberal democracy). Moreover, one can identify a *topos of the need to acknowledge populist concerns and demands* whereby mainstream politics is explicitly urged to acknowledge the problems highlighted by populist movements instead of ignoring or dismissing them. The following excerpt from the *Guardian* combines both topoi:

> (2) How is it possible that a billionaire bigot can present himself as the voice of the people, a brave truth teller speaking up for the little guy? How have we allowed xenophobes and racists to posture as advocates for democracy? […] We should not give an inch to the bigotry resurging in both Britain and the US, just as we shouldn't give any ground to the anti-immigrant xenophobes in Australia. But to fight their hatred, we must – as a matter of urgency – articulate a progressive opposition to the conditions breeding such deep alienation. (June 29)

The prevailing topos in the *Telegraph* sub-sample can be expressed as follows: if mainstream politics lets people down, then people turn to populist parties. At the supranational level this can be translated as: if the EU is not democratic, then people legitimately turn their back to it. Both topoi legitimate the sense of discontent that boosts populist parties, as illustrated (in the reverse order) in the following excerpt:

> (3) Thus pro-EU Left and Right agree that the people are dangerous, that they must be contained and that, slowly but surely, entire areas of public policy should be hived off beyond the reach of the British electorate. The strategy is to impose top-down restraints and to subcontract decisionmaking to external bodies, deliberately narrowing the scope of genuine debate. […] Rather than defending capitalism and explaining why it is counterproductive

> to bail out loss-making steel factories, the establishment simply says that it has no choice: it is merely following EU rules […]. (April 21)

Here mainstream parties' lack of political vision is presented as a real abdication of the "establishment" in favour of distant EU ruling bodies as a strategy to escape the burden of building consensus through deliberation, as democracy would have it. The concerns of the people, far from being paid attention to are then ignored by a denial of responsibility over them.

Related to the legitimation of people's discontent is also a topos that connects the rise of populism with the economic crisis and with the effects of "wild globalisation" on less wealthy families (*Telegraph*, May 27 bis). However, this topos creates a tension in the *Telegraph* between the defence of liberalism, one of the pillars of the Telegraph's Conservative readership, but also the founding economic principle of the EU, and a defence of the Leave position, which implies an alignment with the anti-liberalist populist stance that dominated this side of the campaign. The tension is made explicit in an article that rejects the connection between globalisation and the impoverishment of lower-middle classes as being "almost completely wrong". Here, it is argued, "capitalism and globalisation are still working – for the many, not just the few" because the UK and American middle classes are "getting richer again" (*Telegraph*, September 15).

In the *Times*, a particularly recursive topos is that of *populism as inadequate response to global issues* (see above). This topos is closely associated with the *topos of populism as a political-institutional challenge* whose basic structure reads as follows: if populism poses a chiefly political challenge, then it is the duty of existing political institutions to address it. In both cases populism is not stigmatised as pure manipulation. Emphasis is placed on the causes that have propelled it, as shown below:

> (4) Centrist parties in the EU criticise the populist right for stoking up voters and then manipulating them. They evoke the clatter of jackboots on cobblestones. That, however, discounts the intense politicisation of electorates since the banking crisis. The collapse of trust in political and business elites, the enduring crisis in the eurozone, the humanitarian disaster on Europes shores, the radicalisation of significant segments of the Muslim community and the vast influx of migrants to the continent: all this has changed the significance of the voting process. (April 27)

In other examples of the topos of populism as a political challenge, the editorialist seems to be taking a picture of reality rather than taking a stance on it. This can be exemplified by statements such as: "Both parties have been shaken by populist politics and protest votes" (*Times*, July 4), or "Britain's rejection of the EU is the most dramatic expression yet of a global wave of populism that has upended political

establishments from Rome and Athens to Washington DC" (*Times*, June 25). Here the only idea that is put up for discussion is the extent of populism's impact on mainstream politics ("the most dramatic expression yet …"), while the proposition that populist movements have reshaped the whole political scenario is taken for granted, and other parties, it is maintained, should take issue with that.

Strategies of dialogicity

Strategies for the modulation of dialogicity fall mostly in the categories of *anti-populist heteroglossia* or *dialogically expansive heteroglossia*, with substantially equal distribution across the newspapers. Besides these two categories, the *Telegraph* and the *Guardian* feature also some examples of anti-populist monoglossia and populist heteroglossia. Only the *Times* presents cases of neutral heteroglossia. In the articles in which *anti-populist heteroglossia* prevails, populist voices are often engaged just to expose them as non-genuine or even as lies of sorts, as shown below:

(5) "The people of this country have had enough of experts from organisations with acronyms saying they know what is best," Gove said in the Sky News debate – an ex-president of the Oxford union pretending contempt for "sneering elites". […] The right has used immigration and a diet of lies about the EU to distract from austerity-stricken public services, most damaging to those whose living standards have stagnated for over a decade. (*Guardian*, June 7)

In the case of *dialogically expansive heteroglossia*, on the other hand, populist views are generally engaged to be rejected on the ground of rational counterarguments, granting them greater dialogical dignity in the process as can be exemplified with reference to the excerpt below:

(6) I can already hear the objections: Britain's democracy is hundreds of years older than the 1957 treaty of Rome […]. Nor is the EU a beacon of democracy. Its institutions have often been criticised for their "democratic deficit". […] Let's take those points in reverse order. Its true democratic governance has faltered in several EU states, […] But the union's rules are the first and main mechanisms that can, and should, be leveraged to get those countries back on a democratic track. (*Guardian*, June 18)

As shown in (6), these cases often contain concessive structures. Some arguments ascribed to populist positions are thereby assessed as partially acceptable while the conclusions reached by populists are rejected. For example, one editorialist accepts Theresa May's view that people are tired of being told by experts that their perceptions of reality are wrong. But while May concludes that politics should

cater for people's needs, the editorialist asserts that if people's beliefs are based on ignorance democratic leaders should steer away from acquiescing to their request (*Guardian*, September 16). In the *Telegraph*, an editorialist concedes that "xenophobes, ultranationalists and cranks are richly represented in populist parties", but he also states that if large portions of voters support these parties there must be some reason for discontent (May 27). In the September 15 article, middle classes problems are recognised, but the populist trend of apportioning the blame for these problems onto capitalism is rejected as a facile narrative, claiming that the responsibility lies with national governments.

More marginal than *anti-populist heteroglossia* and *dialogically expansive heteroglossia*, but still represented in the *Telegraph* and in the *Guardian* are *anti-populist monoglossia* and *populist heteroglossia*. These two forms of dialogicity can be considered as the two ends of the dialogicity continuum in our sample. One editorialist makes use of extreme dialogical contraction in defending the claim that (populist) "fringe Conservatives" should be "ejected" and not "embraced". The view of the grandson of Winston Churchill – an authoritative Tory – is thereby reported:

(7) "If you have an Alsatian sitting in front of you, and it growls at you and bares its teeth, […] You can pat it on the head, in which case it'll bite you. Or you can kick it really hard in the balls, in which case it'll run away."
(*Guardian*, June 24)

At the other end of the continuum, endorsement of populist views through *populist heteroglossia* can be observed in cases where the writer brings in populist views by appropriating themes cherished by populists without labelling them as such:

(8) The plan is ruthlessly efficient, the roll-out beautifully choreographed, the elite troops perfectly briefed. Generals, diplomats, company bosses, economists, entertainers, assorted virtue-signallers: they are all rigidly on-message with their grotesque claims that Britain could not possibly cope with standing on its own two feet. (*Telegraph*, May 12)

Quite interestingly, heteroglossia is frequently exploited not to open up dialogue with the other party, but to construct or consolidate consensus for one's position against an enemy. In the above example, the establishment, previously referred to as a "Goliath [who] wants to annihilate David, and do it in style", is attributed the proposition that the UK would not survive a Brexit. This claim is then qualified as grotesque and can therefore not be intended as an object of agreement.

Finally, examples of neutral heteroglossia and monoglossia will be briefly considered. In the excerpt below the editorialist draws a parallel between the Brexit and the US presidential vote and envisages two possible scenarios without taking position on either of them:

(9) If Americans value predictability and the status quo over everything, they'll vote Hillary, just as Remainers did in Britain. If they decide that despite Trump's likely white-knuckle ride it's overwhelmingly important to break a political order they see as corrupt and dysfunctional, they'll vote for him in an echo of our Brexiteers. (*Times*, July 19)

The writer here contemplates the two alternative outputs to US election simply in terms of two alternative sets of values that will be decisive. Both predictability/ status quo preservation and its counterpart, breaking a dysfunctional political order, are presented as plausible rational grounds on which a final decision can be made. In that sense, the move is highly dialogically expansive as neither position is rejected, let alone stigmatised.

Analysis: The Italian sample

Using the same framework for the analysis of the space of dialogue, we now turn to the opinion pieces from the Italian sample.

Definitional-evaluative clusters

The impression one gets from a cursory glance at the sample texts is that populism, whether it is used as a concept or as a label, generally carries a negative or extremely negative evaluative connotation. Indeed, detailed analysis of the definitional and evaluative strategies employed by the authors clearly indicates that attitudes that condemn populism are largely predominant both in *Il Corriere* and *La Repubblica*, where they occur in around three-quarters of the total number of articles. These attitudes are not so common in *Il Giornale*, where they appear in only one-quarter of the total. Typically, the object of condemnation is populism as such rather than individual parties, movements or political leaders, and the negative evaluation arises chiefly from attributions of negative social value (as shown in the examples below).

The predominant way in which authors convey negative evaluation of populism is by discursively constructing it as an imminent threat that needs to be countered lest it lead to potentially disastrous social and political consequences.[4] This specific definitional-evaluative cluster encompasses definitions of populism as consisting in anti-European and euro-sceptical attitudes, and as a reaction to

4. Apart from constituting a conspicuous definitional-evaluative cluster, this pattern also corresponds to a specific argumentative scheme based on the *topos of populism as a threat/danger requiring urgent intervention* (see next section).

the perceived crisis of traditional politics or to the adverse socio-economic impact of globalisation. Populism is also seen as a regressive, dangerous and potentially destructive movement that thrives on xenophobic and anti-immigration attitudes. In an editorial from *Il Corriere*, for instance, the Italian finance minister exhorts Europe to take immediate action "otherwise populist parties will win across the whole continent and only ruins will be left" (October 1), while in *La Repubblica*, world-renowned political scientist Francis Fukuyama warns against the "potentially deadly measures" (July 29) that emerging populisms could promote should their leaders come to power. The supposedly destructive impact of populism is probably most dramatically thematised in an editorial written by *La Repubblica* leading columnist Eugenio Scalfari a few days before the referendum, which argues that Brexit "would be a defeat for Europe and the whole of western civilisation, and a victory of populist movements seeking to destroy all that exists, erasing the past and leaving the future in the hands of Fate, that is, of nobody" (June 19).

Apart from emphasising the existence of a populist threat, condemnation of populism is discursively expressed in other salient, albeit less frequent, ways. One consists in representing populism as an alluring, enticing, and potentially overwhelming force. For example, in two opinion pieces populism is referred to as a "temptation", respectively "towards retreat and protectionism" (*Corriere*, August 27) and "to blame the foreigner, the different, the other" (*Repubblica*, June 18). Another consists in stressing the power of populist rhetoric to manipulate and mislead the public mind, for example by rhetorically asking whether Brexit will "make new adepts on the altar of a nationalist populism which would multiply problems instead of solving them" (*Corriere*, August 21), or by condemning the pro-Brexit campaign for being "based on the populist myth, in the worst sense, of a Great Britain that will never exist" (*Corriere*, June 25). Moreover, populism is occasionally described as an alarm bell (*Corriere*, August 22; *Repubblica*, September 12) or as a disease affecting Western democracies (*Corriere*, June 28).

Amid such a pervasive condemnation of populism, it is all the more important to focus attention on the 17 opinion pieces – slightly fewer than one-quarter of the total – in which populism is instead defined and evaluated in moderately or highly positive ways. That the occurrence of such evaluative stances is relatively higher in *Il Giornale* than in *Il Corriere* or *La Repubblica* is perhaps unsurprising, insofar as it reflects the dominant political and ideological orientations of the three dailies. What is remarkable, however, is that editorialists and commentators who align themselves, partially or substantially, with populist viewpoints tend to express their attitude in ambivalent and circumlocutory rather than direct ways, often resorting to manoeuvring strategies both at the level of definition and of evaluation.

As far as definition is concerned, a conspicuous strategy involves taking distance from the populist label itself because of its (ascribed) negative connotation.

Instances of *rejection of populist labelling*, as we propose to call this kind of metadiscursive commentary, range from putting the word *populism* in scare quotes, to cast doubt on its descriptive validity, to openly condemning the biased, indiscriminate, and defamatory use that many make of the populist label in public discourse. In most cases, explicit rejection of the populist label is embedded in the contrastive structure that is not populism but legitimate/justified *x*, where *x* corresponds to a set of cognate expressions mainly related to euro-sceptical attitudes, particularly to popular dissatisfaction with the European political elites. Occasionally, criticism of the stigmatising effects of the populist label is laden with anti-intellectualistic overtones. For example, a prominent senior journalist from *Il Corriere* deplores European (leftist) intellectuals for their propensity to demonise opponents by branding them as populists, demagogues, and the like (June 30). In a similar vein, an article from *Il Giornale* accuses "big experts" of dismissing as populism "whatever their sophisticated brains refuse to understand" (June 25). Moreover, in one isolated case *populism* is not rejected but instead reclaimed as a positive term denoting the political engagement of the masses: a populist, argues French philosopher Michel Onfray in an interview for *Il Corriere*, is "whoever agrees to let the people speak out, to give them back the power that belongs to them" (June 26).

Viewed through the evaluative lens, the strategy of *rejection of populist labelling* forms part of a larger definitional-evaluative cluster which is predicated on a disjunction between the outward manifestations of populism (up to the populist label itself), which are negatively evaluated as politically and socially unacceptable, and its inner driving forces – i.e. the motives, interests, and concerns typically leveraged by populist discourse – which are instead positively evaluated as genuine, legitimate, and justified. An illustrative example of such a disjunction is found in an editorial from *Il Corriere*: the author concedes that "populists" (in scare quotes in the text) are "the wrong answer to Europes shortcomings" but, at the same time, he openly endorses their contempt for the allegedly elitist, arrogant, and self-uncritical attitude of European elites (June 27).

Cases of ambivalent or, as we propose to call it, *surreptitious rejection of populism* similar or analogous to the one presented above are indeed quite common in opinion pieces in which populism is evaluated in more or less positive terms. The preponderance of this kind of authorial stance, in which alignment with, or support for, populist attitudes and viewpoints is couched in a spurious distinction between good and bad forms of populism, is quite significant: it suggests that intellectuals and opinion makers who agree with claims or share concerns that are commonly stigmatised as populist may feel pressured to disavow populism as such (whatever its meaning) in order to make their opinions acceptable to mainstream audiences, with obvious negative repercussions on the very possibility of fostering meaningful dialogue between populist and non-populist positions.

Argumentative topoi

Starting from the assumption that argumentation is inherently dialogic, this section aims to identify and unpack the argumentative topoi that occur most frequently across the Italian sample, with a view to determining whether they help establish grounds for dialogue, or rather contribute to entrench disagreement and conflict.

In-depth analysis of the argumentative strategies employed by the authors in relation to the overarching concept of populism indicates the predominance of three specific topoi. The first is the *topos of populism as a threat/danger requiring urgent intervention*. By combining a *topos of threat and danger* with a *topos of urgency*, this argumentative pattern envisions a catastrophic scenario in which the rise of populist forces, unless quickly and effectively tackled, might have disruptive consequences for the existing socio-political order, most notably for the EU. Proportionately distributed across the three newspapers, this topos emerges as the most pervasive argumentative scheme about populism in the Italian sample. Several authors employ it when warning of the risk that Brexit might trigger a chain reaction leading to a widespread populist upsurge within the EU and beyond. In this respect, the phrase "domino effect" – which aptly encapsulates the gist of this topos – is widely used: "I fear a domino effect in the whole continent" (*Corriere*, June 2); "Its called domino effect, the mortal danger that hangs over Europe" (*Corriere*, June 25); the impact of Brexit on France is a crucial aspect of "the domino effect that is about to beset Europe" (*Giornale*, June 25). Other metaphors are also employed which convey a sense of urgency and fatality. For example, Brexit is variously compared to the opening of "a Pandora's box from which all sorts of things have begun to pour out" (*Corriere*, July 5), to "a time bomb" threatening to "destroy England, prompt [non-euro] countries to assert their independence, nurture populisms everywhere" (*Repubblica*, June 25), and to the beginning of an earthquake that might undermine the foundations of our social and political arrangements (*Repubblica*, June 26; *Corriere*, June 28).

The second predominant topos is the *topos of populism as a political-institutional challenge*, also identified as salient in the British sample. An illustrative example is found in a pre-Brexit editorial from *Il Corriere*:

(10) It will not be the British referendum to demolish the European project, whatever the outcome of the vote. But the European institutions will destroy themselves unless they regain the consent of their citizens. The rise of populist and anti-European parties is a sign of a real discontent, which has been overlooked for too long in the name of the political realism […]. (June 14)

Quite frequent in both *Il Corriere* and *La Repubblica*, this topos is nearly absent from *Il Giornale,* where a single instance was detected. The authors who resort to this argumentative scheme often also advance normative claims about what the EU and its institutions ought to do (or should have done) to address the populist challenge. In the majority of cases, these are generic appeals to reinvent/relaunch the European project, to reaffirm European values, and to bridge the gap with citizens in order to regain consensus (like in the example above).

The third most frequent argumentative pattern concerning populism is the *topos of the need to reject populist rhetoric*, which was also detected in the British sample. An example of it is the following critical commentary of UKIP's anti-immigration rhetoric:

(11) It is not explicitly racist, one must admit. But it involves playing with voters feelings, with their legitimate fears, with their instincts; [it involves] exploiting them to win the competition not through credible and reasonable proposals aiming to manage mass immigration from poverty-struck and war-torn areas, but through appeals to emotions. A gut populism that strikes a chord with both Tory and Labour supporters. (*Corriere*, June 17)

Although the author does not openly state that populist rhetoric is unacceptable and must therefore be rejected, this can be inferred from how contrast connectives (e.g. *but*) are employed to insinuate that "gut populism" is in fact not so far from sheer racism, and to set it in opposition to "credible and reasonable" politics. In some instances of the topos, particular emphasis is placed on the misleading and deceptive character of populist rhetoric: in an interview for *La Repubblica*, for example, French economist Thomas Piketty argues that populist leaders are privileged individuals who mislead the white working classes into believing that "their enemies are not white billionaires, but the other black, immigrant and Muslim working classes", and hence that much populist discourse is but "a way to deflect attention away from the woes of the capitalist system" (*Repubblica*, July 2). Arguments resting on the *topos of the need to reject populist rhetoric*, which condemn in more or less explicit ways populist discourse as manipulative and prejudiced, occur in slightly less than one-third of the opinion pieces from both *Il Corriere* and *La Repubblica*, whereas no instances of it have been found in the texts from *Il Giornale*.

Though largely predominant, the topoi discussed above are not the only salient argumentative schemes in the Italian sample. Three more topoi have been identified which are worth mentioning not only because of their recurrence, but also because they are thematically quite distinct from the previous ones. The first is the *topos of populism as a reaction to the failures of traditional politics*, which consists in ascribing the current rise of populist movements to the inability of the

traditional political system to set common goals and develop a common vision to achieve them. This topos is more frequent in *Il Corriere* than elsewhere, and is well exemplified by an opinion piece addressing France's predicament in the wake of the Nice terrorist attacks of July 14, 2016: the French people, the author claims, "have lost confidence in what had traditionally been a strong state […]. It is in this bewilderment, in this lack of answers […], that political controversies take root which are ever-more fierce and disruptive of national cohesion" (*Corriere*, July 27). The second topos, proportionally most prominent in *La Repubblica*, is the *topos of populism as inadequate response to global crises*, which also emerged from the analysis of the British sample. The third topos, quite unlike the previous two, constructs populist standpoints as grounded in legitimate needs, and hence as deserving of social and political recognition instead of being unduly neglected or dismissed. This argumentative scheme, which we also identified in the British sample as the *topos of the need to acknowledge populist concerns and demands*, appears in almost half of the opinion pieces from *Il Giornale*, while very few instances have been found in the other two newspapers. In the following interview extract, in which the author elaborates on the significance of populism, the third and second topoi appear in succession:

(12) Beware, populism has a sacrosanct reason to exist when democracies and national, popular and political sovereignty are trampled on. […] The problem is, however, that populist responses are not resolved, they are often shortcuts, nothing more. […] It is very difficult for a populist movement to build a project in which the people are really at the center of the concerns of those who rule. (*Giornale*, October 2)

The general conclusion that can be drawn from the analysis above is that argumentative schemes prevail which curtail, rather than expand, the potential for dialogue on the meaning of populism. Two out of the three most recurring topoi, i.e. the *topos of populism as a threat/danger requiring urgent intervention* and the *topos of the need to reject populist rhetoric*, are in fact inherently antagonistic to populist or pro-populist positions. Topoi which instead create or admit some space for disagreement occur much less frequently.

Strategies of dialogicity

Broadly speaking, approximately two-thirds of the sample texts construct a heteroglossic backdrop by including other voices and perspectives on populism besides the authors; the remaining one-third exhibit instead a monoglossic orientation, with the authors' viewpoint being the only one presented. A glance at the distribution across newspapers reveals an interesting discrepancy: the percentage

of monoglossic opinion pieces is much higher in *La Repubblica* than in the other two dailies. Although one should avoid the easy generalisation that heteroglossic texts necessarily have a more interlocutory character than monoglossic ones (the analysis below will show that this is not always the case), this finding is relevant insofar as it challenges the common perception that liberal-leaning newspapers (such as *La Repubblica*) typically provide more inclusive platforms for critical dialogue than conservative ones. As a matter of fact, the highest proportion of heteroglossic texts is found in *Il Giornale*, which is known for its bold and often unyielding conservative positions. In this light, it should come as no surprise that in most instances of monoglossia the authors' voices express anti-populist rather than pro-populist or neutral viewpoints.

Let us now turn our attention to those opinion pieces which instead reflect and embody, to a greater or lesser extent, the polyphonic character of the debate on Brexit and populism. Instances of *populist heteroglossia* are confined to *Il Giornale*, where they occur in nearly half of the opinion pieces. These include two editorials that combine *populist heteroglossia* with the metadiscursive strategy of *rejection of populist labelling* (see above). In the former, the author takes issue with those who deplore the Brexit vote as the triumph "of the fears and populism of a bunch of yokels" (*Giornale*, June 25), framing it instead as a legitimate reaction to the failures of the European political leadership. The argument rests on a dialogical opposition between the critics of Brexit, whose voice is (mis)represented, and thus discredited, as hostile and contemptuous towards Brexit voters, and those who share the latter's disgruntlement with Europe, whose voice is instead endorsed by the author. Similarly, the author of the latter editorial (*Giornale*, July 2) sustains his criticism of the widespread tendency – especially on the part of the "establishment media" – to dismiss euro-sceptical attitudes as populism by including and validating the very voices of those who are cast as populists, while at the same time precluding any possibility of dialogue with alleged populist-mongers.

As compared to *populist monoglossia*, instances of *anti-populist heteroglossia* are more frequent but appear almost exclusively in texts from *Il Corriere*. A representative example of this strategy of dialogicity is found in an opinion piece in which the author gives ample space to issues that are typically leveraged by euro-sceptical and populist discourses – such as widespread unemployment, mass immigration, the decline of the middle classes, the challenges posed by globalisation, the menace of terrorism, etc. – but concludes by insinuating that "euro-pessimism" often boils down to "unilateral criticism of the EU", which fails to recognise and cherish the EU's important merits (*Corriere*, August 21). In this example as well as in most texts from *Il Corriere*, populist voices are discursively represented via abstract and depersonalised terms (e.g. "criticism of the EU"), which arguably contributes to obfuscating the polemic and confrontational nature of the debate.

The most pervasive strategy of dialogicity in the Italian sample is *dialogically expansive heteroglossia*. The distribution across newspapers is rather uneven, with a clear predominance of *La Repubblica* and *Il Corriere* over *Il Giornale*. Since this strategy of dialogicity entails engaging competing views on populism in an open and unreserved manner, the analysis has focussed on what the authors presuppose or offer as common ground for critical discussion. In both *La Repubblica* and *Il Corriere*, where negative evaluation of populism has been shown to be preponderant, the establishment of common ground is chiefly achieved through concessions made to populist or pro-populist positions. These concessions revolve around three main themes: the first is mass immigration, which is widely acknowledged as a pressing issue requiring immediate and concerted action; the second is the adverse socio-economic impact of current and emerging global challenges, particularly the ongoing financial crisis; the third is the perceived inability (or even failure) of traditional political institutions, notably the EU, to deliver benefits to their citizens and develop a common vision for the future. The following excerpt provides a striking example of this concessive attitude:

(13) Let us consider the causes of this climate of revolt: migrations and the ensuing insecurity, for example. Do you really think it is irrational for a young French unemployed and poor person to fear job competition from a young poor North African immigrant? […] What responses did liberal elites, from the traditional right and left, give to these fears, apart from insisting that they are exaggerated? […] What are Western liberal elites doing in order to fight the real cause of popular revolt, that is, economic stagnation? […] The sooner they understand that, like a century ago, the *belle époque* is over, the more chances they will have not to be crushed, alongside the liberal order they have built during seventy years of peace. (*Corriere*, July 25)

Concluding remarks

Starting from the assumption that one of the defining traits of populism is the opposition to elites, coupled with a preconceived distrust of intellectuals as such, editorialists commenting on populism may find themselves grappling with serious identity and legitimacy issues. In fact, as senior journalists of important national newspapers or prominent opinion makers, with an established professional reputation, editorialists are de facto part of a society's cultural elite, which makes them inherently unlikely to identify with the populist mindset, at least in its most prototypical forms. This is rather unproblematic for editorialists who firmly

take a distance from populism, but not for those who may genuinely share some views commonly cast as populist, and as such at odds with the dominant orientation of the newspaper's target audience, not to mention those who cater for more populist-oriented readerships.

Amid such complexity, this chapter has considered how intellectual discourse embodied in newspaper opinion pieces contributed to shaping public perception of populism, in relation to the Brexit debate in the UK press and its reflections in the Italian press. In particular we aimed to understand to what extent intellectuals manage to accommodate and give voice to views they may disagree with, creating a space of dialogue and thus warding off the risk of alienating certain sectors of readers who do not see their positions represented in the official debate. At the same time, though, our analysis has also shed light on how the public debate on populism as dealt with in the newspapers differs from that taking place in the academia. While the latter is particularly keen on reaching a definition of populism, editorialists are not the least concerned with this issue. All writers (but one) seem to take for granted what populism is, confiding that their audience will share the same background wisdom about it. In so doing, they can selectively address aspects of populism they wish to address, thus treating it as a sort of semantically plastic and evaluatively laden signifier, which can be conveniently stretched to suit one's views. The shifting boundaries of the concept include notions traditionally considered in the literature, especially the anti-elitist stance and the coarseness of style, the grievances of lower classes in the face of sweeping social and economic change, the opposition between liberal progressive cities and traditionalist rural communities, but far from being troubled by such an indefiniteness, commentators seem to consider that as a strategic advantage for the liberty that it leaves to them.

Coming to the main focus of our chapter, operationalising the notion of *space of dialogue* as the resultant of manoeuvering strategies at the level of definition, evaluation, argumentative patterns and dialogicity, the analysis has led to a number of observations not only on the leitmotifs characterising intellectual discourse on populism, but also on how commentary on populism often involves a more or less calculated (re)negotiation of the notion as well as of one's own position towards it. Populism is widely treated as a self-evident concept (a clichéd expression?), while what is presumed to be fixed are not so much its definitional boundaries, which remain fuzzy, but rather its evaluative connotation, which is assumed to be inherently negative. Thus, dialogical engagement with populism, particularly from positions that are not radically or categorically opposed to it, is rarely if ever straightforward. Instead, it tends to be accompanied by two specific pre-emptive rhetorical adjustments geared towards ensuring that one's standpoints are not liable to be mistaken for sheer populism by the readership. One is the *rejection of populist labelling*, a metadiscursive move aimed at delegitimising

existing derogatory uses of the populist label as unwarranted and misguided, thus restricting the scope of the concept itself. The other is dissociation between good and bad populism, which has emerged as an underlying move meant to allow the appropriation of some of the contents of populism while rejecting its most stigmatised aspects. Although both discursive strategies appear as efforts to expand the space of dialogue, they can in fact produce dialogical contraction to the extent that indirectness and tortuousness might be interpreted as tokens of the difficulty of publicly professing populist identities. In these circumstances, establishing a meaningful dialogue between populist and non-populist positions becomes an extremely challenging task.

A few remarks are in order also with regard to a comparison between the Italian and the British sample. All in all, a negative stance towards populism prevails in both samples of articles, with the exception of one Italian newspaper, *il Giornale*, where pro-populist views find a greater space and adherence of mind. This confirms in a way the alienation of populism from intellectual discourse, thus indirectly backing the view that the establishment mostly took side with anti-Leave positions. One interesting difference, though, between the two countries concerns how disagreement is dealt with. Italian editorialists generally show little inclination to extend the space of dialogue with positions on populism which differ substantially from their own. Non- and anti-populist writers do engage populist viewpoints, but tend to do so in ways that curtail the potential for dialogue instead of expanding it. Pro-populist authors appear to struggle to make their opinions acceptable against a climate of widespread condemnation of populism, often resorting to precautionary rhetorical moves of the kind discussed above. In terms of dialogicity the situation is best described as one of entrenchment, with each party focussing on reiterating its own standpoints rather than on challenging the assumptions made by the opponent. In the British sample, on the other hand, the debate is certainly characterised by fierce opposition, as is quite natural during referendum campaigns, with long-term divisive effect also in the aftermath of the poll, but at the same time there seems to be greater willingness than in Italian newspapers to discuss the merits of views antithetical to one's own, thus expanding to a certain extent the dialogical space.

While the restricted focus of our analysis does not warrant any attempt at explaining these differences in terms of different conventions for editorial writing in Italian and British journalism, we can quite safely try to connect these observations to the two countries' different extent of involvement in Brexit. While in the Italian editorials, without any urgency of concrete deliberation, the debate was mainly informed by a logic of simply reaffirming and reinforcing one's positions, in their British counterpart, the incumbent referendum and the concrete changes a Leave victory would entail put a different kind of pressure on commentators. In

that case a populist readership was not a vague construct, but a far more concrete entity, embodied in the large portion of voters adhering, for different reasons and to different extents, to populist views who had to be addressed. A case in point concerns the stance towards immigration. In the British sample editorials embedded in a non-populist mindset seem more inclined than their Italian counterparts to accept concerns about immigration and its effects on British communities as justified grievances. As De Cleen (this volume) points out, anti-immigration stances are not a constitutive trait of populism, but in the Brexit case they appear closely knit with the pervasive, and somehow transversal, theme of class (cf. also Bennett's findings, this volume) as the watershed in the referendum electorate. Populist anti-establishment positions have accordingly been understood as a reaction to the difficulties experienced by lower classes – the ones who are more directly affected by immigration – in the face of social and economic downturns that, in the era of globalisation, have made them more vulnerable than they were in the era of nation-states.

Finally, our conclusions should include a consideration about Martin and White's model. As Marín Arrese points out, the model lacks "clearly defined operationalization criteria for the notions of contraction vs. expansion" (2017: 25), one main problem being the overlaps between subcategories and the lack of univocal correspondence between the linguistic resources assigned to each subcategory and the function they perform.[5] On the basis of our analysis we can say that an operationalisation cannot go in the direction of defining a priori more stringent relations than those envisaged by Martin and White between subcategories and the linguistic resources used to realise them.[6] Expansion and contraction seem in fact the resultant of concomitant factors that can be captured only by enlarging the focus of analysis, so as to include textual and contextual elements such as the values and beliefs frame in which the text originates – as we did in our multi-dimensional analytic framework. In particular, a move where the writer engages a given view to reject is not contractive or expansive in absolute terms: it can be contractive with regard to the part of the readership that champions that view, but expansive with regard to the opposing party. Let us contemplate the case of a non-populist editorialist who however rejects staunch anti-populist views: he or she

5. For example, as Marín Arrese (2017: 24) points out, is the expression "I contend", which Martin and White consider expansive, as a resource associated with Entertain, really more dialogically expansive than "I'd say," which they associate with dialogically contractive Pronounce?

6. This problem should be framed in terms of the more general difficulty attached to finding lexical indicators of discursive moves (cf. Degano 2016), which can be partly pinned down to the indeterminacy of form-function relations in language, and partly to the fact that stance is often expressed without using any lexical indicator that makes it retrievable automatically.

is certainly closing down the space of dialogue with those who would condemn such an interlocutory attitude as appeasement, but at the same time he or she is opening up to an audience who subscribes to populist views. That is to say, it is not the mechanics – or the syntax – of engagement which reveals whether a text is dialogically expansive or contractive per se, but the value attached to the content that fills in the slots in the syntax, together with the writer's initial position.

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CHAPTER 3

European populism(s) as a counter-hegemonic discourse?

The rise of Podemos and M5S in the wake of the crisis

Arthur Borriello and Samuele Mazzolini

In this chapter, we compare the discourse of Podemos and Movimento Cinque Stelle in order to answer the following question: to what extent do these movements pertain to the same political phenomenon? Based on Laclau's definition of populism, we provide a "snapshot" of both parties' discourse between 2012 and 2016 by carrying out a corpus-based analysis that combines lexicography and metaphor analysis. The results show that they display a populist logic and represent two counter-discourses against neoliberal hegemony. However, they also display important differences that could prove to be decisive when it comes to seizing political power and building an alternative to the hegemonic order they challenge, as their recent evolutions have shown.

Keywords: populism, discourse, Podemos, Movimento Cinque Stelle, neoliberalism, lexicography, metaphors

Introduction

In Southern Europe, the crisis and the "strange non-death of neo-liberalism" (Crouch 2011) have generated strong reactions, such as the emergence of new political actors that are hard to characterise or unwilling to define themselves along the left-right cleavage. In Spain, *Podemos* has put into question the bipartisan confrontation between PP and PSOE, which had structured Spanish politics since the democratic transition in the 1970s. In Italy, the rise of *Movimento Cinque Stelle (M5S)* has reshuffled the political cards of the post-*Tangentopoli* party system, which was previously articulated around the pro-/anti- Berlusconi cleavage. More generally, "the imposition of austerity measures […] has had the effect

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of converting this Southern part of the European Union into an area unified by shared problems, emergencies, and exigencies" (Knight and Stewart, 2016: 2), thus justifying the revival of the Southern European area studies and the flourishing of comparative research on the ongoing political transformations in those countries.

Against this background, we aim to answer a simple research question: to what extent do Podemos and M5S pertain to the same political phenomenon? We argue that they do insofar as they both represent populist reactions against the same neoliberal order in a comparable economic and political context. First, they epitomise the populist logic as Ernesto Laclau has defined it, namely as a mode of construction of the political – which involves the dichotomization of the social space through the construction of a common enemy – rather than as a specific ideology or rhetoric. Second, they represent a counter-discourse against the contemporary neoliberal hegemony and its attempt at emptying out politics of antagonism: they refute the allegedly post-political character of contemporary societies and oppose the 'hollowing out' of democracy which takes place through, on one hand, the submission of political decisions to economic logic, and, on the other hand, the subordination of the national level of decision-making to the European technocracy. Third, these new political actors emerge at a moment of organic crisis, as Gramsci had it: a conjuncture characterised by a profound imbalance of the socio-political system, which leaves the door open for a disarticulation and re-articulation of social forces towards the establishment of a new equilibrium. The Eurozone crisis, in particular, has both deepened the technocratic confiscation of economic policies and frustrated various social demands, thus paving the way for the latter to be voiced, in the name of the people, against the political establishment.

In this perspective, we carry out a comparative analysis of Podemos and M5S that, while drawing on recent comparative studies (De Prat, 2015; Hartleb, 2015; Semenzin, 2015; Roux, 2016; Vittori, 2017), tries to go further in grasping the deeper significance of their emergence for the reconfiguration of the European political context. In order to do so, we (1) critically reflect on the notion of 'populism', (2) put the rise of these political parties in the broader context of the long-term evolutions of Western democracies, as well as in the more specific context of the Eurozone crisis, and (3) provide an extensive corpus-based analysis of their discourse. In that respect, our contribution represents a hybrid approach between macro and micro analyses, as it intends to analyse "the way large-scale interpretive pattern crystalize in empirically observable patterns that can be discerned with a more linguistically and/or textually oriented toolbox" (Zienkowski and Breeze, this volume).

To be sure, those parties have evolved rapidly in recent times: while M5S has undergone a process of normalisation, professionalisation and moderation in its

coming to power, Podemos has recently evolved towards a more classic radical left strategy (Muñoz and Fontaine, 2016), epitomised by its electoral alliance with *Izquierda Unida*. Those evolutions should contribute nuancing our argument: more than a characterization of those political movements *per se*, our analysis provides a "snapshot" of a particular *moment* of their political life – the moment of populist re-articulation of social demands in a period of crisis – that might arguably have already come to an end.

Moreover, despite sharing these common denominators, *Podemos* and *M5S* display strong differences that we must not overlook and that have certainly influenced their recent diverging trajectories. These differences have to do with their ideological background (M5S refuses to inscribe its politics in any existing political tradition, whereas *Podemos* seems to constitute a distinct re-elaboration of left-wing thought), the analysis of the situation that they offer (while *Podemos* provides a more systemic definition of the current crisis and of its own enemy, M5S is mainly concerned with the 'moral question' of corruption among the political caste), and the form that their opposition to the hegemonic order takes, especially with regard to the EU (from this point of view, although they both focus on regaining popular sovereignty, *Podemos* and *M5S* represent two distinct strategies). However, since we discuss their differences and their implications in terms of electoral prospects and capacity to challenge the hegemonic order elsewhere (Mazzolini and Borriello, 2017), we shall only briefly address this aspect here.

The chapter is structured as follows. In the first section, we develop our theoretical framework, including the definition of populism and the description of the broader context within which Podemos and M5S have emerged. In the second section, we present our methodology, which combines quantitative (lexicography) and qualitative (metaphor analysis) methods, as well as our corpus, which comprises 243 texts covering the period between 2012 and 2016. The third section is dedicated to the empirical analysis, which investigates the populist and counter-discursive nature of Podemos and M5S. Finally, we briefly summarise our findings in the concluding section.

Populism as a reaction against the hegemonic order in a context of crisis

Populism as a political logic

Recently, populism has been at the centre of public and academic debate: media and scholars tend to see the current developments in Western democracies as the advent of a populist *Zeitgeist* (Mudde, 2004). Therefore, an increasing number of theoretical and empirical studies focus on populism through various lenses: its

relation to democracy and power (Albertazzi and McDonnell 2015), the impact of the crisis on its progression (Kriesi and Pappas, 2015), its rhetorical specificity (Wodak et al., 2013), and the methodological issues in identifying and "measuring" it (Stavrakakis et al., 2016). However, the mainstream approaches to populism display several weaknesses that a discourse theoretical approach can overcome. Since Benjamin De Cleen has already discussed these issues in detail in this volume, we shall only briefly come back to the blind spots of the mainstream approaches and the main characteristics and advantages of a Laclauian perspective, especially when it comes to comparatively studying two political movements such as Podemos and M5S.

First, besides the proverbial fuzziness of the concept, the strands of the relevant literature based on the mainstream definitions present a series of weaknesses: they advance a taxonomical understanding of populism, oppose its "vague" and "ambiguous" nature to the standards of political rationality and ideological coherence, focus on attributes that are not necessarily inherent to populism as such (role of the leader, anti-intellectualism, anti-cosmopolitism, etc.), and reduce it as an intrinsically top-down phenomenon. By doing so, they tend to downplay the interactive and dynamic processes between different social agents, contribute to reinforce negative connotations and to reduce the heuristic dimension of the concept of populism, ignore what populism can reveal about the underlying premises inherent to social life (more specifically the irreducibility of antagonism), and eclipse the role that the "constitutive ambiguity" (Mény and Surel, 2002) of populism plays in the construction of political identities.

Second, the dominant explanation of the current success of populist parties views them as an adaptation to the social transformation of Western democracies. According to this perspective, the rise of populism is the result of two converging trends: the "cartelisation" of mainstream parties (Blyth and Katz, 2005) as a consequence of broad social transformations (expansion of the service sector, individualisation, decline of party membership, etc.) and the emergence of new structural conflicts between the 'winners' and 'losers' of the globalisation process, which creates the conditions for populist actors to transform the structure of political cleavages by mobilizing and uniting the latter social category against the former. However insightful this dominant perspective may be in seizing the nature of key structural transformations of Western societies, its sociological bias (see Chapter 1, this volume) prevents it from providing a successful explanation of the ideological diversity of populist movements and from understanding the performative operation that they accomplish, precisely because it conceives political conflicts as the mere reflection of underlying, pre-existing and objective social cleavages.

Against this backdrop and in order to overcome these definitional and theoretical deadlocks, we rely on Ernesto Laclau's definition of populism as a political logic (see Chapter 1, this volume). In Laclau's perspective, populism refers to a mode of construction of the political itself that corresponds to the expansion of the equivalential logic at the expense of the differential one[1] (Laclau, 2005: 78), thus resulting in the dichotomisation of the political space along a 'us-them' antagonistic frontier.

Populism appears when several social demands are not satisfied by the existing institutional channels and are re-articulated based on their shared opposition to an enemy who is held responsible for their frustration. The elements articulated form a chain of equivalences whose common denominator does not lie in positive features that the elements share (such as being the objective 'losers' of globalisation), but rather in their common opposition to the same adversary. In this articulatory practice, the act of naming – both the 'people' and its adversary – is performative: it *constitutes* the unity of the emerging subject and of its opponent, rather than merely conveying a pre-existing unity.[2]

Therefore, Laclau's definition of populism as a particular political logic overcomes many of the deadlocks of the classic approaches. In particular, it (1) once and for all removes the negative connotation of populism, (2) shows that the ambiguous nature of populism is inherent to politics as such, (3) draws a sharp frontier between the political operations performed and the normative elements mobilised (and thus accounts for the ideological diversity of populism) and, finally, (4) provides a framework for approaching the emergence of populism as an interactive, discursive and performative process which cannot be reduced to a mere expression of pre-existing social cleavages.

The discourse-theoretical perspective on populism becomes crucial when it comes to empirically comparing two political movements as different as Podemos and M5S. Indeed, defining populism as a specific articulatory practice, regardless of the particular content that is being articulated, enables us to understand why these parties may be both characterised as populists, independently from the

1. The distinction between these logics borrows from the relational definition of meaning in Saussure's linguistic theory and corresponds to the distinction between the paradigmatic and syntagmatic poles of language. In stark contrast with populism, institutionalism corresponds to the expansion of the differential logics at the expense of the equivalential one: it tries to deal with all the elements in such a way so as to maintain the *status quo*, preserve the differential status of the social demands and impede the emergence of antagonism.

2. This means that the populist logic cannot be reduced to any specific content and may thus be combined to completely different ideological repertoires. It results from this that nothing precludes it from assuming a reactionary character rather than an emancipatory one, but also that, contrary to commonplace claims, it cannot be considered as intrinsically proto-fascist.

elements that do not pertain to their populism *per se*. In other words, it provides a starting point for approaching those political movements *as populists*, based on which we can then more specifically analyse the ways in which they "construct the down/up opposition between 'people' and 'elite' as well as how this opposition is articulated with other elements of populists' particular programs and strategies" (see Chapter 1, this volume).

Therefore, we will assess the populist character of *Podemos* and the *M5S* based on this definition and its underlying theoretical framework. However, since the rise of populism must be understood in relation to the context of crisis in which it takes place – even if the populists may actively participate in constructing the sense of crisis (Moffitt, 2015) – and to the deterioration of the institutional framework that it challenges, we must now turn to the long-term and short-term trends that have made the emergence of these new political parties possible.

Populism against neoliberal hegemony in times of austerity: "Re-politicizing" and "Re-nationalizing" politics

The recent rise of populism in Western democracies in the wake of the Great Recession must be understood in relation to the general political context of the post-Cold War era, during which the – allegedly objective and irreversible – economic and social transformations (globalisation, technological changes, expansion of the service sector, individualisation, etc.) were supposed to render social warfare and ideologies obsolete. The obsolescence of political conflict was best epitomised by the rallying of the centre-left to the neoliberal free market principles under the banner of the so-called "Third Way" (Mouffe, 2005) and, as a consequence, by the advent of a hegemonic "radical centre" (Mouffe, 1998) that has become the only legitimate political actor and claimed that the conflict over society's ends was over – a situation that has been characterized as the "post-democratic" (Crouch, 2004) or "post-political" (Rancière, 2005) condition of our times.

However, from a post-foundational point of view (Marchart, 2007), this "post-political" claim is an impossibility, since it denies the autonomy and ontological primacy of the political as well as its corollary, the irreducibility of antagonism. Two consequences stem from this perspective. First, the contemporary neoliberal consensus is – despite its momentarily successful attempt to naturalise certain social relations – intrinsically political insofar as it involves a specific institution of the social. Second, it results from the primacy of the political that the occultation of antagonism can never be fully completed and that it may resurface in a very radical way. While the institutional framework of neoliberalism expands the differential logic (as global markets are supposed to meet the various social demands on a strictly individual basis), the definitive closure of society is impossible and the logic of equivalence

can always subvert the differences.[3] The economic recession in the Eurozone, particularly severe in the Mediterranean countries, has frustrated a growing number of social demands and paved the way for new actors to re-articulate them and to forge new political identities. Before turning to the rise of populism in Italy and Spain, we shall explore more in detail these two aspects: the political nature of the neoliberal order and the nature of its wobbling in the wake of the Eurozone crisis.

As a specific mode of institution of the social, neoliberalism rests on two key transformative operations: the "restructuring" and "rescaling" of social practices (Fairclough, 2006). These two dimensions are strongly interrelated; both are part of an institutional design through which crucial economic decisions are kept out of reach of political contestation. On the one hand, the "restructuring" of social practices refers to the transformation of the economy into an autonomous sphere of social activity, which then plays the role of a "neutral", "central" sphere that "serves as an imaginary ground for the rest of society" (Marchart, 2007: 45), and in terms of which the problems of other spheres tend to be solved. On the other hand, the "rescaling" of social practices refers to the establishment of new relations between different scales of social life, such as the globalisation of financial markets and the ordoliberal-inspired European integration, which involve a hollowing out of the Nation State (Della Sala, 1997), where the latter is more and more dependent on its counterparts at the expense of its domestic constituency (Bickerton, 2012; Mair, 2013).

As neoliberalism becomes institutionalised and "sedimented" – both at the macro (independent central banks and rating agencies, budgetary "golden rule", financial deregulation, etc.) and micro (new management, rating systems, etc.) levels –, its political nature becomes less visible. However, it may always reappear, in particular when a crisis draws attention to the conditions that make this particular set of social practices "both possible and vulnerable" (Glynos and Howarth, 2007: 136). In this respect, the economic crisis has played a twofold role of catalysis in the erosion of the institutional framework of neoliberalism.

On one hand, its economic and social consequences have considerably deepened the process of social dislocation. On the other hand, the management of

3. However, the logic of difference must not *necessarily* prevail in the neoliberal discourse, as Thatcherism showed, ending up with "one of the most aggressive discourses of social division in contemporary British history" (Laclau, 2005: 79). Perhaps the best way to grasp the relation between neoliberal discourse and the logics of equivalence/difference is to reflect upon hegemony. On the one hand, one could possibly argue that, when it has a counter-hegemonic status – such as at the beginning of the 1980s – or when its hegemonic status is under threat, neoliberalism can assume a highly antagonistic character. On the other hand, the success of neoliberal hegemony has given way to its 'sedimentation' into social relations (Laclau, 1990: 34) and to the forgetting of the political and contingent character of its foundation.

the Eurozone crisis and the convergence of mainstream political parties towards austerity policies have revealed both the extent of the technocratic confiscation of economic policies and the degree of ideological convergence of centre-left and centre-right political elites. In particular, we have witnessed this convergence in Italy and Spain, where the successive governments (whether of conservative, social-democratic or "technical" obedience) have carried out similar economic policies and developed the same kind of TINA discourse – revealing both the nature of the political operations of neoliberalism and its post-political pretention (Borriello, 2017). The combination of these two elements – the frustration of social demands by the economic crisis and the absence of channels for expressing them politically – has created the necessary conditions for the emergence of populist movements. As the social demands were losing their differential status within the extant institutional framework, they were turning back into heterogeneous elements ready to be re-articulated into new chain of equivalences united by their opposition to the perceived responsible of their frustration – a dynamic first initiated in a proto-political form through the social movements in Greece (*aganaktismenoi*) and Spain (*indignados*) (Prentoulis & Thomassen, 2013; Gerbaudo, 2017).

The remarkable convergence of mainstream political parties over the last thirty years has a crucial consequence: the political does not resurge under the classic form of a left-right cleavage, but rather takes the form of a divide between technocracy and populism (Bickerton and Invernizzi-Accetti, 2014) which opposes, on one hand, the supporters of the "post-political" neoliberal consensus and, on the other hand, the adversaries of this consensus who confront it through the construction of "the people" as the only legitimate political subject. Although this new pattern is widely perceptible across almost all the Western democracies, the severity of the crisis in Southern Europe where a deep reconfiguration of the political landscape is taking place, has made it even more striking in this context.

Against this backdrop, we hypothesise that Podemos and M5S represent two populist reactions against the hegemonic neoliberal order. On the one hand, we expect that they construct the political identities according to a populist logic, that is, through the dichotomisation of the social in two antagonistic camps. On the other hand, following the assumption that the nature of their adversary shapes structurally and negatively the content articulated by populist parties (Canovan, 1999), we hypothesise that *Podemos* and *M5S* resist both the submission of politics to the economic logic (restructuring) and its supranational technocratic reduction (rescaling). Moreover, given the strong intertwining of these two dimensions in neoliberal discourse, they are likely to be interlinked in *Podemos* and *M5S*' discourse as well; in particular, the recurrent theme of regaining "popular sovereignty" may be the key signifier that merges the two dimensions.

However, we expect the differences between these populist parties in terms of national political context of emergence and ideological repertoire to influence the content and boundaries of 'the people' and 'the elites' in their discourse, as well as the nature of their opposition to the latter and its expression.

In particular, the harsher economic crisis and its stronger social consequences in Spain, the prevalence of the so-called 'moral question' in Italy since the Tangentopoli scandal, the relation of Podemos to the cultural and political imaginary of the 15M and its normative anchoring to the Left – as opposed to the much more ambiguous nature of the M5S that represents a direct political translation of the opinion movement generated by Beppe Grillo – may be crucial in that respect (see Mazzolini and Borriello, 2017). The critique developed by the M5S might well be directed exclusively towards 'the elites' as a corrupted and morally decadent political class, while we expect from Podemos a greater focus on the structure of the economic model and the complexity of the relation between the economic and political elites.

Corpus and methods

In order to assess the populist logic and counter-discursive strategy that these movements display, we carry out a corpus-based analysis of their discourse. This research strategy does not imply that we adopt the restrictive definition of discourse – conceived as the linguistic/semiotic dimension of every social practice – that prevails, for instance, in the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) perspective (Fairclough, 2001). On the contrary, we adopt the broader definition of discourse, coined by Laclau and Mouffe (1985) and further developed in the Essex school of discourse theory (Howarth, 2000) – as the articulatory practice between linguistic and non-linguistic elements, which refers broadly to "the interpretative character of every mediation between actors and their environment", i.e., to "the [intrinsic] symbolic dimension of society" (Sommerer, 2005: 195). However, since the perspectives that draw on this definition of discourse are often criticized for their lack of empirical ambition and precision (Torfing and Howarth, 2005), and since we have already given a broader account of Podemos and M5S' discourse elsewhere (Mazzolini and Borriello, 2017), we have chosen here to conduct a more systematic analysis of the textual dimension of their discourse, even if it does not exhaust their *meaningful* practices as a whole.[4]

4. However, see also the efforts made recently by Stvrakakis & Katsambekis (2014) and Stavrakakis & al. 2016) in order to give an empirical account of left-wing populism based on this theoretical perspective.

In this perspective, we have analysed a large corpus of 243 texts that represents a significant sample of the discursive production of *M5S* and *Podemos* between 2012 and 2016 (see Table 1). The corpus includes articles, press interviews (collected on their respective websites) and parliamentary debates (collected on the website of Italian and Spanish Parliaments). We have selected the texts based on the presence of specific key terms related to the general context of the Eurozone crisis: "crisis", "economy", "austerity" and "Europe". The choice of a large time span and of various types of interventions was intended to allow for a comparative analysis of their discourse that is not limited to any narrow, too specific context of enunciation.

Table 1. General characteristics of the corpus

	Podemos	**M5S**
Texts	71	172
Number of tokens	119235	163165
Number of types	7222	9523
Words per text (average)	1679	949
Time span	From March 2014 to November 2016	From October 2012 to December 2016

The analysis combines two complementary methods: lexicography and metaphor analysis. The lexicographic analysis, conducted with the software *Iramuteq*, plays a primarily exploratory and comparative role: it provides aggregate information about the corpus and enables us to compare the numerical importance of specific themes in the discourse of M5S and Podemos. By systematically combining the use of frequency and concordance analysis, we aim to explore the meaning of several key terms related to our object of inquiry (the populist logic and the counter-discursive dimension). First, we analyse the frequency of use of the terms related to the dichotomisation of the social field (the indicators of antagonism, the definition of the enemy and of the people, etc.) and to the "restructuring" and "rescaling" of politics (the indicators of the primacy of politics over the economy, the mentions of the EU, etc.). Second, considering that meaning is always relational, we systematically replace these terms in their immediate context of use (concordance analysis) and shed light on the strength of association between specific words (co-occurrence index) and on their simultaneous presence in repetitive expressions (such as "popular sovereignty" or "corrupted elites").

In a second step, we focus our attention on metaphors as a specific type of rhetorical forms and analyse in greater depth the role that they play in the construction of a new political subject ("the people") as well as in the opposition to

the hegemonic neoliberal discourse. Building on the cognitive linguistic literature, which has shown the importance of metaphors for cognitive processes in everyday life and in the language of economics (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980; Charteris-Black, 2000; White, 2003), recent studies have highlighted the role of metaphors in the discursive construction of the economic crisis in general (Horner, 2011; Nerges et al., 2015) and in the legitimation of austerity policies in particular (Vaara, 2014). Since the metaphorical naturalisation of economic issues is a key dimension of neoliberal discourse, the analysis of metaphors in Podemos and M5S' discourse provides a great opportunity to study the way populist discourse "turns the language of power against itself", in Pablo Iglesias' own terms (Iglesias, 2015: 36). In particular, we investigate the use that they make of specific metaphorical domains (medicine, mechanics, natural disaster, living organism, journey, war, etc.) in order to dichotomise the social field, to accentuate political antagonism, to criticize the submission of politics to the economic logic and to propose alternative solutions to austerity policies. Concretely, the analysis of metaphors is conducted through three steps: inventory (identification of metaphors in the close environment of key terms related to the hypotheses), classification (identification of the source domain to which they belong) and contextualisation (analysis of the broader context of use of the metaphors and the arguments that they underpin).

Similarities between Podemos and M5S': Two populist counter-discourses against neoliberal hegemony

The populist logic is obvious in the discourse of Podemos and M5S: they both attempt to construct political identities in two camps divided by an antagonistic relation. The logic of equivalence clearly prevails, as all the peculiar social demands are re-articulated around the frustrations of the popular subject caused by its enemy, the elites. This dichotomy is epitomised by the constant use of terms that refer to these two opposite groups (Table 2): the people (*"la gente"*, *"i cittadini"*, *"il popolo"*, *"la mayoria"*, etc.) on one hand, and the elites (*"las elites"*, *"la classe politica"*, *"los privilegiados"*, *"la casta"*, etc.) on the other. Interestingly, most of these terms are the same from one corpus to the other, even if they appear in different proportions. On the one hand, in both cases "the people" is referred to alternatively as 'citizens', 'society', 'the majority' and, though much less often – probably due to the historical resonances of the term in two countries which have experienced fascism – as 'the people' (*"popolo"*, *"pueblo"*). On the other hand, both parties define 'the elites' in general terms ('the privileged', 'the elites', 'the powerful', 'the establishment') or by referring to specific political or economic actors ('the traditional parties', 'the political class', 'the banks', 'the Troika', 'the shareholders', etc.).

Table 2. Absolute and relatives (per 100000 words) frequencies of use of lemmas related to the definition of the people and its political adversaries

Podemos			**M5S**		
Form	**Abs. frequencies**	**Rel. frequencies**	**Form**	**Abs. frequencies**	**Rel. frequencies**
Gente	161	135	*Cittadino*	394	241
Ciudadano	155	129	*Banca*	333	203
Popular	133	111	*Maggioranza*	67	41
Banco, banca	106	88	*Popolo*	62	37
Mayoría	43	36	*Cittadinanza*	53	32
Neoliberal(ismo)	35	28	*Troika*	32	19
Pueblo	38	31	*Classe*	31	18
Élite	31	25	*Popolazione*	26	15
Poderoso	22	18	*Popolare*	23	14
FMI	22	18	*Privilegiato*	17	10
Oligarquía	21	10	*Burocrazia*	16	8
Troika	20	16	*FMI*	11	6
Clase	18	15	*Banchiere*	11	6
Establishment	18	13	*Azionista*	11	6
Ciudadanía	11	9	*Nemico*	6	3
Privilegiado	14	11	*Tecnocrazia*	7	3
Adversario	8	6	*Populismo*	7	3
Turnismo	8	6	*Establishment*	5	3
Accionista	8	6	*Casta*	3	1
Potente	7	5	*Neoliberale*	3	1
Calle	6	5	*Élite*	2	1
Populismo	5	4	*Avversario*	2	1
Oligopolio	5	3	*Oligarchia*	1	0
Antagonista	5	2			

In line with the hypotheses, three elements are worth noticing in the way Podemos and M5S define the enemy/adversary of the people. First, in both cases the "constitutive outside" includes the political system *as a whole* – for which Podemos uses the term "*turnismo*" – as well as the implicit collusion between centre-left and centre-right, both at the national and European level, in order to preserve the *status quo*. This dimension is made omnipresent through the use of repeated segments – such as the 'political class' (18 occurrences) in M5S' discourse and the

'political system' (22), 'grand coalition' (10), 'traditional parties' (9), 'party system' (5) and 'PP and the PSOE' (4) in Podemos' – as well as through repetitive explicit assertions of this collusion, as in the following excerpts:

> These elections have been characterized by a conflict that has dominated Spanish politics since 25 May 2014, between the possibility of change and **the overcoming of the political system born in 1978**, on one hand, and the capacity of containment and restoration by **the conservative forces of the existing order**, on the other. (Podemos, Íñigo Errejón, 12th January 2016)

> The promptness of Ciudadanos to join any form of **grand coalition with the PP and the PSOE** reveals immediately **the absence of an alternative project other than being an auxiliary force […] to the parties of *turnismo***.
> (Podemos, Íñigo Errejón, 12th January 2016)

> The premise is always the same. In Brussels the political groups with a stern voice are t**hose which often vote in unison in order to have the majority** – by this, **we mean the S&D (to which the Partito Democratico belongs) and the PPE (with Forza Italia)** – sometimes assisted by ECR and ALDE.
> (M5S, Blog Beppe Grillo, 2nd April 2015)

> The economic policies adopted until now by **the Government "of the single party", the only real political actor of the last twenty years in this country**, are able to go only in two directions: to cut the services to citizens or to increase taxes.
> (M5S, Luigi Gallo, 6th May 2013)

> A last consideration on right and left: **these obsolete political categories are completely a-historic. The traditional right and left govern together in many European countries and will also fuse together in the next Parliament and in the next European Commission, and nobody will be able to understand to which formation the representatives belong. And this is simply because there is no difference; they think in the same way on everything, they embrace this all-encompassing neoliberal ideology that made the West collapse**.
> (M5S, Paolo Becchi, 14th June 2014)

Second, both parties underline and denounce the convergence between economic and political interests: they define the enemy as a fuzzy conglomerate of interests involving economic and political actors, whose collusion is better epitomised by the phenomenon of "revolving doors" between the two areas (the expression "*las puertas giratorias*" appears 7 times in Podemos' discourse). This collusion is said to undermine democracy itself, since the institutions of popular sovereignty tend to be bluntly confiscated by private interests:

> We **do not spend time with Masons and lobbyists to establish what to do**; we do not have **renowned economists to corrupt** in order to make them support our

> theses. We prefer to ask **teachers and students** how they would like the school to be; we talk with **doctors and patients** on how to reform public health and we do not get influenced by **pharmaceutical industries**. We think that **citizens** are entitled to decide which transport system they want, not the **car industry**. **Citizens** ask us to **protect them from the financial speculation** exerted by **banks and sharks** from this sector, by separating investment banks and commercial banks. (M5S, Vincenzo Caso, 27 April 2016)

> One more reason, in addition to the economic one, to put the fight against inequalities at the centre of an agenda of radical change, is the observation that **economic and political powers are merged and confused, forming a dense mesh of interests and threatening the very bases of democracy**. **Economic elites have set up the political agenda** and have drawn precisely the roadmap followed by the government; **they have occupied public spaces and institutions, which they have put at the service of their own interests**.
> (Podemos, Nacho Álvarez, 8 October 2014)

> Those who do not run for election, but have lot of **money and power**, buy people like you through the "**revolving doors**". They buy you with money so that **you act as their salespersons and as their middlemen in foreign countries**. This is a **trick on democracy**, because democracy rests on the fact that, ultimately, the representatives of **popular sovereignty** do not stand for the executive boards, but **for the people**. (Podemos, Pablo Iglesias, 27 September 2016)

Third, they draw a parallel between, on one hand, the political and economic elites at the national level, and, on the other hand, their counterparts at the European level: they depict them as being on the same side of the political frontier. Therefore, the fundamental political divide goes far beyond a mere opposition between elites and citizens at the national level; it involves a broader opposition between, on one side, the peoples of Europe and, on the other side, the European establishment. In this perspective, the national elites are depicted as allies (or, more offensively, as 'vassals') of a broader coalition that is basically accused of protecting the interest of the German (and, to a lesser extent, the French) banking sector. However, while in the case of Podemos this dichotomisation of the European social space goes always hand in hand with a careful analysis of the identity of the actors involved and the relations between them, the M5S sometimes tends to simply equate the national elites' interests and the German interests. In other words, while the former always speaks about the mechanisms through which the 'German financial capital' or the 'German conservative-neoliberal establishment' influences the European agenda, the latter often depicts the internal enemy as a mere enforcer of the external enemy's will, in a rhetoric which is somehow reminiscent of the far-right conspiracy language.

> Actually, […] we must conclude that the great beneficiary of these policies, which is predominantly the financial capital, is now dominating not only the politico-institutional field, but also media and academia (it funds the great majority of research centres and journals in economics), which continue to promote the dogma of the ideological apparatus that support them […]. And, **in the Eurozone, the German financial capital dominates the European financial capital which exerts a disproportionate influence on institutions such as the ECB, the European Commission and the European Council**. […] In Spain, the influence of these financial and economic groups on media and political institutions is almost absolute. This explains the persistence of the neoliberal dogma […]
> (Podemos, Vicenç Navarro, 12 February 2015)

> **The obsequious pilgrimage**, just after their assignment, of our Prime ministers like Rigor Montis and Capitan Findus Letta to Merkel […] remind **the feudatories of the Middle Age searching for the papal blessing. On their knees, kissing the holy ring.** *"Gott mit uns"*. **The economic interests of Germany and Italy have not been coinciding** for a long time, since our entry into **the Euro, which is actually a disguised mark**. (M5S, BBG, 14 July 2013)

> The spread is an instrument of blackmail, a noose put around the neck of Italian people, which are threatened of getting strangulated if they do not align themselves with **the will of the Teutonic-Masonic rigour that nowadays governs us**.
> (M5S, BBG, 9 January 2015)

Besides the identification of two political camps, the second defining feature of populist logic, namely the construction of a strong antagonistic relation between these camps, is omnipresent in both parties' discourse. The best way to grasp this antagonism is to look at the way they use the war/battle metaphor in order to describe the relation between the elites and the people. To be sure, this source domain is not absent from the neoliberal discourse itself (Straehle et al., 1999) and is probably one of the most common features of political discourse in general (Gauthier, 1994). However, it plays a completely different role in neoliberal and populist discourses: while, in the former, it serves mainly as a way of denying the inherently political and antagonistic nature of the social, it plays exactly the opposite role in the latter, since it serves to build a sharp political frontier within society.[5] The antagonistic dimension in general, and its expression through war

5. This is, for example, a striking feature of the discourse developed by Monti, Zapatero and Rajoy in order to legitimise austerity policies. They always use the war metaphor to exorcise antagonism or to direct it towards external and abstract targets in order to reaffirm the unity of society as a whole at the symbolic level: society is described as a homogeneous body fighting against economic crisis, unemployment, etc. Similarly, they use this metaphor in order to stress the unity and consensus at the European level on the best way to wage this "battle" against the crisis (see Borriello, 2019).

metaphors, is impossible to miss in Podemos and M5S' discourse, since it appears clearly in several titles – such as "the Euro war", "the tribute of blood to Europe" (BBG, 18.09.2013 and 24.10.2013) and "the frontal attack on Greece by the German government and the ECB" (Navarro, 17.02.2015) – as well as in the repetitive use of a lexicon of war and confrontation (Table 3).

Table 3. Absolute and relatives (per 100000 words) frequencies of use of lemmas related to war metaphors

Podemos			**M5S**		
Form	**Abs. frequencies**	**Rel. frequencies**	**Form**	**Abs. frequencies**	**Rel. frequencies**
Frente	65	54	*Affrontare*	34	20
Lucha	32	26	*Guerra*	31	18
Guerra	20	16	*Fronte*	29	17
Conflicto	11	9	*Lotta*	26	14
Afrontar	10	8	*Conflitto*	24	14
Fractura	8	6	*Confronto*	24	14
Austericidio	8	6	*Combattere*	15	9
Adversario	8	6	*Battaglia*	15	9
Batalla	7	5	*Massacro*	12	7
Barbaridad	7	5	*Sangue*	9	5
Conquistar	6	5	*Uccidere*	7	4
Capitulación	3	2	*Nemico*	6	3
Antagonista	3	2	*Conquistare*	7	4
Búnker	2	1	*Avversario*	2	1

A large part of this vocabulary takes place in a broader narrative which describes austerity policies as a 'slaughter', an 'austericide' perpetrated by the European elites against their own people and identifies the existence of a conflict over the future of Europe, as shown in the following excerpts. Once again, interestingly, while the identified belligerents are countries (creditors and debtors, northern and southern) in M5S' discourse, Podemos explicitly rejects this framework in favour of a confrontation between social groups *across* European countries.

> **A war has been waged, the Euro war**, and after every kind of lost war, **the losers must pay war debts**. **Germany has won the war** and now claims its 700 billion € of credit granted to the European periphery, among which 200 billion to Italy.
> (M5S, BBG, 18 September 2013)

> The Euro is now explicitly **a war between creditors and debtors**.
> (M5S, BBG, 23 July 2015)

> The rhythm of the **massacre** has grown steadily since 2011, with the Monti, Letta and Renzi governments, **loyal executors** of the European austerity.
> (M5S, Barbara Lezzi, 6 September 2015)

> The ***austericide*** could not take place in a country without **the complicity of the politico-financial establishment**, in particular of the big banks, which are obtaining what they have always dreamed. […]Therefore they use every mean to make it irreversible. And they will oppose the propositions of the party that won the [Greek] elections by opposing the ***austericide***. […] Hence, the huge importance of mobilisations in support of Syriza which take place all across the EU […] **This conflict** is about **the definition of the kind of Europe we will have in the future**.
> (Podemos, Vicenç Navarro, 12 February 2015)

> In front of the German orthodoxy, the new European identity forces us to face a new challenge which does not correspond to the diagnosis of a contrast between advanced and backward (or peripheral) countries. No; **what is at stake is not the war between Germany and Greece, but the war of the financial powers against the Europe of citizens**. (Podemos, Íñigo Errejón, 5 March 2015)

However, the use of these metaphors is not limited to the context of austerity within the EU, but involves the description of political activity in general as a war/battle. This is particularly clear in the case of Podemos, which describes itself, with explicit references to Gramsci, as an 'electoral war machine' which aims to deal with the existing 'social fracture' and to 'conquer the hegemony' (Errejón, 12.01.2016) by overcoming the resistances of economic, political and media powers. This conception of politics is the perfect antithesis of the consensual, post-political dimension that prevails in the neoliberal discourse; as a matter of fact, both parties explicitly criticise the traditional left for having abandoned its historical electorate and its conflictual attitude ("*voluntad de conflict*"):

> In **this epochal battle** between sovereignty and negative internationalism, **the traditional "left" has betrayed its own historical electorate** and others, post-ideological actors, **will have to put on the helmet and go into the trench**.
> (M5S, Paolo Becchi, 14 June 2014)

> Social democracy has lost one thing, which is the **conflictual attitude**. **The conflictual attitude is an attitude distinctly political**: the social democracy, during the 20th Century, has been able to build what it built partly thanks to **its conflictual attitude towards the powerful**. Once the powerful are able to bind their interests to the social democracy's leadership, this tradition loses its conflictual attitude and accepts the neoliberal view; and therefore it is where other political forces and other realities emerge to give a response to what is left vacant and inert: the

> defence of the citizens' rights and the observation that these rights must be kept outside of the logic of profit. (Podemos, Nacho Álvarez, 21 February 2016)

Besides the populist logic, Podemos and M5S also represent two counter-discourses against neoliberal hegemony and its institutional operations, the restructuring and rescaling of social practices. On the restructuring dimension, they share several elements that place them at odds with the neoliberal political project.

First, they strongly criticise the appraisal of the crisis (whether for being inaccurate or dishonest), as well as the ordoliberal-inspired economic solutions (whether as inefficient or unfair). Interestingly, this criticism is often based on arguments against austerity formulated by famous economists such as Paul Krugman and Joseph Stiglitz (whose names are cited respectively four and five times by Podemos, and six and nine times by M5S). More importantly, this criticism takes place in a broader narrative which provides an alternative account of the nature and causes of the crisis – pointing at the role of financial deregulation, the structural imbalances within the Eurozone and the very existence of the common currency – as well as alternative solutions, usually focusing on the increase of public investment and the construction of a more sustainable model of economic growth. Moreover, austerity is criticised for being unfair, for it privatises the profits and socialises the losses, thus putting the burden on the majority of citizens – which, in this narrative, is said to have no responsibility in the outbreak of the crisis – and ends up in a reverse form of wealth redistribution:

> Monti's Italy has contributed with 40 billion to this scandalous hidden rescue of private banks. **While the profits have been privatised, the losses have been socialised and transferred onto national public debts**. (M5S, BBG, 1 July 2015)

> If we want to broaden the picture to see the more general context […] of **viability and sustainability** for the citizens, we cannot elude several deep considerations […]: people are fed up with austerity, because it is actually **unsustainable**, not because our people is not inclined to sacrifice, but because it involves a burden humanly unsustainable and because […] **it doesn't correspond to any logic of justice, be it political or economic**, and, in addition, it is perceived as **a gratuitous oppression** imposed by a European context which is **unfair** and **incapable of satisfying the needs of the peoples**. (M5S, Tommaso Currò, 1 October 2013)

> This combination of social cuts and increase of the burden of the public debt, derived from the bank rescue, supposes in practice **the socialisation of private debt**, with the additional problem that **the population most affected by austerity policies pay for a banking crisis in which they have no responsibility**.
> (Podemos, Bibiana Medialdea & Antonio Sanabria, 22 April 2014)

> This is the other side of the economic recovery: **the reverse redistribution** which occurred in Spain during the crisis and with a management of the crisis far from being neutral. (Podemos, Joaquín Estefanía, 2 November 2015)

Moreover, and more decisively for our argument, they disclaim the very idea of an autonomous economic logic disembedded from social, political and ethical concerns, and criticise this idea for being at odds with democracy, since it undermines the exercise of popular sovereignty: whereas the government is criticised for relying on a doctrine according to which "sovereignty belongs to the markets, not to the people" (Errejón, 01.04.2016), they reaffirm that "power [belongs] to the people, not to the banks" (BBG, 01.07.2015). This occurs through several arguments, such as the rejection of the accounting logic and its institutionalisation in the budgetary golden rule, the reaffirmation of the prevalence of social goals on strictly economic results, and the denunciation of the submission of political decision to the markets. It also often entails the explicit deconstruction of several features of neoliberal discourse, such as the classic "common sense" argument that "you cannot spend more than you earn", the sanctification of the GDP as the most relevant indicator and the necessity for the State to "regain the trust of financial markets":

> The **official discourse** on the crisis and on the necessary measures to get out of it has succeeded in **permeating the collective common sense**. How can we appeal to the **dictatorship of the markets**? How can we put into question the application of measures […] which are considered as indispensable to avoid falling in a disaster worse than the one we are enduring? We must identify **the blackmail of the so-called "markets"**, acknowledge **the sequestration of politics, incapable of taking decisions autonomous from the requests of employers and financial investors**. […] The debt crisis […] is a central part in **the official discourse** which supports this blackmail. **We lived above our means and now we must tighten our belts**.
> (Podemos, Bibiana Medialdea, 12 April 2015)

> Health, education, pensions must be **removed from the logic of profit**. This was the historic role of social democracy, which they gave up. Protecting these rights in front of the market logic is the historical task which we are facing, because our Welfare State is yet much deteriorated and fragile.
> (Podemos, Nacho Álvarez, 21 February 2016)

> This austericide **presents itself as necessary in order to "regain the trust of the markets"**, one of the most c**ommonly used sentences in the neoliberal narrative**.
> (Podemos, Vicenç Navarro, 12 February 2015).

> […] a country does not care about its citizens' future if it does nothing more than **the mere respect of some dubious accounting and numerical principles**; on the contrary **politics – in particular economic policies – should aim at achieving objectives of welfare, full employment, removal of the economic and social**

> **obstacles** that impede the full development of the human being and the effective participation of the workers to the political, economic and social organisation of the country, as stated in our Constitution. (M5S, Laura Castelli, 2 April 2013)

> […]The increase of GDP does not always coincide with an increase of employment. Actually, **the GDP** […] **cannot measure the welfare of a society**, since it includes also, for example, the expenses to cure cancers that are often caused, by the way, by a criminal management of waste treatment. We thus invite you to re-examining your priorities because **Italians do not care about the GDP**.
> (M5S, Francesco Cariello, 9 October 2013)

> During the parliamentary votes, a large part of the citizens still knows very little about it [the golden rule]; at best someone will remember some TV news where they were saying c**ommonsense things such as: the public finances must be in order, we cannot spend more than we earn**.
> (M5S, Alessio Mattia Villarosa, 6 May 2013)

Finally, in line with the previous elements, Podemos and M5S strongly reaffirm the primacy of the political, thereby explicitly disclaiming the denial of alternatives that lies at the core of neoliberal discourse. On the one hand, they both criticise austerity as a 'dogma', a 'religion' which treats the budget balance as a 'totem', a 'mantra', in the name of which a country like Greece can be "sacrificed on the altar of Brussels in order to keep the Euro alive" (Di Battista, 27.01.2015). On the other hand, they regularly claim the existence of alternatives (the very term 'alternative' and its variations appear respectively 27 and 47 times in M5S' and Podemos' discourses) with regard to economic policies, thus explicitly replacing the TINA claim by a TAA claim: "there are alternatives" (*"ci sono alternative"*, *"hay alternativas"*).

Interestingly, all these elements that characterise Podemos' and M5S' discourse as a counter-discourse against the autonomy and priority of the economic logic are often expressed through the use of *the very same metaphors through which the dominant discourse affirms this autonomy*; the neoliberal language is clearly turned against itself. All the source domains (health, journey, natural disaster, mechanics, living organism, etc.) that the latter uses in order to disembed the economy from society and to deny the political nature of economic decisions are turned the other way around, allowing for instance to put in doubt the accuracy of the *diagnosis* and the *cure*, to affirm the existence of *another accessible way*, to assert that social regression is not the result of *natural laws*, to criticize the *voracity* of the markets, etc. For reasons of space, we cannot show here all the nuances through which this rhetorical reversal is accomplished; however, the following sample of excerpts gives a clear idea of the mechanisms at stake:

> The Greek tragedy is only the most evident example of how irrational **the inhuman voracity of an economy released from public control** can be.
> (M5S, BBG, 19 February 2015)

> […] instead of revising rationally the allocation of resources, and incentivising the sectors which can be the **fly-wheel** of the country's economy, they [the Government] continue to waste public money and to implement **palliatives which don't cure, but harm the patient Italy**.
> (M5S, Mirella Liuzzi, 28 November 2014)

> It looks like we are witnessing the paradox **"successful operation, dead patient"**. We must reclaim *the role of politics*, the real one, which decides **according to principles, to ethics, and not only according to the available resources**.
> (M5S, Laura Castelli, 24 September 2015)

> And he [the governor of the Bank of Spain] does it […] by appealing to the "common sense", because, in his opinion, **the opposite way leads literally to "impossible and unsustainable situations"**. This is a commonplace among the defenders of orthodoxy: **denying the alternatives** to the policies that have failed, or warning that **any deviation from the marked path** is an unrealisable idea or adventure, not much rigorous. (Podemos, Jorge Uxó, 2 June 2015)

> […] we face what we usually call, in medicine as well as in popular wisdom, a **symptom**: a superficial fact that indicates the existence of another underlying fact, more solid or structural. Cough, for instance, is a specific fact, but it shows that the body may have a deeper problem. **In this case the symptom that we face is simple: this Government, in fact, is avoiding parliamentary control**.
> (Podemos, Íñigo Errejón, 6 April 2016)

> There is more employment, but workers have nevertheless less spending power […]. **This is not the fortuitous result of nature, nor of the law of gravity**; this has to do with an attempt, in the previous labour reform of the Socialist Party and in the following labour reform of the Popular Party to undermine the working conditions […] (Podemos, Íñigo Errejón, 7 April 2016)

However, the recovery of democracy and sovereignty is not restricted to the sectorial reorganisation of the relation between the economic and the political spheres; it also entails a reaction to the territorial rescaling of these spheres, which implies that "most of the decisions that affect the daily life of citizens are taken in places more and more remote from the national centres of decision: in Brussels, Frankfurt or Washington" (Estefanía, 02.11.2015).[6] In this perspective, while both

6. The lemmas 'democracy' and 'sovereignty' are massively represented in Podemos and M5S' discourse, with respectively 135 and 86 occurrences for democracy/democratic, and 60 and 77 occurrences for sovereignty/sovereign.

parties criticise the removal of the decision-making processes from the national to the (undemocratic) European level, as well as the economic, rather than political, nature of European integration (thus taking a clear *alter*-European stance, rather than a strictly *anti*-European one), they diverge on the attitude to adopt in front of it. Whereas Podemos insists that "there are alternatives within the common currency" (Medialdea and Sanabria, 22.04.2014), M5S actively argues in favour of the exit from the common currency, which it sees as the only viable solution. It appears clearly in the overwhelming presence of this theme throughout their discourses – the expressions "exit from the Euro" and "out of the Euro" are repeated nine and ten times, respectively – as well as in the close environment of the term 'sovereignty' itself (Figure 1). The latter suggests that M5S mainly defines sovereignty as an economic and monetary issue: whereas the term 'sovereignty' is mostly associated with political concepts in the case of Podemos ('popular', 'Chamber', 'Government', 'citizens', 'Parliament', etc.), it is almost exclusively associated with terms related to the common currency in M5S' discourse ('monetary', 'euro', 'market', 'Europe', 'austerity', etc.). In particular, the systematic use of the expression 'monetary sovereignty' (18 occurrences) and the strong co-occurrence index between these two terms (19) reveal the extent to which M5S considers an autonomous monetary policy as the *sine qua non* condition for proper democracy.

Figure 1

Overall, Podemos' and M5S' discourse confirm our initial hypotheses: they both clearly follow a populist logic (since they dichotomise the social along a sharp antagonistic frontier) and represent a counter-discourse against neoliberal hegemony (since they oppose the way neoliberalism restructures and rescales social practices). However, their discourse still displays strong differences that may prove

to be crucial when it comes to build a real and coherent alternative to the existing hegemonic order (Mazzolini and Borriello, 2017). On the one hand, the populist logic they deploy differs with respect to the definition of the enemy/adversary, the very attempt to construct a new political subject, and the ideological repertoire that they mobilise. On the other hand, the nature of their counter-discursive strategy against neoliberalism is also slightly different.

First, the identification of the "constitutive other" takes a much more systemic form in Podemos' discourse, as epitomised by their much more frequent use of terms related to the systemic dimension of the entity they oppose, such as neoliberal(ism) and oligarch(y) (see Table 2). Similarly, whereas M5S insists on the corruption of the 'political class' as a moral question (they systematically address this issue in terms of criminality, lie and plot), Podemos is much more precise in identifying the political system of the democratic transition as a whole, as well as the mechanisms through which political and economic powers merge. Second, the articulatory practice of constructing the people is much more evident in Podemos' discourse: while M5S always assume the existence of an "already-there" people, Podemos explicitly evokes the necessity to unite heterogeneous social demands in order to form a new political subject. From this point of view, Podemos represents a reflexive application of populism drawing its inspiration directly from Laclau's theory (Kioupkolis, 2016).[7] Third, while M5S defines itself explicitly as post-ideological and seems to blur any reference to pre-existing ideological traditions, Podemos assumes a leftist heritage which appears clearly in the vocabulary it employs – for instance, the expressions 'working class' and/or 'popular class' (8 occurrences) and 'progressive' (19 occurrences), which are completely absent from M5S' discourse. Finally, and in part due to the previous elements, they display significant differences in the way they oppose neoliberalism. On the one hand, concerning the criticism towards the supremacy of the market logic, Podemos focuses in a much more detailed manner on the analysis of the institutional structure that underpins it and on the critical examination of the alternative economic models that exist. The complete absence of the terms 'capitalism' and 'capitalist' in M5S's discourse, compared to the fifteen occurrences in Podemos' discourse, is emblematic of such difference, as well as the extensive reports on economic issues that the latter produces through the *Instituto 25M Democracia* and that fuel its political communication. On the other hand, the different attitudes that these

7. This is, for instance, clearly noticeable in the following excerpt: "Indeed, there were and there still are the conditions for a discourse that articulates transversally frustrated demands from different kinds and areas, democratic, social, moral – around referents with a high symbolic power and a perspective of *refundación* as a country, of democratisation and redistribution of wealth." (Íñigo Errejón, 12 January 2016)

parties show towards the single currency reflect the nagging hesitations of many anti-neoliberal forces within the EU: should sovereignty be regained through exit from the EMU structures, or from their democratisation? Is an exit from the EMU a viable option from an economic point of view? Although there is no simple answer to these questions, Syriza's experience suggests that any progressive force wishing to challenge the neoliberal hegemony will have to adopt a coherent and realist strategy in that respect, given that any hidden contradiction is likely to come to the fore in the conquest of national executive power.

Conclusions

This chapter started from a simple research question: to what extent can we consider Podemos and M5S, two new political movements that emerged in the wake of the economic crisis, as a single political phenomenon? To answer this question, we have combined, on one hand, a theoretical discussion on populism and its context of emergence and, on the other hand, a corpus-based and comparative analysis of both parties' discourse between 2012 and 2016. We have hypothesised that, regardless of their ideological and strategical differences, these parties pertain to the same political phenomenon insofar as they represent two populist counter-discourses against the neoliberal hegemony order.

The empirical analysis has provided strong evidence that supports our argument. Both parties clearly follow a populist logic whereby they divide the social field into two antagonist groups: the alliance of economic and political elites (both at the national and European level), on one hand, and the people as an articulation of frustrated social demands, on the other. By the same token, Podemos and M5S clearly constitute two counter-discourses against neoliberalism: they explicitly disclaim its post-political pretention, reveal its political nature and oppose the restructuring and rescaling of social practices that it performs.

However, the story does not end here. Although these movements appeared in the same broad economic and political context of the Eurozone crisis, and although they display manifest common features, these elements do not exhaust the question of their counter-hegemonic potential. Since hegemony, in the Gramscian tradition, requires the conquest of a leading position in different spheres of society at once, it takes much more than the contestation and dis-organisation of the extant political order that populism brings over. From this point of view, Podemos and M5S display strong differences with regard to the specificities of their national context, their ideological background, the identity of the new political subject they attempt to shape, as well as their strategy and organisational structure, which could prove to be decisive when it comes to building an alternative to the

hegemonic order they challenge. Ultimately, we may conjecture that it is precisely in the articulation of a populist logic with a new hegemonic horizon where the key to these political movements' outcome lies.

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CHAPTER 4

Islamic conservative populism in Turkey

The case of the AKP

Hayriye Özen

This study focuses the Islamic/conservative populism of the Justice and the Development Party (AKP) in Turkey. Drawing on the post-structuralist discourse-theoretical perspective developed by Ernesto Laclau, it demonstrates how the populist discourse of the AKP substantially changed in this period through fluctuations in the boundaries that separated 'the people' from 'the power' as well as the components of both of these categories. While 'the people' signifier initially acted as an empty signifier that represented a series of unfulfilled social demands against 'the power' – the institutional system – that negated these demands, it gradually came to signify Islamic/conservative demands against all those opposing the AKP. This transformation involved a move from a relatively inclusive and democratic populism to an exclusive and authoritarian one.

Keywords: populism, populist discourse, post-structuralist discourse theory, AKP, authoritarian populism, democratic populism

1. Introduction

Over the last two decades, populist forms of politics have witnessed an increase in different regions of the world ranging from North and South America to Europe. Besides the right-wing populist parties, many other populist movements have also emerged such as Indignados, Aganaktismenoi, Occupy, and Gezi movements, as well as left-wing populist parties such as Podemos and Syriza (see introduction, this volume). As revealed by such a proliferation in populist politics, populism takes various forms in different contexts depending on its ideological character (Stavrakakis 2015). Yet, most of the existing studies on populism deal with right-wing populism (see introduction, this volume). Moreover, they focus their attention on a certain type of right-wing populism, the anti-immigration and the anti-Islamist populism of the right-wing political parties in the Western European countries (Mudde 2007).

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With this background, this chapter focuses on a different type of right-wing populism: the Islamic conservative populism of the Justice and Development Party (AKP), which has been in power in Turkey since 2002. In line with the overall aim of this edited volume on *Imagining Peoples of Europe*, it aims to understand how the category of "the people" has been imagined, constructed and interpellated in the populist political project of the AKP. It draws on the post-structuralist discourse-theoretical perspective developed by Ernesto Laclau and the Essex school which conceptualizes populism not as contents of politics, but as a particular logic of articulation that symbolically divides the social field into two antagonistic camps by interpellating "the people" against "the power" or a "common adversary". From the Laclauian perspective, populism has a deeply constructed character, and its meaning change depending on the discursive constructions of "the people" and "the power" (see Chapter 1, this volume). Analysing the logic of articulation that constitutes the populist discourse of the AKP in the period from its establishment in 2001 to date, I demonstrate that the populist discourse of the AKP substantially changed in this period through fluctuations in the boundaries that separated the people from the power as well as the components of both of these categories. Although "the people" (*millet* in Turkish) signifier of this discourse has always represented Islamic/conservative demands, it initially acted as an empty signifier that represented a series of unfulfilled social demands together with the Islamic ones against "the power" – the institutional system – that negated these demands. In other words, by establishing a "chain of equivalence" between Islamic/conservative demands and other demands for liberalization, democratization and economic development, the discourse of the AKP interpellated heterogeneous social groups with frustrated demands as "the people" against "the power" that either repressed or disregarded all such demands. As it represented diverse social groups with multiple frustrated demands against the power, "the people" signifier was emptied of any concept and turned into a mere name.

This relatively inclusionary and democratic populist discourse started to change with the increasing electoral successes of the AKP as well as its increasing control over the state elites' bureaucracy with anti-AKP agendas. Gradually, the central signifier of this discourse, the people, ceased to be an empty signifier as it came to signify a single group: the Islamic conservative segment of Turkish society. As the central signifier evolved into an Islamic conservative one, it blocked the expansion of the equivalential chain beyond Islamic/conservative social groups, turning the populism of the AKP into an anti-democratic one. As many social groups, particularly the ones who do not have Islamic or conservative lifestyles, resisted the calls of this Islamic populism and voiced their opposition, the AKP turned to constituting only its electorate as "the people" – i.e. what it also calls "the public will" (*milli irade* in Turkish). In this way, by making an image of the

party as the representative of the people and the leader of the party as the man of the people, all those opposing the party or criticizing the leader are constituted as the "common adversary" of the people. In time, by dichotomizing the social space into two antagonistic camps, this populism has become instrumental for the AKP to block the interpellation of conservative and Islamic social segments by oppositional discourses and, thereby, achieved the following: the prevention of any substantial challenge to its power; gaining the support of its electorate for repressive measures taken against any form of opposition; the imposition of Islamic-conservative values; and the creation of a new authoritarian state system. The premise of this study is that, depending on the way the categories of "the people" and "the common adversary" are constituted, populism not only assumes many different forms, it may also be democratic or anti-democratic.

I begin by introducing the concepts that inform the analysis of the populism of the AKP. Following a brief section on data collection and analysis, it proceeds by outlining the conditions that provided the grounds for the establishment of the AKP's populist discourse. After examining the changing forms of the AKP's populism from 2001 to date, the paper concludes by pointing out the implications of this study.

2. 'The people' as the subject of politics: The Laclauian perspective of populism

From the Laclauian perspective, populism is not seen as the content of politics or the ideology of movements. Rather, it is a "political logic" (see Chapter 1 this volume), a "particular mode of political articulation of whatever social, political or ideological contents" (Laclau 2005a: 34). Populist articulations discursively construct "people" as "a new subject of collective action" (Mouffe 2016a) against the status quo of hegemonic systems. As such, they symbolically divide the social field into two distinct antagonistic camps by constructing a political frontier between the 'people' and the 'power' or the 'elite' that is unresponsive to the demands of people (see Chapter 1, this volume).

Laclau (2005a: 72–83) takes "social demands", not social groups, as the smallest unit in the analysis of populist discourses, and argues that populist politics depend on the existence of plurality of social demands together with the incapability of the hegemonic system to satisfy these demands. Yet, this does not generate populism, but only provides its conditions of possibility. As Laclau (2005a) argues, there are three structural dimensions in the transition of multiple frustrated social demands into populism. The first one is the aggregation and unification of unfulfilled social demands in an equivalential chain. The formation of the chain of

equivalence between disparate demands requires the simultaneous construction of a political frontier between the frustrated social demands and the hegemonic power that negates them all (Laclau 2006). The second dimension is the change in the nature of social demands: with the formation of the political frontier and by pitting the people against the power in this way, social demands turn from simple requests into fighting demands (Laclau 2005b), and the social groups having these demands emerge as a new popular subjectivity against the hegemonic power. The third dimension is the consolidation of the chain of equivalence through the construction of a popular identity or, put differently, the creation of a "people". This requires the crystallization of the chain of equivalence in a popular identity.

Concerning the question of how a collective identity can be constructed out of heterogeneous demands with no shared positive features, Laclau points at the production of "empty signifiers", through which a particular demand in the equivalential chain starts to represent the entire chain. As a particular demand comes to represent an incommensurable totality, it is transformed by emptying itself from any particular content (Laclau 2006). This involves the metaphorization of its literal content and, as such, the subordination of its particularism to the function of signifying the totality. With the production of an empty signifier, a popular identity is formed around it. It is precisely in this way that "the part" sees itself as the whole, that is, as the people – the "central point of reference" in populist politics (Stavrakakis 2005).

Laclau's conceptualization of populism as a logic of articulation allows us to account for different forms of populism (see Chapter 1, this volume). Unlike those conceptualizations that represent populism as inherently anti-democratic or right-wing (see introduction, this volume), it helps us see that populism is not inherently regressive or progressive (Mouffe 2016a), but contingent upon the construction of a people in relation to its constitutive other, i.e. power. Laclau's concept of populism also shows that the relation between people and power can also be constructed in different ways. As Mouffe (2016b) underlines, this depends on whether the confrontation between these two categories takes on an antagonistic or agonistic form. While the former articulation involves the construction of the powers that be as the "enemy", the latter involves such construction of the power at hand as an "adversary". This has very important consequences for politics: an antagonistic confrontation rejects the existing system and aims to replace it with a whole new system; whereas an agonistic populism does not aim for a "total rejection of existing institutional framework" (Mouffe 2016b: 4). It should be noted here that antagonism, from the perspective of both Laclau and Mouffe, is an inherent part of populism and, therefore, can never be eradicated. If antagonism or an antagonistic political frontier in a populist discourse collapses, the "people" as a historical actor also disintegrates (Laclau 2005a). With her conceptualization

of agonism, Mouffe proposes not to eliminate but to sublimate antagonisms "by mobilizing them towards democratic designs" (Mouffe 2013: 9). An antagonistic confrontation between the categories of people and power, as I will show in this study, may lead to the emergence of exclusionary and anti-democratic populism, particularly in the case that the populist force is in power.

3. Data collection and analysis

The empirical data of this study were collected by using various documents. I carried out a close reading of the party programme of the AKP (2002) as well as two books – Akdogan 2003 and Akdogan 2004 – published by the AKP in order to clarify its official ideology. I also used critical public statements and speeches of the prominent figures of the party drawn from daily newspaper reports (Milliyet, Hurriyet, Hurriyet Daily News, Radikal and Sabah).

From the Laclauian discourse-theoretical perspective, discourse analysis is not a mere method, but a theoretical and methodological whole (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002). In contrast to those approaches that use the term discourse as a synonym of text, or speech, this perspective sees it as co-extensive with the social. In other words, the social is structured by hegemonic discourses. When the hegemony of a discourse weakens, it fails to structure social practices and, as such, provides the 'conditions of possibility' for the constitution of new discourses that contest the existing structures. In analysing the populist discourse of the AKP from the Laclauian discourse-theoretical perspective, therefore, I first focused on the existing social structures in order to understand how and in what ways they opened a space for the constitution of the populism of the AKP. In analysing the construction and reconstruction of the populist discourse of the AKP from 2001 to date, I took "social demands" as the minimal unit of analysis, and focused on the constitution of boundaries or, what amounts to the same, the construction of social antagonisms between those who have particular social demands and those who ignore these demands, i.e., "people" and "power" categories.

4. Conditions of the AKP's populism: The crises in the Turkish context

As Glynos and Mondon (2016) rightly point out concerning populism in Europe, it is not a disease but a symptom. For this reason, in attempting to understand populism, we first need to understand the conditions that make populist politics possible. As stated before, some degree of crisis in the hegemonic structure is a "necessary precondition of populism" (Laclau 2005a: 177). It is important to

understand the degree and the depth of the crisis since the conditions of the possibility of change will be dependent upon them.

When the AKP was founded in 2001, Turkey had long been experiencing a political and economic crisis. While the latter crisis was mainly, though not exclusively, related to the way the neo-liberal economy was shaped in the Turkish context, the former was due to the increasing inability of the founding state ideology – Kemalism – to reproduce its hegemony from the 1980s onwards. As the official ideology of the Turkish republic, Kemalism enjoyed a hegemonic position for a long time. Yet, an important part of this hegemony was based on silencing certain social segments through the use of various coercive measures. This is mainly due to the transformative, elitist, and exclusionary character of Kemalism. Since it was formulated in the 1920s and the 1930s, this ideology guided ambitious elitist politics that aimed for a top-down transformation of a religious, multi-ethnic, and traditional society as inherited from the Ottoman past, into a secular, ethnically homogeneous, and modern society. While this political project gained the consent of the educated urban segments, foremost among them the civil and military bureaucracy, it did not have the same appeal for all, particularly for religious/conservative segments and for some ethnic groups such as Kurds. As such, the bureaucratic elite became both the carrier of Kemalist reforms and the custodian of the Kemalist project, turning to educate and enlighten the rest in order to create a secular, homogeneous, and modern society. The education of the masses involved top-down measures to change their lifestyles, behaviours, attitudes, and even looks. The masses had no say in any of these changes and were, in fact, seen as those "to be used in attaining the goals established by the elite cadre of the state" (Karpat 1970: 540). The reforms were commonly known among public to be 'for the people despite the people'. Accordingly, many changes were effected through the use of state authority and force, leading to the emergence of new inequalities and to the marginalization of social groups with respect to political participation and socio-economic rights, creating new social divisions between the 'secular, modern and Turkish' state elites and nearly everyone else in society.

There is no doubt that the hegemonic capacity of Kemalism did not remain the same throughout history (Yegen 2001). In fact, Kemalism faced increasing difficulties in holding on to its hegemonic dominance after the transition of the Turkish politics into a multi-party system in 1946. From then on, the centre right-wing parties began defeating the party of the Kemalist state elites (the Republican People's Party, CHP) in elections. These parties used a more or less populist language in an attempt to appeal to the people (Taşkın 2013). This provided religious/conservative groups and to a lesser degree the Kurdish people with new outlets in politics. Yet, neither the secular and nationalist state policies, nor the tutelage of the Kemalist state elites on the politics changed substantially. In fact, whenever

the political developments were conceived of as posing challenges to the secular or nationalist state policies, the military intervened in politics and controlled and contained any potentially dislocating social demands. This not only hindered the country's democratization, but also and more importantly, created prolonged discontent for many social groups including Kurdish, religious, and leftist groups.

The harshest and most longstanding of these military interventions took place in 1980 with severe political consequences. After taking over power by means of a coup, the military introduced an illiberal constitution and created a semi-authoritarian state system on the basis of a reformulation of Kemalism (Tanör 1995). Turkish nationalism and a nearly militant secularism became the pillars of Kemalist ideology as conceptualized by the military, continuing to create and recreate some fundamental social problems concerning democratization, the Kurds, and religion.

Furthermore, the dose of authoritarianism in the rule of the country increased due to two political developments that characterized the 1980s and the 1990s; one is the armed struggle that the Kurdish insurgents, and the other is the gradual increase in power of the Islamic political party. The establishment conceived of the former as a substantial threat to national unity whereas the latter was thought of as a threat to the survival of the secular regime. The establishment therefore introduced a number of additional restrictive measures on political rights and freedoms in spite of its declared aim to become an EU member state and EU pressure in favour of the country's democratization. Steps towards such democratization were rather limited however and did not advance smoothly due to the resistance and opposition by some bureaucratic – particularly military – elites within the state.

The problems created by this semi-authoritarian system were accompanied by a series of serious economic setbacks and corruption in the 1990s. In addition to the new inequalities and to the poverty that the neoliberal transformation of the Turkish economy was giving rise to, a severe economic crisis emerged in 1994, leading to the devaluation of the Turkish Lira, a high inflation rate, and a considerable loss in the annual output of the country (Celasun 1998). The economic crises and turmoil of the 1990s also extended to the 2000s: first in November 2000 and then, in February 2001, severe economic crises erupted which led to a high inflation rate, a rise in unemployment, and a drop in real wages (Yeldan 2008). Unlike the previous crises experienced in the 1990s, these new economic crises negatively affected almost all sections of society in varying degrees (Öniş and Bakır 2007).

This crisis-ridden context was limiting and frustrating for many social groups, which included not only those who, in various ways and to different degrees, suffered from the economic crises, but also those who suffered from the prevailing anti-democratic structure: Islamic groups; religious-minded social segments; Kurdish groups; liberal and progressive groups; and so on. Yet, at the same time the existing system was still able to appeal to secular groups, and Kemalist social

groups in major cities in particular. The system was able to gain the support of these groups for the use of coercion against any opposition. Although this ability prevented the system to enter into an organic crisis, it failed to eliminate its vulnerability to anti-institutional challenges. As I will show in what follows, this crisis situation provided a fertile ground for the articulation of a populist discourse as well as for its resonance among, and reception by, the masses. In spite of its attempts, the political system of the 2000's could not relegate the anti-institutional challenges of the AKP to a marginal status.

5. The AKP as a new populist force

The AKP has its roots in the mainstream Islamist movement in Turkey that emerged towards the end of the 1960s within the relatively liberal political environment – *Milli Görüş* or the National Outlook Movement. Although the secularist state policies did not substantially change and even though the control of the elites over the public visibility of religion and religious groups did not diminish, this new environment was more favourable for the organization of Islamic groups in "communities, informal networks, publication houses, and fringe political parties" (Tugal 2009: 5). The first Islamist mass party, which was the political party of the National Outlook Movement, was also established at the end of the 1960s.

After being ordered to close down by the secular courts and after its re-establishment under new names, the Islamist party (Welfare Party, RP) began to enjoy increasing popular sympathy and support within the semi-authoritarian environment of the 1990s. First, it managed to increase its votes considerably. Later it took over the municipalities of major cities such as Istanbul and Ankara in 1994 and finally it became the majority party in the 1995 general elections. This success and the coming of the Islamist RP to power via a coalition with a right-wing party was conceived by the secular bureaucracy as a substantial threat to the founding principles of Turkish Republic. In line with this stance, the party was removed from office upon an intervention of the military in politics. In 1998, it was shut down as ordered by the Constitutional Court. Those who split away from this Islamist party founded the AKP in August 2001.

6. Early years of the AKP (2001-mid-2011): People as an empty signifier

As mentioned earlier, the AKP was established within a crisis-ridden context. This crisis situation, however, should not be seen as external to the populism of the AKP. On the contrary, the articulation of this crisis, or in Moffitt's (2015: 90)

words, this "performance of the crisis" by the AKP played an important role in the constitution and reconstitution of its populism. The use of Islamic networks and organizational infrastructure as well as the experiences of the National Outlook Movement endowed the party with a substantial opportunity to detect social dislocations, grievances as well as demands of many different social groups. The articulation of such diverse social dislocations and demands through the spectacularization of the crisis situation brought rapid success: the party won the majority of the votes in the first general elections that took place towards the end of 2002, a year after its establishment.

From the very outset, the specific discursive articulation of frustrated social demands by the AKP was populist, since it interpellated and constituted heterogeneous social groups with frustrated demands as "the people" against the then existing institutional system (AKP Program 2002). However, especially during its early years in politics, the AKP had an ambiguous position vis-à-vis the institutional system. This was mainly due to the conjunctural nature of the crisis in the very system. As explained earlier, in spite of its failure to absorb many social demands, the institutional system still had the ability to satisfy certain social demands and to marginalize opposition in the first years of the 2000s. The system thus continued to consolidate its position. When this is the case, the populist forces, as Laclau (2005a: 178) states, "have to operate both as 'insiders' and as 'outsiders" since they will try to subvert the system while at the same time be integrated into it. This is precisely what we see in the AKP's approach until 2011: while the AKP attempted to subvert the system by articulating frustrated social demands, it was also integrated into the existing system.

It was this ambiguous position that shaped the populism of the AKP during its early years. In order to be integrated into the existing institutional system, that is, to preempt possible anti-secular allegations and related coercive practices of the secular state elites, the party devoted much of its energy and time to distancing itself from its Islamic roots (Şimşek 2013). Accordingly, by publishing a book written by the advisor of the party's leadership, Yalçın Akdogan, it has identified itself not as an Islamist, but as a 'conservative democratic' party and, in contrast to the National Outlook Movement, presented itself as secular. During the establishment process of the new party, for instance, the party's leader, Recep Tayyip Erdogan often said 'I have changed', implying that he was no longer a radical Islamist, but a moderate one. For instance, when interrogated by the Chief Prosecutor for his speeches, in which he had strongly emphasized an Islamic worldview, he stated "all these were expressed under the conditions of those times. Now, I don't believe that they are right. I have changed" (Milliyet 26 April 2002). Contrary to the anti-Western and anti-capitalist tendencies of the National Outlook Movement, the AKP also presented itself as pro-Western and pro-capitalist. It regarded the

adoption of neoliberal principles as necessary both for ensuring economic development and yielding the support of Western powers, as well as for the national and international capital groups, declaring its commitment to neoliberal principles and promising fresh neoliberal reforms.

The conservative democratic identity had clear populist aims mainly because the party tried to represent many frustrated social demands with this identity. It was designed to go beyond traditional ideological divides in Turkish society. In the words of Erdogan: "We, as AKP, cannot limit ourselves to the existing communist, socialist, political Islamists, social democrat, rightist, leftist, or nationalist concepts. Our party [as being a conservative democratic party] embraces all citizens regardless of their gender, ethnicities, beliefs, and worldviews" (Hurriyet 3 March 2002). It should be noted that the conservative part of this new and carefully designed identity, defined by the party as "cultural conservatism" (Akdogan 2004), aimed to appeal to broader sectors that included not only under-represented and marginalized Islamic groups due to the strict secular state policies, but also religious-minded groups and conservative groups, as the following quote reveals: "Religion-politics, traditional-modern, religion-state, state-society-individual have always created tensions in Turkish politics which will be overcome by the rule of the conservative democratic AK Party" (Akdogan 2004). In this respect, the party was highly careful not to prioritize religious demands over other issues but to articulate them equivalentially with various other 'conservative' demands. The 'democratic' part of the political identity of the party, and in line with this, the declaration of the importance and necessity of the EU membership of the country also contributed to the representation of many frustrated demands critically. Using democratic rhetoric, the party easily appealed to many different social groups suffering from the long-prevailing, anti-democratic structure in the country that included not only religious groups but also ethnic groups such as Kurds and the liberal and democratic circles. The importance given to EU membership also attracted many because of the potential economic benefits to be gained from such membership (Öniş and Şenses 2009). Being in conformity with the 'westernizing' aims and outlook of the Kemalist elites, this pro-EU stance also increased the legitimacy of the AKP government, providing the party with a form of protection from the intervention of the state elites in the practices of the government (Çınar 2006).

There was one more theme that was strongly emphasized by the new party; the 'economic development' of the country, which, in spite of being one of the most important social demands in the Turkish context, gained further prominence as a result of the severe economic crises experienced by the nation from the mid-1990s to the early 2000s. As mentioned before, the AKP, in sharp contrast to its National Outlook past, reiterated that it is pro-capitalist and neoliberal, and would further liberalize the Turkish economy towards development.

It was not the mere representation of all these demands, but rather their articulation in a specific way that made the AKP's discourse populist. All of the abovementioned themes and social demands, ranging from economic ones to calls for civil freedom and democratization, were articulated against the then existing institutional system in Turkey that was conceived of and presented by the AKP as 'economically backward and anti-democratic'. Through this articulation, a relation of equivalence was formed between diverse demands. By forming a 'chain of equivalence' among a number of frustrated demands against the power that repressed all these demands, the discourse of the AKP met the two preconditions of populism: One is that it related diverse social demands for democracy, economic development, civil rights and liberties with each other. In this way, it created solidarity among disparate social groups who shared 'the fact that their demands remain unsatisfied' within the existing system (Laclau 2005b: 37). The other is that the discourse of the party created an internal political frontier between the unfulfilled demands and the system that fails to accommodate them. In fact, the equivalential articulation of a plurality of social demands involved a simultaneous construction of a power that negates all these demands, i.e., the 'common adversary'. Accordingly, the social field is divided into two parts with various frustrated social demands on the one side, and the institutional system unresponsive to these demands on the other side.

Yet, the populist attempts of the AKP were not limited to the equivalential articulation of diverse demands. More importantly, it discursively constructed diverse social groups having the above-mentioned disparate social demands as 'people', *millet* in Turkish (AKP Program 2002). The party, as Erdogan stated, "was established not on the order of someone, but on the order of the people" (Yeni Şafak 23 March 2003). Here, it is important to note that the term millet has more than one meaning. The term is commonly used in Turkish to refer to both the 'people' and the 'nation'. However, since the Arabic origin of the term refers to 'religious community' (originally an Hebrew word referring to the word of God), *millet* also has some religious connotations. Yet, the initial use of the term by the AKP referred to the 'people', since it was used to signify many social groups having different – not merely religious – demands.

Thus, the 'people' became the central point of reference in the discourse of the AKP. It served to unify all those whose demands for democracy, economic development, civil rights and liberties were not satisfied within the then existing political and economic order. The discursive construction of the people as a political subject in this way is radical in the sense that it did not express a previously given unity of a social group but that it rather constituted a new political agent. The party, as Erdoğan stated, 'was established not on the order of someone, but on the order of *people*' (Yeni Şafak 23 March 2003). The AKP was presented in this

discourse as the voice of the "people". From the very outset, it presented itself as "the party of the people". Even the theme song of the party said "the AKP is the people itself, the heart and the voice of the people".

Concerning the 'power' category, the party was cautious in the early 2000s not to offend the Kemalist state elite mainly due to, as mentioned earlier, the ongoing appeal of Kemalism and the power of these groups in the then existing institutional system. Although it depicted the Kemalist project of modernization as the source of all the problems that people had been suffering from since the 1920s, it did not openly declare so but merely implied it. Rather than pointing the finger, it contended itself with implying that Kemalism and the Kemalist state elites were the 'adversary'. In particular, the social engineering and homogenizing attempts of Kemalism were seen and implied as oppressive in its discourse (Akdogan 2003). More importantly, the relation between the people and the power was not constructed in an antagonistic way. Rather, it took an agonistic form, and in accordance with this, the power was conceived not as the enemy, but the adversary.

With this populist discourse, the AKP managed to succeed in mobilizing the support of a diverse, and in fact, contradictory element, which included many social segments such as landlords, small tradesmen, shopkeepers, villagers, Islamist groups, conservatives, liberal intellectuals, and the urban poor, winning the majority of votes in the general elections held in November 2002 (Hale and Özbudun 2010). What is noteworthy here is that the discourse of the AKP also provided a surface of inscription to the demands of liberal intelligentsia, bringing about important political consequences both for this group and for the AKP. As the social demands of this group for the liberalization and democratization of the Turkish politics gained a corporeality through this inscription previously absent, these intellectuals became part of the struggle of the AKP against the Kemalist hegemony. Yet, this inscription also restricted the autonomy of the social demands of the liberal groups, subordinating them to the strategic aims of the AKP. As to the AKP government, its alliance with liberal intellectuals helped its promotion as a 'success story' both in Turkey and abroad in terms of liberalizing and democratizing the country.

After coming to power, the AKP remained true to many of its promises and started democratization reforms. Within three years, it showed considerable progress towards meeting the political criteria of the EU, leading to the start of the accession process in 2005. As of the same year, it also began showing its willingness to take some steps towards the solution of the Kurdish problem. In fact, some new rights and freedoms, such as the right of education and broadcasting in a mother tongue, were already granted to the Kurdish people through the political reforms in line with the EU policies. This new government also made certain economic reforms by fully adopting the program developed just before it came to power to

battle the crisis. Under favourable conditions in the world capitalism of the time, these reforms led to a steady economic development until 2009 (Boratav 2010; Öniş 2012). Within a few years after the crisis, that is, in the first years that the AKP was in power, the Turkish economy began to grow sustainably. It also dealt with the problem of poverty that neoliberal reforms and the economic crisis created. In line with the general trend in the world, it tried to solve this problem by promoting voluntary and civil society assistance (Bugra 2008). The 'European' reform agenda of the party, the steps taken for the solution of the Kurdish problem, the neoliberal economic reforms, and the attempts to develop solutions to poverty problem led to a further increase in the support of liberal circles, not only at the national but also at the international level. In line with this, the AKP government was seen as the symbol of the compatibility of moderate Islam with capitalist development and liberal democracy. All these further increased the appeal for the AKP, turning even those who had been skeptical of its true intentions to the party as reflected in the increase in votes for the party in subsequent elections. In fact, the party managed to receive 46.7% of the votes in 2007 and 49.8% in 2011.

A very important point to be considered in the increasing success of the party is the politics of the Kemalist elites against the AKP. In fact, from the very outset, these elites who included bureaucrats from the military and judiciary, the President, CHP, as well as the mainstream media, tried to block the political attempts of the party on the grounds that it is not sincerely secular and that it hides its real intention: the constitution of a religious socio-political order in place of a secular one. At the beginning, all the efforts of this group were directed to undermine the political career of Erdogan, but this yielded no success. In 2007, when the new president would be elected by the Parliament, the Kemalist elites tried to block the AKP-endorsed candidate. As the efforts for eliminating the AKP from the political arena intensified, the party responded by further identifying itself with the "people" on the one hand, and more importantly, by more openly constructing the Kemalist elites as the adversary of the people on the other hand.

This increasingly open confrontation with the Kemalist elites posed a threat to the populist discourse of the AKP by forcing the autonomization of the conservative/religious themes from the chain of equivalence. As mentioned earlier, the populist discourse of the AKP brought extremely different groups together with various, even contradictory and conflicting, social demands such as Islamists and liberals, nationalists and Kurds, and the urban and rural poor and the pious bourgeoisie. During its first two terms, the AKP government managed to hold these groups together by uniting them around the central signifier 'people'. On the other hand, the elites' efforts aimed to break the equivalential chain formed between the demands of these groups by the AKP. By reducing the party to a religious/conservative party, they tried to weaken its representation of other social demands

and groups. In return, the AKP responded by clearly dichotomozing the social space into two parts: the 'oppressive elites' versus the 'oppressed people'. To quote Erdogan: "The word belongs to the people, the authority belongs to the people … It is no longer the mobs or the mafia, but the people who have the power to decide. It is no longer the elite, but my people that has the power in this country" (Hürriyet 8 May 2011). Equivalence against the common adversary was also more openly expressed in the language of the AKP, as the following quote from a speech by Erdogan delivered to Kurds in Diyarbakır reveals:

What was forbidden for you [the Kurds] was also forbidden for us [the pious people]. …. I was imprisoned just for reciting a [religious] poem. … I waged the [same] struggle [that you wage against the repressive state policies]. I know very well what negation and assimilation [that you Kurdish people were subjected to] means (Milliyet 1 June 2011).

As a result, the efforts of the Kemalist elite backfired, leading, contrary to their aims, to a further consolidation of the support of many social groups for the AKP.

To sum up, in its first two terms in office, the AKP's populist discourse was able to inscribe frustrated social demands of various groups. More specifically, it appealed to those social segments marginalized by the Kemalist hegemony not only via social and political rights, but also via promises of socio-economic benefits. In contrast to the elitism of Kemalism, therefore, the populism of the AKP was democratic to some extent in these years since it advocated equal rights for outsiders, for the underdog. Yet, in contrast to what the liberal intellectuals supporting the AKP were then claiming, this does not entail that we are dealing with a success story about the democratization of the country. In its first two terms, democratization did not become a high-priority issue for the AKP government. As I will demonstrate in what follows, the populist discourse of the AKP began to fluctuate in the later years as the social reality within which it operates shifted.

7. People as a signifier of Islamic/conservatism (mid-2011 to date)

Following three subsequent electoral victories, the populism of the AKP began to change. Compared to its discourse during its first two terms in office, the new discourse of the AKP still involved the populist dichotomization of the society into two camps, but those who had a position in these two camps and the relation between these camps changed. In other words, both the boundaries and the equivalential components of the populist discourse of the AKP underwent change.

As the AKP increased its popular support and made advances in curtailing the tutelage of civil and military bureaucracy over the democratic process, the AKP government began to put more emphasis on conservative/religious themes,

changing the shape of the hegemonic game: a new 'people' was gradually constructed through the reconstitution of a new frontier. This entailed the construction of the conservative/religious electorate of the AKP as the 'people' (*millet*) or 'public will' (*milli irade*) and the use of the term *millet* with its religious connotations. The construction of a new 'people' was simultaneously accompanied by the construction of a new 'adversary' redefined in order to signify all those opposing the government. In doing so, the AKP adopted an antagonizing language, constituting its opponents as the common enemy of the people.

There are both internal and external factors influencing the changes in the populist language of the AKP. The most important internal factors, which are in fact closely related, are the leadership of the party and the core conservative/religious electorate. In sharp contrast to the promises it made in its first years in power, the AKP did not develop an internal democratic structure and is in fact characterized by a lack of democracy, fierce leadership, absolute submission to authority, and obedience to the leader. The leading cadre that established the party was gradually rendered powerless through intra-party competition and the party became increasingly associated with the so-called charismatic leadership of Erdogan. There is devotion towards Erdogan, who is presented by his party as the 'man of the people', particularly among the religious public and within the core constituency and conservative electorate of the AKP. The party became more and more dependent on its leader whose in-party authority and power gradually increased.

The conservative masses' identifying with their leading figure has been very important for the ongoing popular appeal of the party despite its obvious failure to keep certain promises. Although conservative/religious groups have significant ethnic, class, and communal differences, they are united and unified upon such identification and act collectively to support the AKP. Yet, the commitment and support of conservative segments comes at a price: in order to maintain its monopoly over the representation of these segments, that is, in order to keep the loyalty, commitment, and even submissiveness of the conservatives – vital to maintain its grip over its political power – the AKP had no other choice but to prioritize religious/conservative social demands over the others. This, however, posed a substantial threat to populist discourse of the AKP because the dominance of a particular demand in the equivalential chain carries the risk of breaking it. In fact, the conservative/religious demands have had centrifugal tendencies from the very outset. Although the AKP has never had a solid ideological orientation, but rather enough pragmatism to alter its language depending on external changes, its core constituency has always been conservative/religious groups, exerting pressure on the party to bring their agenda and sectorial interests into the spotlight. During its first two terms in government, the AKP managed to neutralize the centrifugal tendencies of these groups towards particularism by trying to respond

to the religious demands of these groups within the framework of civil rights and liberties. However, as these groups continue to extend their almost unconditional support to the party, pressure increased. Accordingly, instead of articulating the different demands of various social groups, as it had done during its first term (2002–2007) and to some extent in its second term (2007–2011), the government slowly began to lean towards enhancing the particularism of the religious/conservative demands by increasing the impact of religion on public life (Kaya 2015). This was seen in the changes made within a series of affairs namely: the national education system at primary, middle and high school levels; the policies on family, particularly concerning childbirth, abortion, and divorce; the changes made in social provision policies; the restrictions brought on alcohol consumption; the interventions made to bring sexual segregation in student houses and dormitories; the promotion of an Islamic civil society; and the support of religious/conservative media outlets, to mention but a few. Moreover, by abusing the state resources, the government provided disproportionate benefits (and continues to do so) to those having Islamic lifestyles. This includes favorable treatment of the Islamic capital in government tenders and providing material support to the poor with such lifestyles (Bugra and Savaşkan 2014; Bakırezer and Demirer 2010). In this way, the AKP has not only created a new Islamic bourgeoisie largely dependent on the party, but also managed to gain the loyalty of large conservative segments of the poor, thereby guaranteeing a solid electoral base for itself.

As the particularity of the religious/conservative demands began to prevail over the equivalential chain, the equivalences formed between various demands began to dissolve and the 'people' signifier became more attached to the particularity of conservative groups. The gradual dominance of conservative/religious demands narrowed the space for liberal and secular demands, leading to tensions between these two groups of demands. At the beginning, they came together against the institutional system of the time, and the liberals supported the religious rights of the conservative groups. Yet, the imposition of conservative demands over others resulted in the failure of the AKP's populism to embrace liberal and secular social sectors. At this point, the withdrawal of the support by liberal and secular sectors did not lead to the collapse of the populism of the AKP, but did play a role in its transformation. The party was still populist because it was still appealing to diverse social groups and unifying them as "the people". Yet, the people (*millet*) were acquiring a more and more conservative/religious character. This was clearly seen in the public speeches of Erdoğan: he increasingly referred to the religious/conservative masses as "the people" by emphasizing how these people had been culturally and economically oppressed by the ruling Kemalist elites (see, for instance, the speeches delivered by Erdoğan in the so-called "people's will rallies", a series of pro-government rallies, organized by the AKP in 2013). In his efforts to

present the AKP as the sole representative of this 'people', Erdoğan also constantly emphasized how the Kemalist elite and the CHP insulted religion and religious values of people and repressed important religious figures: 'CHP never respected the religion and never represented the people …Isn't it the party that attacked our religion, sacred values, our mosques, our azan, and our Quran?' (Ahaber 27 March 2014).

All these changes were accompanied by an ever-increasing dose of authoritarianism on the side of the AKP government. By naming its conservative/religious electorate as the "people" and the conservative/Islamist demands as those of the people, the government turned to imposing them upon the entire society. In fact, in a society where a significant portion of its people was not religious and used to live in a secular environment and, as such, would not consent to the increasing impact of religion on their lives, the government had no other option but authoritarianism in order to push forward with religious/conservative values and arrangements.

Accordingly, around 2011, 2012 and 2013, in spite of maintaining its appeal to many social groups, the rule of the AKP was becoming more and more limiting and frustrating for many other actors, particularly those who have secular, liberal and democratic demands. Some of these groups tried to voice their discontent and/or their demands through protests. The authoritarian drift of the AKP became more apparent through its response to these protests. Many peaceful demonstrations and marches, such as those on Women's Day, the university student protests, the local uprisings against hydroelectric power plants, the uprising against the demolition of a historical cinema in Beyoglu, and the May Day demonstrations were ruthlessly repressed by excessive measures of the anti-riot police (Hurriyet 4 December 2010; Hurriyet 22 May 2013; Hurriyet 12 September 2013; Radikal 31 May 2011; Radikal 20 July 2011). As is commonly known in the Turkish context, the confrontational policy adopted by the government against those who oppose state policies is materialized in particular in the uncompromising and intolerant attitude of the leader of the party who profiled the protesters as 'a handful of looters', 'enemies' of economic investments, and 'bandits' (Hürriyet Daily News 1 June 2011).

Yet, it was the response to the Gezi protests – one of the major movements against those in power – that rendered the authoritarian tendencies of the government more apparent. In understanding the changing form of the populism of the AKP and its drift towards authoritarianism, we therefore need to take these protests into account. As one of the largest and strongest waves of protest in Turkey (Özen 2015), the Gezi protests posed a significant challenge to the AKP government. Not only did they raise strong objections to the conservative-Islamist-neoliberal political project that the AKP was trying to make hegemonic, they also confronted

the increasing authoritarianism of the government directly. In a sense, these protests undermined the success story about the 'moderately Islamic' yet 'democratic' AKP government that was being told not only at the national but also at the international levels.

As mentioned earlier, it was in its response to these protests that the government's move to authoritarian populism can be observed clearly. As the repressive tactics that the government deployed against the protesters at the outset of the protests backfired, the government attempted to mobilize its conservative electorates to mute the voices of the Gezi protesters. In order to do so, it began using a new language that established an antagonistic relation between the protesters and the conservative/Islamic social segments of society, i.e., the AKP's fixed electoral base. The protesters were profiled as militantly secular Kemalists, whose aim was to overthrow the AKP government elected by the conservative masses and to re-establish Kemalist hegemony, whereas the conservative/religious segments were constructed as "the people" (Sabah 3 June 2013; Radikal 9 June 2013; Sabah 21 June 2013). By organizing a series rallies, the protesters were openly portrayed as those who despise the values, the religion, the lifestyle and, more importantly, the political choices of 'the people', that is, the conservative/religious groups in Turkey (Sabah 15 June 2013; Radikal 16 June 2013; Radikal 17 June 2013). In this way, the AKP government began to present the sectorial interests of the conservative/religious groups as those shared by the whole, and the demands of the protesters as a substantial threat to these interests, thereby managing to win over the support of the conservative segments for the use of repressive measures against the protesters.

As this authoritarian populism worked to silence the Gezi protesters, the AKP government eventually began to use it against all those who were regarded as posing a challenge to its power in government. In fact, the number of those that it conceives as a "threat" or as "adversary" has been constantly on the rise since the Gezi protests. In this respect, the cessation of the Kurdish peace process, which was started in 2009 is particularly noteworthy. Various constituents of the Kurdish movement, including those who are not involved in any armed action, even those who are for a peaceful solution to the Kurdish problem, are placed on the list of the "enemies" of the "people". For this, they were subjected to various forms of repressive measures. In a broader sense, the AKP government has continued to silence *all* social groups who raise demands that cannot be integrated organically within the conservative/Islamic/neoliberal hegemony it has been trying to install. In doing so, it has always tried to mobilize conservative/Islamic groups. This authoritarian populism was realized by turning its politics into a confrontation between two antagonistic blocs and by closing all channels for negotiating social demands down.

The populism of the AKP partly relies on popular support and partly proceeds through authoritarian imposition. The AKP government has been trying to use this authoritarian populism not only to impose Islamic-conservative values and silence opposition, but also to create a new authoritarian state system by making constitutional amendments. Since the state bureaucracy that the AKP managed to control to some extent after 2007 has been the main vehicle of its authoritarian measures, it has been trying to gain more and more control over the judiciary, police, army and other institutions of state bureaucracy. Its politics are aimed at changing the state structure through constitutional reforms. Yet, the problem is that the mere support of the conservative/religious segments of Turkish society is not enough to make such changes. The result is that the AKP, having lost the support of the liberal and secular groups as well as of many Kurdish groups, has now turned to attract nationalist groups. Accordingly, in contradistinction to the articulation of an inclusionary discourse for different ethnic groups in its earlier terms, it has started to articulate an exclusionary discourse by articulating nationalist themes. Ironically, at times, this brings the party on the same line as the antagonist Kemalists it has been struggling against for decades. Another strategy of the party for increasing its support has been heavy use of clientelism. It provides social, political and economic benefits in return for electoral support. As such, very different groups and individuals became linked to the party with clientelistic ties. Needless to say, this strategy has attracted many opportunistic figures to the party. However, those who obtain or try to obtain favours from the party tend to support the AKP, its leader and its government unconditionally, furthering the polarization in the country.

8. Conclusion

By drawing on the Laclauian concept of populism, this study has demonstrated how the populism of the AKP in Turkey has transformed from its establishment in 2001 to date. It argues that the AKP's populist discourse changed as its central signifier – the people – turned from an empty signifier into a signifier attached to Islamic/conservative themes, demands, and groups. This transformation has been accompanied by a move from a more or less inclusive and democratic populism to an exclusive and authoritarian one.

As this study shows, in attempting to understand populism, we first need to understand the conditions that make populist politics possible. Without some form of crisis in the institutional system, that is, its failure to absorb a number of social demands, populism cannot find fertile grounds to flourish. The nature of the crisis, whether it is a deep organic one or merely a conjunctural crisis, is also

important in order to understand the discourses and politics of populist forces. The institutional system in Turkey in the early 2000s, marked by a crisis and by related dislocations, provided such grounds to form AKP's populism through the articulation of a series of frustrated social demands. It allowed the AKP to present itself as the voice of the people against this system. Yet, due to the conjunctural nature of the crisis which, as Laclau (2005a) argues, poses certain limitations on populist forces, the discourse of the AKP could not establish a confrontational antagonistic relation with the institutional system of the time, but merely an agonistic one.

Unlike most of the studies on populism, which tend to ignore 'how populists actively construct people' (see Chapter 1, this volume), this study shows that populism may assume very different forms depending on the changes within its content, that is, the way the people and power categories are discursively constructed. As Zienkowski and Breeze (this volume) rightly underline, populism is not essentially anti-democratic or right-wing, but may assume democratic or authoritarian forms depending on the way that it constructs the relation between people and power. As the examination of the populism of the AKP reveals, the populist discourse of this party entailed a democratic promise as long as its central signifier, the people or *millet*, functioned as an empty signifier that crystallized a series of demands in the equivalential chain formed through the articulation of these demands, that is, as it became a name for heterogeneous demands and groups and as long as the confrontation between "the people" and "the power" was agonistic. Yet, the AKP failed to reproduce and fulfil this democratic promise as it attempted to keep the loyalty of its core conservative/religious constituents and electorate and, in relation to this, to privilege conservative/Islamist demands over the others. In other words, as its central signifier turned to attaching to a particular literal content, the discourse of the AKP lost its appeal for many social groups, failing to fulfil its democratic promise. The reconstitution of the people in a narrow way to signify Islamic/conservative segments was simultaneously accompanied by the reconstitution of the power or the common enemy, which became any entity who was not with the AKP. As the Islamic/conservative populism of the AKP has continued to exclude many social groups, it has increasingly acquired an antagonistic character, leading the government to adopt authoritarian measures against the excluded. Yet, it should be stressed that whatever form it takes, populism always mobilizes 'people' against some sort of 'power'. In addition, it is the mobilization of the people that separates populist politics from non-populist ones. In turn, mobilizing the people's support gives populism its strength.

This study shows that even the populism of a single actor may change depending on the changes in the surrounding conditions. As the AKP case reveals, this might be particularly true for those parties or actors with a pragmatic character. Other than a conservative orientation fed by religion, the AKP has never had a real

and solid ideological base. As Çınar (2013) points out, the foremost aim of this party is to hold on to the political power. This implies a highly pragmatic character. This pragmatism has given the party considerable flexibility in articulating its political discourse. This means that there have been very few restrictions within the party that stand in the way of populist politics. In essence, the party had to change its discourse in order to exploit external conditions for increasing or preserving its political power. As a result, the populist discourse of the AKP contains extremely contradictory -even contrasting – elements in different periods. This is revealed easily upon a closer examination of the party's replacement of liberal democratic themes with the anti-democratic ones.

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CHAPTER 5

The articulation of 'the people' in the discourse of *Podemos*

Nicolina Montesano Montessori and Esperanza Morales-López

This chapter focuses on the construction of *pueblo* 'people' and *patria* 'homeland' in the Spanish discourse of Podemos and the party's relation to *la gente* 'the people' between June 2016 and its second political conference, Vistalegre II (February 2017). The discursive analysis focuses on figures of speech, such as synecdoche and metaphors, followed by a narrative analysis. The data cover the General Secretary of the party, Pablo Iglesias and the head of the branch in Catalonia, Xavier Domènech. We then apply the explanatory logics developed within discourse theory (Glynos and Howarth 2007) to interpret the results of the analysis[1] and we critically reflect on some observed ambiguities in the discourse of Podemos.

Keywords: Podemos, populism, discourse theory, narrative analysis, rhetoric analysis

Introduction

This chapter investigates the discourses created by Podemos in the political debate in Spain between the repeat-elections of June 26, 2016 (when the right-wing party Partido Popular (PP) managed to form a government with the support of the Socialist Party) and January 2017, when its second political conference was held, *Vistalegre II* (February 11–12, 2017)). It analyses how the lexical terms "*pueblo*" and "*patria*" were articulated in this specific time frame by the new, left wing party

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Podemos, which emerged in the aftermath of the Spanish popular struggle of the 15 M, the group that emerged during massive protests in the main plazas of Spain in May 15 2011 (Pujante and Morales-López 2013; Montesano Montessori and Morales-López 2015).

The corpus consists of speeches and interviews with the General Secretary of the party, Pablo Iglesias, and Xavier Domènech, who was then head of the Podemos group in Catalonia (En Comú-Podem)[2] (see Section 3.1 for details). As discourse analysts, we will analyse these data applying a discursive-rhetoric method, focusing, first, on the analysis of the most relevant discursive resources present in those discourses, particularly synecdoche and metaphor and, second, on the description of ideological frames or narratives constructed with the mentioned discursive resources. This research is inspired by the holistic approaches to discourse and knowledge of the philosopher of history Hayden White (1973, 1978), who in turn was inspired by Giambattista Vico (1744) as we will explain below. We interpret the outcome of this analysis using the explanatory logics developed in discourse theory (Glynos and Howarth 2007; Chapter 1, this volume) in the light of a Gramscian approach to understand the observed attempt by Podemos to turn the vernacular rhetoric found in the discourse of the Indignados as a "war of position" into a hegemonic, national "war of manoeuvre" meant to eliminate the existing ruling class (Briziarelli and Martínez Guillem 2016).

Theoretical and methodological framework

Our approach combines a (critical) discursive analysis with a constructivist orientation. In this constructivist approach, as explained in Montesano Montessori and Morales-Lopez (2015), reality is discursively constructed by social actors to fit their perception of the world. Therefore, we start with the analysis of what we have considered the key discursive resources in the selected data, in this case, mainly, tropes; we analyse them both individually and socially, as well as in relation to human action and their socio-cultural context (Bateson 1972; Morales-López 2017).

For this study, we use White's description (1973; 1978) of a historical narrative: a verbal structure in the form of discourse, which acts as a model or image of past processes (*events*), in order to explain these processes by offering a specific

2. While we are certainly aware that these leaders are political scientists (Pablo Iglesias, Íñigo Errejón, Carolina Bescansa, Juan Carlos Monedero, etc.) who were inspired by the theories of Laclau and Gramsci (among others), this is not the focus of our discursive analysis (but see Briziarelli 2018 for the dilemmas which a combined influence of both Gramsci and discourse theory represent in political practice).

representation of them (White 1973: 14–15). This type of narrative is figurative, i.e. it is tropological in nature and tends to entail "a process of coding and recoding in which an original perception is clarified by being cast in a figurative mode different from that in which it has come to be encoded by convention, authority, or custom" (1978: 96). Vico (1744), the eighteenth-century scientist who, opposing the singular linearity, rationalism and universality of Enlightenment thought, acknowledges the importance of both poetic logics, connected to the senses and the imagination, and rational logic on an equal footing. Poetic logic depends on tropes (especially the metaphor) to transmit its substance (Vico 1744: ¶ 375, 404 and 779; Pujante 2017). As White (1978: 2 and 20–21) states, the use of tropes represents the "soul" of a discourse.

To consider the process of the construction of decoding and recoding we first perform a discursive analysis and then use a model to analyse social narratives designed by Somers (1994). Somers envisions narratives as an instrument for agents to define their identities and to plot their desired future. This approach fits an assumption presented in state theory, that capitalism is a succession of accumulation regimes with particular supporting political and cultural systems. In times of crisis, agents tend to produce different competing narratives to make sense of what went wrong in the past and different imaginaries of a desired future where these wrongs will be resolved (Jessop 2002). Within her model, she distinguishes three dimensions: (1) *meta-narratives* (the "master narratives" of our time, Capitalism vs. Communism, the Individual vs. Society, etc.); (2) *ontological narratives* (the stories that social actors use to make sense of their lives and the context they live in); and (3) *public narratives* (those attached to cultural and institutional formations larger than the individual) (Somers 1994: 617–620; see Montesano Montessori 2009, 2011, 2016; Montesano Montessori and Morales-López 2015 for details).

We follow Laclau and Mouffe (1985) and Laclau (2005) in order to make sense of the discursive construction of "the people" and the party's relation to "the people" in the discourse of Podemos. Hence, we look at the construction of the people in terms of the equivalences and differences articulated in each case (see Chapter 1 and Chapter 3, this volume). We furthermore use the discourse theoretical approach of explanatory logics, which "involves the identification of an aspect of a practice which is deemed worthy of public contestation" (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 144). In this particular case, the problem is the dislocation in which the two-party system loses its hegemonic position. The austerity measures that these two parties imposed here caused massive protests that are directed not just against this austerity program, but also against the two-party system and the Spanish constitution (see Chapter 3, this volume; Kioupkiolis and Katsambekis 2018). Explanatory logics include: *social logics*, which identify the social orders that mark the order and rules of the social field (e.g. centralization); *political logics*

that include the practice and regimes that either contest or reconstruct the social order; and *fantasmatic logics* that explain the emotional dimension of a discursive practice – why subjects are gripped affectively by a specific discursive regime or practice motivating them to support or to resist a specific aspect of socio-political reality (Glynos and Howarth 2007).

In the context of this chapter, we consider the social order and the political field in Spain, in which Podemos emerged in the aftermath of the struggle of 15 M – the popular response to the crisis expressed through massive occupations of main squares in the biggest cities in Spain and its activist demands for an improved democracy. The Spanish political field was marked by various patterns that made up their social logics, especially the centralized two-party system, in which the Popular Party and the Socialist Party alternated in government as well as the thresholds which often blocked access to power for some of the smaller and newer parties (Montesano Montessori and Morales-López 2015). This apparently stable situation reached an organic crisis (Gramsci 1971), in the sense that the hegemons lost the consent of the majorities. 15 M marked a moment of crisis, or, in discourse theoretical terms, of dislocation (Laclau and Mouffe 1985). We consider the political logics in terms of the logics of difference and equivalence (see De Cleen 2018 this volume for further explanations). Following the analysis, we will present the application of the explanatory logics in detail.

Analytical Approach

With these ideas as the backdrop, our analysis focuses on the discursive-rhetorical resources that we identified as being most relevant in the speeches in our data, especially synecdoche and metaphor. After the description of context and data, we will analyse the discursive-rhetorical construction of the people followed by the methodological and interpretative steps described above. Our approach is different from that of other authors contributing to this volume (see Chapter 3), who start with theoretical categories and test these through their empirical research. As discourse analysts, we take the opposite direction. To us, populism, and the lexical items and discursive resources that construct this meaning are not predetermined categories. We consider them as everyday notions used in political genres and in the media, which need to be submitted to a discursive, rhetorical analysis (Morales-López and Floyd 2017: xi). After our analysis we compare and interpret our outcomes with other theoretical approaches such as discourse theory, in order to further understand the meaning of the outcome of our analysis and to connect these to wider academic debates.

Context and data

This chapter analyses data from the last period before the second general meeting of Podemos, Vistalegre II (February 2017). The first, foundational meeting had taken place in October 2014 and marked the beginning of the first stage of the party, known as Vistalegre I. In its first year, during the European elections held in 2014, Podemos – which formed a lose affiliation with regional parties such as En Comú in Catalonia and En Marea in Galicia – obtained 5 seats and became the third biggest party in Spain, gaining 71 seats out of 350 in Spain after the conservative Partido Popular (PP) and the Socialist Party (PSOE) during the elections of December 2015. Until then, PP and PSOE formed a two-party system which was held responsible for the economic crisis of 2008 and which was strongly attacked by the 15 M struggle due to the imposed politics of austerity, dictated by Germany and the so-called Troika – the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund, which was believed by many to be against the real needs of the Spanish population (Montesano Montessori and Morales-López 2015). However, while the major parties lost its majority during the elections (December 2015), it turned out impossible to create a new government. Attempts to form a left-wing coalition failed due to major differences between the PSOE and Podemos. Podemos defended a more social orientation than the PSOE and opted to resolve the socio-political problem in Catalonia with a legal referendum (Excerpts 10–13 below).

As a result of this failure, new elections were held on June 26, 2016. In the elections of 20 December 2015, Podemos obtained 5,189,333 votes (20.66%) and the United Left (Izquierda Unida) won over 923,105 (3.67%) of the voters. On 26 June, the coalition of these two parties obtained merely 5,049,734 votes (21.1%), 140,000 votes fewer than Podemos achieved when it stood alone (Zaralejos 2016). Podemos started to operate as an opposition party. During Vistalegre II, Iglesias was again elected as secretary general of Podemos after a struggle about competing ideological visions among potential leaders of the party (see Martínez Guillem 2018).[3]

3. The election results of Vistalegre II are available for consultation at http://www.publico.es/politica/victoria-aplastante-iglesias-errejon-vistalegre.html, http://www.eldiario.es/politica/datos-cocina-votaciones-Podemos_0_612089572.html and http://www.publico.es/fotogalerias/vistalegre-ii-mejores-imagenes.html

Analysis of the data

For the analysis of the topic of this chapter, the notion of "people", we have selected different fragments of speeches that alluded to this term, and which addressed the Spanish population, through life streaming and digital publication.

Podemos' relationship with the people as a synecdoche

According to rhetorical tradition (Quintilian VIII/VI/19–22; Lausberg 1960: ¶ 572.577), the figure of synecdoche implies that one concept refers to many things, such as a part meaning the whole; or, on the contrary: the whole meaning the part; the "tip" instead of the "sword" (Pujante 2003: 221). According to White (1978: 73), "[synecdoche] opens the possibility of understanding the particular as a microcosm of a macrocosmic totality, which is precisely the aim of all organicist systems of explanation."

In Podemos' use of the term "people", the construction of precisely this figure can be observed in three different ways: Podemos is presented as part of the whole, i.e. the nation, the people, the popular movement; Podemos also identifies itself with the various nations of Spain, which are grouped together in a plurinational fraternal project; and Podemos creates a political divide between the people and the elite discursively turning the "plebs" into the "people", a partiality that claims to be the whole while claiming to be the only legitimate citizens, excluding the ruling elite (Laclau 2005; Moffitt 2016; see Chapter 1, this volume). We present and analyse examples of each category.

Podemos is the people, a popular movement

The two examples below include the name of Spain, which is identified as consisting of all of its inhabitants and its various towns. The term *patria* (homeland) also appears but is used more frequently by the right-wing party. However, here Pablo Iglesias uses *patria* because he is giving his speech on the Spanish national day of 12 October:

(1) Spain is not a brand, it is its people [*gentes*] and its peoples [*pueblos*]. We say: we are patriots and our homeland is the people [*gente*]
(12 October 2016 http://www.eldiario.es/politica/Octubre-diferentes-formas-entender-patriotismo_0_568343408.html).

(2) I promise to abide by the Constitution and to work to change it. Never again a country without its people (19 July 2016 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aYVrFY6x-zk).

In (1), the use of the term *peoples* in the plural is ambiguous because it may refer to the different populations of Spain as peoples or nations (cultural entities, some of which have their own language). Importantly, Iglesias explicitly states that the entire state (Spain) is the homeland of the people as opposed to Spain as an abstract political entity as it is normally referred to by the Popular Party and by more conservative politicians in the PSOE in expressions such as "defend the unity of Spain", in response to the break-up advocated by nationalist groups in Catalonia and the Basque Country. Furthermore, the concept of "brand" situates the dominant right-wing notion of the nation in the semantic realm of the commercial, global economy. Conversely, for Podemos Spain is the whole, but a totality with a specific character – its citizens as a whole.

In the first excerpt, the use of the personal pronoun "we" is ambiguous since it could be meant inclusively (creating a singular position between the party and the people) or exclusively (meaning the party as a representative body standing above the people it represents). The second excerpt is clearly exclusive, made manifest by the use of the personal pronoun in singular "I", in which Iglesias explicitly presents himself as the leader of the people; a political leader who wields political power and promises to use it to modify the Constitution.

In discourse theoretical terms, Podemos rearticulates the national notion of Spain, which now becomes a floating signifier, since it now has a different significance for the two leading parties and for Podemos. It is a process of recoding, in White's terminology (1978).

The following excerpt contextualizes the economic crisis of 2008 including its effects on the middle classes and the emergence of the 15 M movement and the creation of Podemos:

(3) … As in other European countries, the economic crisis blew up people's self-perception of being middle class among vast sectors of the working-class population in Spain. (…) Evictions, constant frauds, unemployment, precarious living conditions and the emigration of young people were the breeding ground for the movement that changed everything: the 15-M movement. The sons and daughters of the new middle classes came down into the streets and pointed at the political and economic elites. They only needed to give them a name. We decided to call them the *casta* (Interview with Iglesias, 29 September 2016, http://blogs.publico.es/pablo-iglesias/1068/la-crisis-del-psoe-como-crisis-de-regimen/).

In this excerpt, Podemos provides agency to those who allegedly separated the whole – the nation – and its most vulnerable parts – the people. Those responsible, the agents, were political and financial elites, the *casta*. Podemos creates an antagonistic, irreparable divide between the people and the *casta*. The use of the

term *casta*, coined by Podemos to designate those same elites, became enormously popular. In describing the elite as a *casta*, Podemos rearticulated the Spanish political arena from a legitimate right–left divide to a vertical, undemocratic, "high-low" axis, where the *casta* governed at the expense of the people and became therefore an adversary to be excluded (Morales-López and Montesano Montessori 2016; Molpeceres Arnaiz 2016; De Cleen and Stavrakakis 2017).

In this context, Podemos' mission is to restore the unity of all its parts, that is, all Spanish peoples. In Example (3), the use of the verbal lexeme *saltar por los aires* ('to blow up') is significant as a lexicalized metaphor that refers to the sudden recognition of part of the country's working classes that their self-designation as "middle class" was simply an illusion. Podemos presents itself as the advocate and spokesperson of the people, uniting them as a group that became the victim of the ruling class, now called the *casta*. However, the party presents itself as more than a spokesperson, it also assumes the authority to analyse the situation. The excerpt starts with an impersonal analysis but ends with a personal depiction of the young generation that made the change. In the last two utterances, the personal pronouns separate these young people (third person plural: "they"), depicted simultaneously as victims and as revolutionary agents from the party (an exclusive "we", but assumingly part of the same revolutionary process).

In the next five examples Iglesias explains the reasons behind the popular revolt of the 15 M movement and the related commitment of Podemos. We discuss these excerpts in two groups because Excerpts (6) to (8) reflect recent changes in the party's discourse. First, let us consider Excerpts (4) and (5):

(4) When faced with uncertainty, it is up to us to remain at the side of the people. We must be prepared to govern or to repeat the election, but also, if those wishing to make the PP the government have their way, we must make sure of our role as a political force that offers some guarantees, and which must be built as an instrument of a *popular movement* which continues to push for a more just society. (…) In times of uncertainty and oligarchic coups, Unidos Podemos must be the *benchmark for security* of those who want a better society in opposition to the elites (Interview with Iglesias, 29 September 2016, http://blogs.publico.es/pablo-iglesias/1068/la-crisis-del-psoe-como-crisis-de-regimen/).

(5) There is a historical error in Marxism. (…) The coming of a better society is a lie; it is a lie; history has proven that perhaps the worst is yet to come. That is why I want to emphasize something that is not very abstract (…) and that is that we want to change this society, we do not want to resemble it; politics is not to mimic the society you have, politics is about trying to change it for a better society; and that is very risky; there may be parties which achieve

electoral success by resembling the worst of society (24–25 September 2016, downloaded from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dV7i0BmfYiE).

In these fragments, Podemos identifies itself with the people, while simultaneously creating a separation between the party and the people. The party's mission in the whole-part relationship created by the synecdoche is emphasized. Podemos is part of the people, although it has a specific objective – to improve the people's position within the envisioned new society. The lexical terms used to recode Podemos as a *popular movement* and as a *benchmark for security* entail the aim to achieve these improvements through the party's political praxis. In this fragment, Podemos constructs its double aim of being prepared to govern and to play a role as a representative of the people, while also creating a praxis of solidarity and direct support, thus creating a double role for itself as a political party and as a popular movement. Podemos' mission is reflected in the lexicalised metaphor of the verb *to push* in Excerpt (4). It is included in a syntactical construction – a periphrasis of the durative aspect "to keep pushing", which emphasizes the role of Podemos as the continuation of a movement of a struggle initiated by others. Excerpt (5) situates the orientation of Podemos in disagreement with Marxist thought. Podemos indicates its will to change the society – to create that war of manoeuvre. Simultaneously, it implicitly distances itself from negative right-wing populism in Europe.

The following three excerpts are part of the debate that Podemos began in the autumn of 2016, about the new organization of the Party open for elections during the Vistalegre II conference (February 2017). In these examples, Iglesias outlines his vision for the future of the party.

(6) We need grass roots who control the party apparatus … a popular movement with mechanisms that enable supervision on public officials and the organization's mechanisms of control (Iglesias at the University of Podemos, 24–25 September 2016, downloaded from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dV7i0BmfYiE).

(7) The terrain of political struggle is now linked to militants. We now need a Podemos of militants; the Podemos of the first Vistalegre obviously had to be a Podemos of generals, in inverted commas, a Podemos that was an electoral war machine. Now we need another Podemos. (…) We need a Podemos with much deeper roots in the heart of civil society … (Interview with Iglesias, October 20 2016, http://www.eldiario.es/politica/Pablo-Iglesias-cambiar-Gobierno-Parlamento_0_571493820.html).

(8) (…) So I ask all comrades who are spokespersons, (…) to restrain themselves and to stop talking about ourselves and our internal differences.

> If we continue to wash our dirty laundry in the media and on the social networks, we will destroy Podemos. (…) This isn't about silencing anyone, it is about restraining ourselves and respecting the people who have brought us this far – those who can't go into a studio and who don't have thousands of followers on Twitter, and who like Teresa, can only shout at us in indignation and despair because we are letting them down (Iglesias' reply to Teresa, a party member who complained about the divisions between different groups in the party, December 2016; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JMk_uaShfRI&feature=youtu.be).

In Excerpt (6) there is an identification between the popular movement alluded to in the examples above and the importance given to the grassroots of the party. Excerpt (7) identifies this popular movement with the party's members, who must take political control (through a participatory democracy) in the second phase of Podemos (Vistalegre II), as opposed to the first phase which was controlled by those who established the party – as previously mentioned, mainly academics. In the synecdoche between the whole and the parts, the second stage of Podemos, Vistalegre II, must therefore establish a continuum between the people as a popular movement and the elected members of the party. Podemos suggests a deepening of the democracy, by drawing power from civil society, thus creating the basis for a radical democracy (Gramsci 1971; Olesen 2005; Montesano Montessori 2009) – for more information on the organization of Podemos, see Borge and Santamarina (2015).

Excerpt (8) explicitly shows the identification with the people, while implicitly referring to the internal struggle in the party. In this letter to all party members – in response to the complaint of a 76-year-old female party member – Iglesias apologized to this woman for having used social networks to air these differences. In this extract included in Example (8), the creation of the synecdoche is completed with the intention of the leadership to subordinate and to restrain itself in order to serve the needs of its grassroots. Nevertheless, the fragment still shows a party that stands above the grassroots – thus revealing a dilemma of a party that wishes to create a praxis of solidarity, but is also caught up in party politics.

Podemos' identification with the peoples and nations of Spain

One of the central claims of Podemos included the specific recognition of the plurinationality of Spain thus opposing the constitutional definition of Spain as a single historical nation. It therefore calls for a reform of the constitution in recognition of the cultural, linguistic and historical diversity of its different peoples and/or nations. These problems were avoided by the PP and the PSOE,

since they required an important constitutional reform. Examples (9) to (13) show the party's discursive construction of this subject which will be analysed within the framework of synecdoche presented above. Excerpt (9) shows Pablo Iglesias' opinion on this subject. Excerpts (10) to (13) show the opinion of the leader of Podemos in Catalonia at that time, Xavier Domènech.[4]

(9) Are they [the Socialist Party] willing to accept something that is electorally obvious – that Spain is plurinational? Today we will see how they vote in the Basque Country, we have already seen how they voted in Catalonia; there is something new in the air. Is that party willing to accept that a project based on fraternity can only be built by recognizing the sovereignty of nations that are part of what we want to be a collective project? Are they willing to acknowledge that as long as there are centralist governments in Spain there will be an increasing number of people in those territories who want to leave? (Iglesias at the University of Podemos, 24–25 September 2016, downloaded from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dV7i0BmfYiE).

In Excerpt (9), Iglesias makes clear that his party's vision for Spain is to be a "project based on fraternity", "a collective project" that recognizes the "sovereignty of nations" in Spain. The whole is therefore now identified with the people grouped in different peoples and nations, but sharing a common project of fraternity. The *casta* remains excluded from this imaginary.

In this fragment, Podemos univocally plays its representative role as a political opposition party, while articulating a radically new social order organized around the nodal point of sovereignty of peoples (rather than the state). In discourse theoretical terms however, the national groups are inserted in a chain of equivalence, where the parts have a split identity in that each of them maintains their local identity, while being united through the universal value of fraternity. Nationalism is now a floating signifier, seeking to replace the existing nodal point of the state for that of sovereignty of the people. Once again, it is an example of recoding in the terminology of White (1973).

In the following examples, Xavier Domènech clarifies this idea based on his position as a Catalan:

4. For an update of the political party "En Comú" see http://www.lavanguardia.com/politica/20180703/45613290700/xavier-domenech-ada-colau-catalunya-en-comu.html?facet=amp&utm_campaign=botones_sociales&utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=social&__twitter_impression=true *Podem* is part of Podemos. Xavier Domènech represented both parties, but he unexpectedly resigned in September 2018, in order to return to his former position of Professor of History at the University of Barcelona.

(10) And among these major issues [to reflect on] has been plurinationality. In other words, we have a state, the Spanish State, which continues to experience the issue of plurinationality (…) using the typical archetypes of the nineteenth century. In other words, it still considers itself a nation-state, but not a nation-state of the twenty-first century, but instead of the nineteenth century. And that means that it thinks of itself, this state, as if there were only one nation of reference among its citizens, which is none other than the Spanish nation. When it is obvious that at least some of its citizens share at least several national identities of reference. So, this state has not adapted to this reality (Xavier Domènech, representative of En Comú Podem in Catalonia at the University of Podemos, during the round table discussion on "Plurinationality and constitutional process," 22 September 2016, downloaded from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CgfnqzRZLPg).

In this example, Domènech refers to the conception of the right-wing government, using a semantic temporal opposition: a view on the nation-state of the nineteenth century (PP/PSOE) as opposed to a twenty-first century (Podemos). The synecdoche of the parts and the whole can be recognized once again when Domènech appeals to the multiple identities and the diversity of its citizens. Again, it is the voice of a representative party leader. Examples (11) to (13) include the other key term alluded to above: next to the recognition of plurinationality, the party also claims sovereignty for the people.

(11) What is happening now? Today, the regime of 1978 has been in crisis since the economic crisis of 2008. And this crisis is a crisis of many things, but basically a crisis of sovereignty. When 15 M goes out onto the street, what it is demanding is sovereignty. They say "We are not goods in the hands of politicians and bankers" and "We want a real democracy now." To what extent? To the extent that we perceive, because it is true, that we have lost control over our lives; that we are not sovereign, but instead there are other sovereigns, that nobody votes for, who steal our lives from us. And that type of theft of sovereignty happens from the top down and from the centre to the peripheries. In other words, from the Troika, from the major financial centres towards state governments, and from state governments towards regional governments.

(12) Why? … Because as the finances of the autonomous regions are controlled, as controls and cutbacks are implemented – because part of the cuts has been on the autonomous regional governments – what is actually happening is cutbacks on social policies. Most social policies are autonomous regional policies. (…) Whether the attack is from the top down and the centres on the peripheries (and the peripheries not only those who are on the sides, it is all

of us), the answer is from the bottom up and from the peripheries towards the centre. And that answer is not only the recovery of sovereignty, not only the recovery of democracy, but also the recovery of national dignity …

(13) At the same time as this is emerging, other movements in the new politics are appearing (what En Marea represents, what Podemos represents, what En Comú represents, what all this represents). They are also movements which based on fraternal alliances are demanding the recovery of sovereignty (Examples 11–13, from Xavier Domènech, En Comú Podem, at the University of Podemos, in the round table discussion on "Plurinationality and constitutional process" 22 September 2016, downloaded from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CgfnqzRZLPg).

These fragments contain examples of this other trope: metaphor. Domènech constructs a spatial metaphor, an ontological image-schema (Lakoff and Johnson 1980), in order to explain the thread of his argument: the social cuts imposed on the population represent an attack both from the *top down* and from *the centres to the peripheries* (Examples 11 and 12). The elites, situated at the top decide in a centralized manner on the cuts that the citizens have to suffer, in order to compensate for mismanagement of neoliberal capitalism. An opposite process is the 15 M movement, which called for the sovereignty of peoples, in the sense of their ability to decide their fate against the elites. The concept of the nation appears in this context, but is now recoded in its 21st Century imaginary where the sovereignty rests in its various nations (as sociocultural constructions, some of them with their own language, plurilinguistic spaces) connected through positive values such as fraternity, thus shaping the desired "new politics" in Excerpt (13). In Excerpts (11) and (12), Domènech simultaneously presents himself as a party leader who analyses the situation and – through the use of an inclusive "we" – establishes a direct identification with the people. Again, in Excerpt (12), he includes himself in the periphery: "it is all of us".

The construction of an antagonistic divide from the casta

In this paragraph, we will analyse the excerpts in which Podemos separates itself from the elites and through a series of spatial and temporal metaphors – most powerfully the metaphor of the "trenches" – creates a thorough antagonistic divide between the people and the *casta*. The latter is a metaphor that they no longer use as often as in the beginning, but still continues to play a role in their imaginary, as seen in Excerpt (3).

In Excerpt (14), Iglesias refers to the increased instability of the middle classes in Europe, due to the neoliberal model. In this context, he situates the progressive discourse of his party against the emerging new parties of the European right:

(14) Weimar Republic times. That's why I think, our original hypothesis … It is over in Europe, there is no more. The classes themselves, which perceive themselves as middle-class, found they had a mortgage they could not afford, they were facing eviction, they saw that their children had to go abroad, (…) [or] had to suffer from unemployment and job insecurity, they saw how they had to depend on the grandparents' pensions (…) That is why, in times like this, belligerent and insurgent discourses are what works in Europe. Unfortunately, in a progressive sense, only in Spain. But those who are succeeding in opening fissures in the traditional party systems in France, in Italy, in Germany, in the United Kingdom sound *hard*, sound much harder than us. (Iglesias at the University of Podemos, 24–25 September 2016, downloaded from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dV7i0BmfYiE).

In this example, Iglesias in his role of a party leader, lists a series of benefits that have been wrested away from the middle classes. He uses repetition of the verbal lexeme *they saw*, as a parallel structure, an anaphor, with which he emphasises the increased awareness of the people. In this context, *seeing* is synonymous with *waking up, realising.* However, referring to some European countries that have seen a resurgence of the extreme right, Iglesias defines Podemos as a progressive antithesis to these belligerent xenophobic discourses.

The metaphorical construction continues in Excerpt (15) to (17), in which the political task of Podemos is expressed through the metaphor of "digging trenches":

(15) Another debate, which is in my opinion the most important, which is not a rhetorical movement, the debate about the popular movement, the movement of the trenches. The initiative "*Vamos*"[5] was presented the other day, on 17 October, which will argue that Podemos must be an instrument to demand that nobody can cut off the electricity this winter … (Iglesias at the University of Podemos, 24–25 September 2016, downloaded from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dV7i0BmfYiE).

(16) Digging trenches in civil society means reinforcing the checks and balances at the social level (Interview with Iglesias, 20 October 2016, http://www.eldiario.es/politica/Pablo-Iglesias-cambiar-Gobierno-Parlamento_0_571493820.html).

5. *Vamos* is the name of the fund, created by donating part of their salary to the party. From his/her salary, each leader keeps about 2000 Euro per month and donates the rest to this common funding. Once a year, after a participatory decision, the budget is given to different social projects.

(17) Politics doesn't end, it has to do with antagonism. There will be people who get evicted from their home and we will have to defend the right to housing. (…) We will have to defend a taxation system that is as redistributive as possible. (…) It will be a tough fight, every little thing that we achieve will be very hard. But it's always been like that (Interview with Iglesias, 20 October 2016, http://www.eldiario.es/politica/Pablo-Iglesias-cambiar-Gobierno-Parlamento_0_571493820.html).

"Digging trenches" (*cavar trincheras*) refers to a military action that takes place on mobile or static fronts, from which troops advance protected by trenches or earthworks. This metaphor is also polysemic in that it implies both a fight (Podemos fights against the elite), and protection, in this case the protection of the rights of the people, thus symbolizing both its vertical political representativeness and its horizontal solidarity. Furthermore, trenches create a fissure, between Podemos as a counterhegemonic innovative party on the one hand, and the corrupt stagnated parties that still lead the country on the other. This metaphor is used to create a political frontier between the people and its constitutive other, the *casta*.

Another spatial metaphor which Iglesias uses to describe the political action of Podemos is that of the construction of the power from the *bottom up* (*abajo-arriba*) (similar to Domènech in Excerpt (12):

(18) There is another crucial element. It is dangerous to get used to living in Parliament, where you only see other parliamentarians and journalists. The most interesting people you can meet are the restaurant staff and cleaners in the parliament. It is essential that our deputies do not lose touch with reality, by being there where people suffer (…) When you spend a few weeks in which you are invited to a newspaper's party, a cocktail and a public event, you end up relating to people who do not really represent what things are like for most citizens (Interview with Iglesias, 20 October 2016, http://www.eldiario.es/politica/Pablo-Iglesias-cambiar-Gobierno-Parlamento_0_571493820.html).

(19) The commitment to building this new popular will requires an institutional and political commitment to the social sectors who want to make change possible. (…) At the same time, it requires a militant effort every day that extends from the institutions to our neighbourhoods and towns, where we must avoid known party politics of handing each other medals, and focus on achieving victories when people form a popular bloc which we are a part of, but we are not the whole. Our representatives in the institutions cannot become *politicians*, but must instead continue to be militants and fulfil a task in the service of the collective interest. (…) We need to use a pedagogy for praxis which shows that in specific situations, the people can overcome

> the elites and their representatives. (…) We will win if those victories [avoiding house evictions] are not Podemos' victories, but instead victories of the social and popular bloc. (Document by Iglesias et al. for discussion at Vistalegre II, pp. 23–24, January 2016, downloaded from https://pabloiglesias.org/2017/01/13/plan-2020-ganar-al-pp-gobernar-espana/).

In these excerpts, we see Iglesias' proposal for constructing *power from the bottom up.* Their new politics involves both parliamentary debate and action and praxis, shoulder to shoulder with the people they work for. The UCM intellectuals turn themselves into militant politicians to create a new historic bloc based on a historic will articulated by the people during the 15 M (see also Briziarelli and Martínez Guillem 2016).

Finally, in Excerpts (20) to (21), Iglesias constructs an analogy of Podemos with the PAH (the Mortgage Victims Platform) and two of its most prominent characteristics – its transversal struggle to stop evictions and the politicization of pain. The PAH is a movement of activists which uses the techniques of peaceful resistance to organise the confrontation with the police and legal officials to halt house eviction. While the PAH succeeded in making the human drama became publicly known – the "socialization of pain" – through media attention, Podemos wants to now achieve the "politization of pain", by turning social demands into political demands. Let us consider the last two examples:

(20) [T]he political space, which we are obliged to lead is no longer only our political space; we share a political space with other sister organizations that openly and without nuances have left-wing demands. (…) Transversality is not a moderate discourse, there is nothing more transversal than the PAH, stopping evictions, putting their bodies in front of the riot police while they were being criminalized; being transversal means appealing to very different subjects. (…) How do we make the politicisation of pain possible …? That debate is not so simple … It is the debate of a political force that aspires to win, and aims to win by being the breakwater and the space where many political traditions converge. (…) being transversal means not resembling the PP or the PSOE, it means resembling the PAH. (Iglesias at the University of Podemos, 24–25 September 2016, downloaded from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dV7i0BmfYiE).

(21) In the twenty-first century, the classic party is practically an obsolete model. It is almost impossible for a political party to represent what one person thinks (much less a society); that is why parties must experiment with greater flexibility (…) and to consider themselves as part of something broader. In our century, parties will be networks rather than fortresses. The network (…) is well woven, it cannot unravel, it trusts each of its nodes.

> Since society is increasingly networked thanks to the new technologies, parties cannot be as arrogant as to pretend to represent everyone at all times. It is therefore essential that a twenty-first century party thinks of itself as part of a project that is larger than the party itself (Document by Iglesias et al. for discussion at Vistalegre II, p. 29, January 2016, downloaded from https://pabloiglesias.org/2017/01/13/plan-2020-ganar-al-pp-gobernar-espana/).

These excerpts create a metaphorical separation between Podemos (the transversal network), and the PP and the PSOE (the hermetic fortress). This division shows in its practices: while politicians of the former are militants, politicians of the *casta* drink cocktails and hand each other medals. The space it claims in Excerpt (20) marks a desire to occupy the crossroads of representative verticality and horizontal solidarity.

The fortress and the network represent significant *cultural spatial metaphors* (Morales-López 2017) (our terminology to distinguish it from the ontological spatial metaphors, Johnson and Lakoff 1980). These creative metaphors reveal the "soul" of the discourse of Podemos and testify to a complex codification of buildings and artefacts -trenches, fortresses and networks – belonging to different historical periods, which imply different power structures, including forms of warfare and governance, in their historical narrative.

In discourse theoretical terms, the network would entail a chain of equivalences with a split identity, where the binding element would be fraternity or solidarity, while the various connected parties are seen to maintain their more specific historic and cultural particularities. This idea concurs with contemporary theories on the network society (Castells 2000) and a historical shift towards a more horizontal power structure (Rotmans 2015; see Montesano Montessori 2016).

Results of the discursive-rhetoric analysis

So far, we have seen that Podemos employs the tropes of synecdoche and spatial and temporal metaphor in order to conceptualise the people and in order to explain Podemos' relationship to this entity.

In the first place, with the trope of the synecdoche, Podemos has recoded the meaning of Spain as a nation; now a whole based on an imaginary that presents the people as constituting the nation, entitled with the right to take sovereign decisions in the context of local cultures and traditions. This imaginary should replace, after constitutional change, the current nation held together by a national – abstract and centralized – state.

Second, employing a series of creative spatial, temporal and lexical metaphors, Podemos has constructed a close union between itself and the people. Through temporal metaphors, it has constructed a cleavage between the traditional parties in power caught in the logics of the 19th Century and Podemos with its flexible, transversal and militant character squarely positioned in the 21st century. This divide has been strengthened with spatial cultural metaphors such as the trenches, and the opposition between the fortress and the network.

Podemos also relies on the spatial metaphor of a vertical divide and presents itself as part of a movement that wants to derive power from the bottom up and from the periphery to the centre in order to resist the vertical hierarchical power exercised and emanating from the centre. Hence, such spatial metaphors indicate a radical counterhegemonic movement. However, the excerpts show many examples testifying to an inherent ambiguity. While the party overtly claims to work with the people and aims to create a horizontal and networked power structure, in many excerpts, the party creates a benevolent "us-them" divide between itself and the people, thus displaying its traditional role of a representative political party standing with, but also above, "the people". We discuss this further in section five.

Narrative plotting

The results of the analysis provide us with the contours of a political imaginary that aims at removing the political elite and its bourgeois practices while setting up a plurinational country where, allegedly, the sovereignty rests with the people. We now analyse this narrative employing the dimensions of Somers (1994). First, we look at the relation between the narrative of Podemos and that of 15 M analysed in a previous study (Montesano Montessori and Morales-López 2015).

The 15 M movement constructed a meta-narrative and a new interpretation of the final years of the first stage of Spanish democracy (1975–2011) whereby the political elite was described as a mediocre and bureaucratic political class at the service of the global economic powers. The ontological narrative of 15 M contrasted this negative situation with the imaginary of a new society capable of inventing a renewed, socially, politically and economically just democracy (Montesano Montessori and Morales-López 2015).

Podemos constructed a meta-narrative in which the elite, the *casta*, has served the interests of the global economy at the expense of the people. In its ontological narrative, Podemos constructs a divide between the *casta* and the people, claiming that the *casta* has created a nation without a people. Spain belongs to the people: the part is discursively constructed as the whole. Sovereignty rests with the people and the people are recognized as being plurinational and multilingual. In its

public narrative, Podemos envisions its role as a political party that, whether in government or in opposition, is closely connected to the people and its causes, for which it has set up a new political practice. It calls for constitutional change so as to recognise the plurinationality of its peoples and their sovereignty. It claims to advocate a radical democracy.

Comparing the narratives of 15 M and Podemos at a meta level, both point at a political and financial oligarchy as the major cause of the Spanish problem. In its ontological narrative, Podemos (re-) defines Spain in more specific ways than 15 M, emphasizing the need for plurinationalism and returning the community to the people, while excluding the elites. In its public narrative, Podemos proclaims a radical democracy, facilitated by constitutional change so as to form this new sovereign multinational community. In the terminology of Gramsci, Podemos claims that it aims at materializing a historic will articulated by the people and claims to form part of this newly imagined historic bloc. The most significant difference, in our view, plays out at the ontological level. While 15 M creates a myth, an alternative which should fill the gaps encountered in the current socio-political system, Podemos creates a populist, antagonistic divide between the people and the ruling elite. In the following paragraph we will discuss the further implications of this particular issue.

Interpretation and discussion

Looking at the outcome of the analysis through the lens of explanatory logics, (Glynos and Howarth, 2007) we can state that Podemos depicts the social order as an out-dated and unjust power structure of the *casta,* formed by the PP and the PSOE who lost touch with the people in their incentive to serve global capital and to engage in bourgeois practices, and therefore suffered an organic crisis.[6] The political logics are marked by a logic of equivalence that now separates "the people"

6. The situation is now different due to the new leadership in the PSOE, Pedro Sánchez, re-elected in May 2017 as General Secretary of the Socialist party, distantiated himself from the PP, by presenting a motion of censure against the government of Rajoy supported by Iglesias, who convinced other small parties to join this motion of censure (June 2018). Podemos has been working together with PSOE in order to make further social changes until the date of the new elections on April 28th 2019. Rajoy withdrew as a leader from the PP. These changes seem to mark this observed transition of Podemos towards increased institutionalization and its move from antagonism (combatting opponents as an enemy which should be annihilated) to agonism (treating opponents as democratic adversaries) (Franzé, 2018). See the details in https://elpais.com/politica/2017/05/21/actualidad/1495392291_548232.html and https://www.lamarea.com/2017/05/21/pedro-sanchez-nuevo-secretario-general-del-psoe/

from the *casta* (see Chapter 1, this volume) and by a logic of difference between the various nations and cultures that are allegedly bound together by the universal value of "fraternity". Its deeper inspiration – the fantasmatic logics – comes from the desire to be a spokesperson and an instrument for the greater good of the people and to lead the nation away from its out-dated political structure to a new politics for the 21st century. Podemos creates a beatific image of "the people" and imagines a new society in opposition to a horrific image of the *casta* that causes misery and injustice.

At first sight, Podemos clearly builds on the demands of the 15 M movement. It aims at providing political power to a social movement, thus turning a "war of position" started by 15 M into a "war of manoeuvre" with the aim of recovering the democracy, sovereignty and national dignity (see also Briziarelli and Martínez Guillem 2016). However, the analysis has revealed a series of overt and covert obstructions and ambiguities, which we will now discuss. The identified problems start with certain observed ambiguities concerning the rhetoric claim that Podemos constructs a political podium for 15 M. To begin with, Podemos, as a political party, seems to represent a radically different kind of populism than that which 15 M created as a popular movement. While 15 M engaged in an organic process, without formal leadership, which led to political awareness among citizens and subsequent protest against the political and economic power structure and its main representatives, Podemos constructed an antagonistic populist divide between the people and the '*casta*'. We will first look in more detail at these different kinds of populism and we will then point out some specific problems to do with Podemos' innovative but ambivalent politics.

15 M and Podemos: Two radically different forms of populism

15 M represented a form of populism created by the people very much in line with the first precondition of a populist formation by Laclau (2005; 72–74): the accumulation of unfulfilled demands, not being addressed by the institutional system so that an equivalential relation is established between them. Hence, demands at a micro level, such as a demand for protection of (minimum) wages, jobs and housing led to demands at the macro level to do with a requested reform of the electoral law, the internal reform of political parties, the establishment of a public bank, the full cancellation of a mortgage in case of insolvability and increased participation of citizens in processes of new legislation. These demands were unified into a universal demand for an improved democracy ("Democracia real ya") which became the name of what was then the central website for 15 M (www.realdemocraciaya.es).

However, these demands and insights were created throughout the process of the massive protests and the creation and recycling of personal and collective slogans, which led to a process of emancipation, in which citizens developed from victims into critics of a system (Montesano Montessori and Morales-López, 2015, p. 202/215). Hence, it was a popular event, without formal leadership, which turned requests into demands, constituting the people as a potential historical actor, through their equivalential articulation. They distanced themselves from power through their developed critique on the ruling system and they were able to unify their demands in a stable signification of "*real democracia ya*" the united struggle for an improved democracy.

This process is very different from what the leadership of Podemos aimed to do, namely to support 15 M by creating a new political platform. It aimed to create a new hegemonic bloc to achieve a counter hegemonic revolution to form a plurinational state with inverted power relations. In the process, Podemos manifested a very different form of populism, through the articulation of a vertical divide between the people and the ruling elite (see also Chapter 1, this volume). While we do agree with the theoretical findings and suggestions outlined in Chapter 1, we believe that it is possible and necessary to problematize this decision of Podemos on the following three grounds:

1. Podemos seems to have overlooked the explicit point of 15 M that it did not want a new political party, it had hoped to change the world – as its 'myth' identified in the ontological narrative – away from the current neoliberal free market economy towards a just and inclusive world (Montesano Montessori and Morales-López 2015, p. 215). It rejected explicitly the formation of a political affiliation (Briziarelli and Martínez Guillem 2016, p. 100), though, in the aftermath of 15 M, some groups opted to indeed create political platforms at the national level (Podemos) and at municipal levels (En Comu (Barcelona), En Marea (Galicia) and others (Morales-López 2017, p. 250). Podemos, especially its intellectual leadership, decided to create this political platform, thus aiming to accomplish the second precondition, the divide between the 'people' and those in power and the third precondition which is to unify these various demands into a stable system of signification, thus moving beyond the vague feeling of solidarity which inspired the initial equivalential change between different demands (Laclau 2005, p. 74 ff).
2. *Podemos: Vertical representation and horizontal transversality*
   It is certainly understandable that Podemos, in its attempt to innovate, has created a hybrid party hinging between a representative party and a social movement. Hybridity is a logical phenomenon in times in which established parties and institutions have entered an undeniable crisis. It is a phenomenon

recognized in earlier research concerning the Zapatista movement in Mexico (Montesano Montessori 2009) and social entrepreneurial movements in the Netherlands (Montesano Montessori 2016). However, the discursive analysis reveals a series of so far unresolved ambiguities and problems. Many excerpts vacillate between an overt aim at solidarity and a covert structure of representative hierarchy – a potential problem described by Kioupkiolis (2016). While we agree with Kioupkiolis and Katsambekis (2018, p. 211) that this ambiguity reflects a complexity in Spanish politics which still relies on institutional parties and 15 M was unable to change this situation, we would like to point out a series of problems. These include the internal power struggle within Podemos (Excerpt (8)). Iglesias' call to its leadership to keep these struggles inside the party, raises the question whether the democratic experiment of Podemos can fully handle the promises of a democracy with its inherent and necessary struggles and divides. The discursive construction of a 'people', necessarily singularizes them (see Moffit 2016 for details), which may lead to losing the authentic connection with its potential followers and electorate.

3. *Podemos: The lack of a solid system of signification*
   A further so far unresolved problem in the discourse of Podemos – and the same open question emerged in that of the EZLN (Montesano Montessori 2009) – was the discursive creation of a new universal after the envisioned cultural nationalism would have been established in Spain. The EZLN remained silent about a new universal; Podemos suggested a bond of fraternity – which sounds as too weak a link to hold a people together. We suggest it marks a potential failure to unify the struggles into a solid system of signification and thus a potential failure of accomplishing this third stage of populism (Laclau 2005, p. 74ff). Podemos in its discourse, especially Domènech (see fragment [12] above), is aware that the vectors of power should be reversed as described above. So far, Podemos has been unable to create this counter hegemonic revolution.

Conclusion

This rhetoric-discursive analysis has shown that Podemos indeed aims at making a difference in the historical political narrative of Spain based on its claims to directly serve and support the people and to restore the dignity of the nation. Podemos has created a counterhegemonic narrative based on the demands and interpretations of 15 M, in which it decodes the discourses and practices of the traditional parties and recodes and enacts those of the new politics while claiming the need to reverse the power structures in a desired opposite direction (bottom

up and from the periphery to the centre). It recodes the concept of the nation from centrality of the state to popular sovereignty. The analysis has shown how this has been done discursively through a series of spatial, temporal and lexical metaphors as well as through the use of a synecdoche in which the part – the people – are considered to represent the whole. In the process, Podemos claims to submit itself to the historic will of the people and understands itself as being part of a bigger project. We have also presented some potential pitfalls of the populist discourse of Podemos, which include its ambivalent relation with 15 M, the singularisation of the people, the lack of a convincing universal signification, and the ambiguity between an innovative horizontal and a traditional vertical, representative praxis. Nevertheless, Podemos has definitely succeeded in creating innovations and provides the promise of a new politics that serves the needs of the people, rather than abstract markets and a benefiting elite. It has also offered an attractive alternative to right-wing populism. We claim that these are important assets in times of democratic crisis in Spain and elsewhere.

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CHAPTER 6

Building left-wing populism in Denmark

Moving far away from the right

Óscar García Agustín

In the Danish context, populism is usually associated with the radical right-wing. However, the left-wing Red-Green Alliance (the RGA), which defines itself as socialist, has carried out a populist turn coinciding with a remarkable electoral growth from 2.2% in 2007 to 7.8% in 2015. I argue that the RGA presents a hybrid form of left-wing populism in which socialist and populist articulations converge. The discourse is socialist since equality (or struggle against inequality) is the main value; the materialist approach is dominant; and there are plenty of references to class, working-class and class struggles. It is populist in the sense that inequality is portrayed as a conflict against the elite; and there is an attempt to constitute a new collective subject named "community". Moreover, the RGA's opposition towards the EU connects with the populist resistance to global neoliberalism and the defense of national sovereignty.

Keywords: left-wing populism, inequality, community, neoliberalism, discourse theory, Denmark, Red-Green Alliance (RGA)

Introduction

In the Danish context, and more generally in the Nordic one, populism has been associated particularly with the radical right-wing Danish People's Party (DPP), which was the second most voted party in the 2015 general elections. However, the left-wing Red-Green Alliance (Enhedslisten, the RGA), a Danish socialist party established in 1989, recently initiated a populist left-wing turn, which can be associated with the elaboration of the party's new manifesto, or programme of principles, in 2013–14 and the collective leadership of a new generation of politicians. Abandoning some of the characteristic values of the anti-capitalist Left, in the new programme the RGA subscribes to socialist principles while adopting, at the same time, a more pragmatic line and a clear anti-elite stance. The RGA

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has experienced a considerable electoral growth in the last two general elections (from 2.2% in 2007 to 7.8% in 2015 and even 9.6% in opinion polls in 2019), reaching a more diverse group of voters. It is positioned in a difficult political landscape in which the RGA is trying to occupy the political space to the left of the Social Democratic Party, which is the biggest left-wing party, and at the same time competes with the activist and green approach of The Alternative and its closest contender on the left wing, the Socialist People's Party, while also attempting to gain voters from the strong right-wing party, DPP. In 2015 the RGA became the second most voted party on the left; this is interpreted here as the outcome of the party's populist turn, as reflected in its reformulation of the party programme and its internal organization.

The case of the RGA illustrates the possibilities and constraints for a populist reading of the political moment in Denmark, in particular from a left-wing perspective. Other kinds of populisms can also be identified in Danish politics (being the case of the radical right-wing party, DPP, the most obvious) but the RGA contributes with the particularity of emerging from the radical left in a context in which the Social Democratic Party is still the biggest party and remains the hegemonic one in the left bloc. In this sense, rather than moving away from the radical left (although this is also true), the RGA represents an attempt to move populism away from the radical right in order to develop a wider political project against the dominant political and economic elites. The populist turn of the RGA required the party to deal with two issues: the identification of nodal points around which a populist discourse could be articulated; and the articulation of an antagonistic set of relationships at national and international level through an opposition of neoliberal and European discourse(s). I argue that the RGA presents a hybrid form of left-wing populism in which socialist and populist articulations converge. In terms of the socialist discourse, equality (or struggle against inequality) is the main value; the materialist approach is dominant; and there are plenty of references to class, working-class and class struggles. Concerning the populist discourse, inequality is portrayed as a conflict against the elite; and there is an attempt to constitute a new collective subject named 'community'. Moreover, the international dimension and the RGA's opposition towards the EU connect with the populist resistance to global neoliberalism and the defense of national sovereignty.

The chapter starts with a presentation of a general framework for conceptualizing articulations of the radical left and populism. Next, a contextualization of Danish politics is offered in order to understand the RGA's 'populist turn' as well as the possibilities and constraints conditioning the emergence of this type of populism in Denmark. The subsequent analysis is divided into two parts: the first part shows the articulation of the RGA's populism as a reaction to hegemonic politics, and the second part addresses the difficulties in establishing a signifier

to name the new political subject. The conclusions emphasize the specificities of Danish left-wing populism, its commonalities with other progressive populisms as well as some of the obstacles to developing a populist approach.

Methodologically, the conceptualization of 'populism' is based on the approach of the Essex School and its minimal definition of populism grounded in the people-elite antagonism (see introduction and Chapter 1, this volume). This implies that the discursive dimension is emphasized and that other aspects within the populist literature such as participation are not included, although their relevance is not denied. Since there is no such thing as a prototypical populism (see introduction, this volume), when I refer to populism, I am addressing left-wing populism in the case of the RGA in which the socialist discourse (characteristic of the radical left) is intertwined with the populist one. Populism is not merely added to socialism herein since the political project is result of the articulatory process (see Chapter 1, this volume) of socialist and populist discourses. The analysis is based on three kinds of sources, which are necessary to understand the RGA's populist turn: the programme of principles (2013–14) is an essential document to identify the shift initiated by the RGA towards a populist (or hybrid) discourse; the 'Community works' campaign, launched online and used in the 2015 elections campaign, offers an interesting attempt to shape a new collective subject; and finally, articles from mainstream and leftish media by the main leaders of the party, particularly Pelle Dragsted and Pernille Skipper, reflect the ways in which the populist turn is elaborated.

Radical left and the populist moment

The economic crisis opened up space for renewal on the left-hand side of the political spectrum, and different political lines can be identified: parties considered as "radical left", like (former) communist parties, maintained their rejection of capitalism and expected to broaden their electoral base as a consequence of growing inequality and the decline of social democracy; "left-wing populist parties", such as Syriza and Podemos, elaborated new discourses to open up the political space to a wider number of voters who did not necessarily consider themselves as being to the left of social democracy; and, finally, even some social democratic parties tried to renew themselves, such as for example Jeremy Corbyn in the British Labour Party and Bernie Sanders in the US Democratic Party, who each initiated different turns in their parties which have been seen as a turn to the left or directly to populism.

Radical left parties define themselves as "to the left of" social democracy, which is not considered as "leftist enough" or even as not leftist at all (March, 2012).

The notion of radical left in this context entails a "root-and-branch" change of the political system. Luke March explains that "radical", here, does not mean "marginalized" (or "extremist") but opposition to neoliberal global capitalism (rather than against liberal democracy). The increasing de-ideologization of social democracy should, logically, lead to a larger political space for the radical left (Ashley, 2008) as it might be capable of filling that space as the alternative to neoliberalism.

Despite their difficulties in occupying the empty political space left by social democracy, in competition with other parties such as the Greens or even the radical right wing, radical parties present some common characteristics. Following March (2011), these parties are "radical" because they reject the underlying capitalist socioeconomic structures and their values and practices, and because they reclaim a major redistribution of economic resources. They are 'left-wing' because their fundamental principle is economic equality, and they are anti-capitalist and argue for internationalism as the best way of fighting capitalism under its global or imperial form. Furthermore, the radical left parties possess a different kind of legitimacy than "catch-all-parties", grounded in social representation (Tsakatika and Eleftheriou, 2013), since they are closer to grass-roots movements and promote participation and a bottom-up approach as part of their internal functioning.

However, radical left parties face serious difficulties in maintaining a genuine anti-capitalist programme and fulfilling the expectations, which have followed from social representation. This is due to the lack of an electoral majority to form a government and their inability to enter into coalitions with mainstream parties. To overcome this double contradiction (social representation of a minority electoral position; and critique of social democracy while being dependent on it to govern in coalition), a shift from a radical left-wing to a more mainstream approach can be identified in the emergence of a populist left-wing (March, 2008): parties are thereby less ideologized; the role of the leader is more important; and people are mobilized through an elite vs. people discourse. Thus left-wing populism, in opposition to a traditional radical left approach offers an alternative response to the abovementioned double contradiction: making it possible for social representation (i.e., the fact that there are many dissatisfied people and that the demands of social movements and civil society are not assumed by the ruling governments) to be translated into electoral (majority) representation; and offering an alternative to social democracy (instead of having a minority position) to reduce such a dependency.

The approach of the Essex School reflects on the shift entailed by this emergent left-wing populism and establishes minimal criteria (Stavrakakis et al., 2017) to define populism: the articulation around the nodal point such as "the people"; and the antagonistic representation of two opposing groups, "the people" and "the elite". In this way, left-wing populism is capable of embracing most of the

demands of popular movements through a chain of equivalences (Stavrakakis and Katsambekis, 2014). Although this approach is mainly discursive and thus misses some dimensions, such as the role of political outsiders or the use of plebiscites as a form of direct democracy (Barr, 2009), it presents a clear way of identifying and analysing populist discourses. At the same time, it explains how populist politics implies a change in the logic deployed by radical left-wing forces that aim to articulate a multiplicity of popular demands and not rely on class struggle.

The minimal criteria offered by the Essex School are also useful to account for the way some parties, traditionally placed on the radical left, assume a populist discourse. The embrace of a populist strategy does not imply that such parties abandon their ideological standpoints or that they merely act pragmatically for electoral gain. In her conversation with Errejón, Mouffe (2015) points out that the emergence of left-wing populism does not imply a diminishing left-wing ideology. According to her, the antagonist struggle, captured by the right–left frontier, does not seem to be adequate to contest neoliberal domination, since the construction of a larger and progressive will is required. "The people" would instead be the new collective subject capable of reconfiguring a fairer social order (Mouffe, 2016). Therefore, Mouffe claims that enhancing a progressive populism would be the best way to stop radical right-wing populism, whose understanding of "the people" is xenophobic and exclusionary. The opposition between neoliberalism and populism better reflects the current political moment than the one between left and right.

I find the notion of a "populist moment" (meaning that the political conflict is defined around "the people" as the central collective subject) in Europe essential in order to understand not only the emergence of left-wing populist parties but also the populist turn of some radical left parties. The adoption of a populist discourse responds to the redefinition of the political conflict (against the establishment or the elite) and the appeal to a more general collective subject (not reducible to the working class). Yannis Stravrakakis (2017) points out that populism involves a series of contradictory articulations that imply a plurality of populist hybrids. Moreover, the editors of the current volume emphasize that hybridity itself is a feature shared by all forms of populism (see introduction, this volume). It would be wrong to look at the populist turn of radical parties as the total assumption of the populist logic instead of as the coexistence of populist and radical forms and traditions. The focus on hybrid left-wing populism only highlights the importance of taking the diverse socio-political contexts into account in order to understand how the populist moment is assumed and embedded within different left-wing traditions and sensibilities. While the fight against inequality is essential to define the political conflict, socialist and populist articulations coexist within political parties, which would not fit strictly into the category of "radical left" or "left-wing populism".

The case of the RGA illustrates the complexity of hybrid populist forms and how the populist articulation is developed within the existing social and political conditions in Denmark. In order to analyse the specific characteristics of this populist articulation, its achievements and constraints, I will discuss the conditions that made this articulation possible: the neoliberal turn of the welfare system; the relative stability of social democracy; and the consolidation of radical right-wing populism.

Conditions for a populist left-wing party in Denmark

After almost a decade of social democratic-led coalition governments (under prime minister Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, 1993–2001) in Denmark, the Liberal Party won the 2001 elections and formed government with the Conservatives under Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen (2001–2009) and Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen (2009–2011). In the 00's policies were characterized by a neoliberal wave which led to considerable reforms of the welfare state, although reforms often were carried out as a silent or hidden process (see for instance Gomez Nielsen, quoted in Krakov, 2011). Whereas the support for the welfare state has remained intact among voters since the 1960s (Goul Andersen, 2017), changes have gradually been introduced, such as for instance the extended use of free choice schemes. Key tasks of health and education sectors are being outsourced, and there is an increasing problematization of (un)employment as can be observed in the reduction of unemployment benefits and in the introduction of stronger demands on the unemployed (Helbak, 2006). Voter support for the welfare state is accompanied by demands for efficiency in the public sector. Furthermore, the support is conditioned by the type of costs, i.e., support for welfare services, for example, is stronger than support for cash benefits; however, welfare in general is increasingly prioritized over tax reliefs (Goul Andersen, 2017).

The Social Democratic Party regained power in 2011 and held it, under Prime Minister Helle Thorning-Schmidt, in coalition with the Social Liberal Party and the Socialist People's Party until 2014 when the latter left the government following the decision, favoured by the Social Democratic Party and the Social Liberal Party, to sell an 18% stake in the energy company DONG to Goldman Sachs. When the Social Democratic Party regained power in 2011, a key part of the electoral campaign focused on the choice between tax reliefs and welfare services, with the Social Democratic Party arguing that they were prioritizing the latter. Subsequently, however, the social democratic-led government was numerous times accused by opposition parties of broken promises and of resembling the former liberal-conservative government since their economic policies were

marked by the preferences of their government coalition partner, the Social Liberal Party. Policies were adopted that introduced tax reliefs for higher earners and companies together with cuts in unemployment benefits. Voter support for the Social Democratic Party declined from 25% at the elections in 2011, falling well below 20%, and the party entered into a severe crisis. Some linked the crisis of the Social Democratic Party to a shift not only in politics but also in the kind of politicians that were setting the agenda in the party, with a stronger focus on agenda and opportunity than on values and ideological heritage (Olsen, 2013). Internal debate about the crisis in the party and on the need for a renewed direction led a group of social democrats to voice the following diagnosis of the problems of the party in mainstream media: "We have fundamentally failed by buying into the liberal-conservative premise that political direction and ideology do not matter. […] To a too large extent we ended up leaving the party membership book aside when we entered the big ministerial offices after the last elections "(Dybvad et al., 2014).

In 2015 the Liberal Party took office first on its own, again under Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen, and later, from 2016 onwards, in coalition with the Conservative Party and the Liberal Alliance. Ironically the Social Democratic Party was the most voted for party in the 2015 elections but lost power as the centre-right-wing parties gained more seats in parliament. The radical right-wing party, Danish People's Party, was the second most voted for party with a record high 21.1% voter support (up from 12.3% in the 2011 elections), with massive support especially in rural or peripheral regions of the country. At the same time a new party, The Alternative, entered the parliamentary scene with 4.8% of the votes with an agenda focusing on sustainability and the need for a new political culture. Minority coalition governments have dominated the Danish parliamentary system in the last 50 years. Thus, the DPP has served as parliamentary support for the most recent liberal-conservative governments whereas the Socialist People's Party and the RGA have, to a minor degree, been considered parliamentary support for the social democratic-led minority coalition governments. With the DPP as parliamentary support, the current liberal-conservative government has hardened immigration policies while the third government coalition partner, Liberal Alliance, has sought to influence the government agenda towards further liberalization and tax reliefs as priorities.

Compared to other left parties and to the radical right-wing party, electoral support for the RGA has increased considerably (see Figure 1). The Social Democratic Party is, by far, the biggest left-wing party, but its adoption of a more social liberal approach at the end of the 1990s (in line with the Third Way) provoked a loss of ideological identity and of a considerable number of votes, as explained above. The more leftist party (the Socialist People's Party) increased its support in the

middle of the 00s but its participation in the coalition government from 2007 and its assumption of policies against some of its main principles similarly led to a strong crisis within the party and the loss of voters. In the meanwhile, the radical right-wing party, the Danish People's Party, was not penalized electorally for supporting the conservative-liberal government and its neoliberal policies and, on the other hand, it increased its support due to disappointment caused by the 2007 government led by the Social Democratic Party. At this juncture, the RGA dealt with a complicated situation by giving parliamentary support to the social democratic-led government; however, the party was capable of occupying the political space left by social democracy and even more so by the Socialist People's Party, and the RGA abandoned its marginalized position and became the second most voted party from the so-called "left bloc". This shift could not be understood without considerable changes in the party programme and its internal organization, both of which are related to the assumption of a populist strategy.

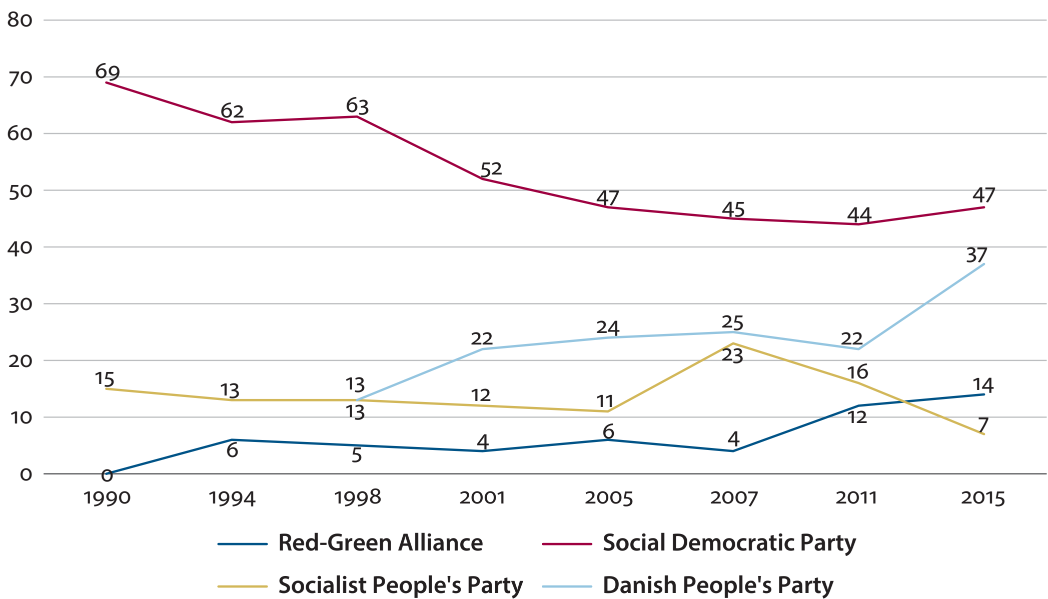

Figure 1. Voter development (number of seats), 1990-2015

There are four areas of dispute which show the possibilities and constraints to develop a left-wing populism in Denmark: socialist ideology (three other parties on the left: Social Democratic Party, Socialist People's Party, and The Alternative), migration (where only the Social Liberal Party has comparably open policies to migration in a context dominated by the xenophobic discourse of the strong radical right-wing party), assuming the role of a grass-roots party (in competition with the other activist party, The Alternative) and green politics (the Socialist People's Party and The Alternative also define their identity as green parties). This political spectrum is *per se* complicated and it is complicated further by the existence of

a radical right-wing party that appropriates issues such as national sovereignty the defence of the welfare state, and historic and traditional Danish values, while being hostile towards migrants and refugees.

Two factors must be highlighted to understand the populist turn of the RGA as well as its remarkable electoral growth in the last two elections. First of all, the role played by Johanne Schmidt-Nielsen as political spokesperson or leader of the party is significant. Schmidt-Nielsen was the youngest MP, with 24 years, entering the Parliament after the 2007 elections. In 2009 the RGA decided to create the figure of a "political spokesperson" for the first time in its history, a role assigned to Schmidt-Nielsen. This is an important development since the RGA has a leader-less tradition (in fact, it used to avoid the use of pictures of candidates during electoral campaigns) to strengthen the sense of collectivity. The increasing support for the RGA can partly be attributed to its new leadership, including other relevant politicians around Schmidt-Nielsen. In 2011 Schmidt-Nielsen, candidate in the Copenhagen area, was the second most voted for candidate (with 47.000 personal votes) and the third most voted for candidate (with 40.425 personal votes) in 2015. She was the highest rated party leader in 2011, as she was considered trustworthy or genuine, in contrast with other leaders (Henriksen, 2011). Secondly, a new party manifesto was approved in 2014 with the goal of clarifying and adapting the values of the party. One of the most controversial proposals, which generated a strong internal debate, was the rejection of armed revolution as a means to enhance socialism. This is not a minor issue since the current political spokesperson of the party, Pernille Skipper, nominated in 2016, faced internal disagreement about her decision to replace a party member, who had advocated for the necessity of armed revolution in certain situations, when he was about to enter the Parliament as substitute for a member on leave. Two other people also contributed to the populist turn of the RGA. Inspired by the experiences of Syriza and Podemos as examples of how to expand popular and electoral support, the RGA member Michael Hunnicke made theoretical contributions and appeals to move towards populism by changing the RGA's uses of language and frames, inspired by George Lakoff. In addition, Pelle Dragsted, former spin doctor of Schmidt-Nielsen and current MP, has been inspired by the work of Chantal Mouffe and the practices of parties such as Podemos.

The changes in terms of the role of the political spokesperson and the new 2014 party manifesto characterized the populist turn of the RGA, which can be defined as a form of hybrid populism. The leader gains a previously non-existing importance within the party but is still subject to the principle of rotation (i.e., according to the RGA rules, MPs cannot run for re-election after seven years in the Parliament and employees of the party cannot hold their position for more than ten years). Leadership thus becomes essential but does not determine the entire

political line of the party. The manifesto or programme of principles is open to a populist approach, challenging some of the traditional principles of the radical left, but it also maintains principles from the socialist tradition. The combination of a charismatic leader and new principles challenged voter scepticism against a party which is placed on the extreme left. A survey from 2014 (Braemer, 2014) showed that 46% of the voters said that they would not vote for the RGA when asked to identify parties they would never vote for. This means that the RGA was the party most voters distanced themselves from; the RGA ranked above the radical right-wing party, Danish People's Party, as well as the ultra-neoliberal party, Liberal Alliance. While this shows how difficult it is for the RGA to get rid of its image as a party on the political extreme, the evolution of the party in recent years has proved its capacity to challenge other political parties.

In search for the collective subject: Community

In a conversation with the Danish People's Party MP Søren Espersen, Pelle Dragsted from the RGA reflects on the discursive articulation of the "us/them" relationship. Dragsted points out that the left-wing has traditionally deployed an image of the 'enemy' but that it has also been cautious not to use narratives that oppose "us" and "them". This has led to a situation in which the space opened by "us/them" discourses has been appropriated by the radical right-wing, whereby "us" has been nationalized and culturalized and "them" has been related to non-Christian religions. Dragsted concludes that: "The left-wing must take a different 'us' and a different 'them' as starting point" (quoted in Thorup, 2014). The challenge here is triple: how to shape a new "us" vs. "them" dichotomy, which can be distinguished from the one appropriated by the radical right? How can such a dichotomy be made compatible with the image of an enemy that has characterized the (radical) left discourse? Which "nodal point" can articulate a populist left-wing discourse within the Danish context? Dragsted (2015) is aware of the importance of gaining the support of the current voters of the Danish People's Party and suggests "breaking the code" of the party in order to avoid the oscillating position of the Social Democratic Party, which has moved from rejecting the Danish People's Party completely to "copying" it.

There are some previous semantic difficulties in finding a nodal point to name "us" as a collectivity. The signifier "the people" (folket), although it exists, is not used in ordinary Danish language and this makes it difficult to introduce it into the public debate. A similar signifier like "popular" (folkelighed) is barely used either. Other signifiers such as "citizens" (borgere), "population" (befolkning) or "people" (mennesker) are not often deployed in the discourse with a strong political

meaning. The dominant signifier among all the parties is "Danes" (danskere) but if there is an attempt to articulate a populist discourse as nodal point, this signifier contains national connotations that exclude those who are not Danes. Looking at the programme of the RGA, there are references to "ordinary people", "ordinary Danes" ordinary Danes", "working class" and more often to "employees" or "wage earners". This implies some awareness of labour struggles although the notion of class as a collective group is diminished. However, in the party documents prior to the formulation of the 2014 programme of principles, there is a signifier which is frequently used and becomes a nodal point to articulate the collective "us": "community" (fællesskab). It should be emphasized that "fællesskab" does not only mean "community" as such but refers to a close group or identity; it rather reflects the feeling of community, the sense of being together and of enhancing solidarity relations.

In the 2014 programme of principles there is an antagonistic division between two fields corresponding to two different classes: the small minority of owners (as a general term) and their allies and a diverse class of the majority "who make a living by selling their labour power or by receiving income transfers" (Red-Green Alliance, 2014). The reason for the conflict still relies on the exploitation of the working class by the dominant class. In this way, this conceptualization is consequent with the socialist tradition assumed by radical left parties. However, there are already two interesting elements that point at a hybrid form of populist and socialist articulation: the introduction of the conflict in terms of minority vs. majority; and the acknowledgement that the class composition of the majority is heterogeneous. The latter reflects the need to appeal to a collective subject, which is larger than the working class, whilst the former is introducing a populist opposition between elite and people. It is interesting to notice how the heterogeneity of subjects is named: "The RGA calls this majority the working people, wage workers, the working class, the working majority, or simply ordinary people" (Red-Green Alliance, 2014). All the suggestions for naming the heterogeneous subject are related to work relations with the exception of the last one, which is presented as a sort of synthesis: "ordinary people". Thus, the focus on class struggles does not disappear but is rather integrated into a larger discourse in which those who can identify themselves as "ordinary people" would not necessarily identify themselves as "working class".

The RGA, at least in the programme of principles, moves between an incipient populist discourse and a traditional socialist one where "socialism" still works as a nodal point to articulate the programme. However, there are two aspects that strengthen the inclusion of a populist approach: the relation with popular movements and the shaping of a majority. The RGA prioritizes to support and cooperate with popular movements and considers the victories of social struggles

as common to all. The party, in a Gramscian sense, assumes a role of unifying and reinforcing alliances in order to configure a historic bloc. Since socialism "does not grow spontaneously out [of] the struggles of the popular movements" (Red-Green Alliance, 2014), the party still considers itself to be necessary in order to organize those diverse and disconnected struggles. On the other hand, the importance attributed to "majority" is not only due to its opposition to the minority (the elite). It is also fundamental to reject the way of the "armed revolution", embrace the mechanisms of liberal democracy and open up the question of how to achieve such a majority to move towards a socialist society:

> It is absolutely fundamental for the RGA that only a majority of the population can carry out a break with capitalism, and this majority must manifest itself in referenda and completely free elections to representative assemblies. In the same way it is evident that a majority of the population at any time through democratic elections may change society in other directions. (Red-Green Alliance, 2014)

It is important to notice how the party refers to the "majority of the population". The use of the term "population" does not entail a sense of shaping a collective identity, as the "the people" does, and the reference to the "majority", although the extent of the majority is not specified, conditions the "break with capitalism" on elections. In other words, here it is not about talking for the people, but about assuming that a fundamental change of the political system is only possible through elections. This implies that change can only be achieved through the votes of the majority, and the electoral majority to break with capitalism does not yet exist. In this regard, the rejection of revolution does not imply a mere assumption of liberal democracy. The RGA becomes metapolitical here in the sense that the party discusses the mode of doing politics (Zienkowski and De Cleen, 2017) since it expresses its opinion on the best (and most desirable) political system rather than limiting itself to revolve around concrete changes. Michael Hunnicke of the RGA argues for a populist strategy to appeal to that majority. He proposes "ordinary Danes" (almindelige danskere) as nodal point to articulate a left-wing populism. He claims that this signifier would only work if the RGA starts to talk more about equality and community. Besides noticing the national basis of such populism ("ordinary Danes" instead of "ordinary people"), Hunnicke correctly highlights two of the main values which shape the RGA populism and operate as well as nodal points: equality (rooted in the socialist tradition and most of times presented in its negative form: "inequality") and community (which indeed becomes a nodal point reflecting the sense of collectivity in a stronger way than "ordinary Danes"). The programme of principles contains a key reference to community:

> A strong community, however, is a precondition for freedom. A community with opportunities for all, irrespective of gender, sexuality, disabilities, ethnicity

> or religion, and where everybody fully can exploit their potentials and live life to the fullest. […] Such a community ensures the basic needs of everybody […] The freedom to live your life as you want is not real without the protection of a community. (Red-Green Alliance, 2014)

"Community" is essential here to offer a new angle to the debate between equality and freedom, and the material conditions to ensure the latter for everybody. Community as precondition for freedom acknowledges diversity, ensures equality but adds a new dimension: protection or security. This conception of community establishes the ground to develop a collective subject which, besides moving beyond the working class, can compete with the collective subject of the radical right-wing whose understanding of community is homogenous and whose notion of security as value is applied to protect the in-group from the out-group on the basis of ethnic and cultural markers, primarily in its discourse on migration.

"Community" is put forward as a nodal point in order to articulate the demands of "us" within the campaign "Community works" (Fællesskab fungerer) in 2013. This is the most complete attempt thus far to articulate an inclusive collective subject that results from social struggles and that is not directly attached to a national sense of belonging. This enables a discursive articulation of the collective subject that differs clearly from the nationalist one which characterizes the radical right but which has also been considerably assumed by the social democratic party. In a narrative form, the campaign divided Denmark between "the few" (de få) and "the many" (de mange) in times of large social and economic inequalities. When the majority desired change they fought for social improvements and created community. Community is thus depicted as the result of many social struggles, from the right to parental leave to the six weeks holidays (see Figure 2), and it works because it enhances freedom and security, which is assumed by the welfare state.

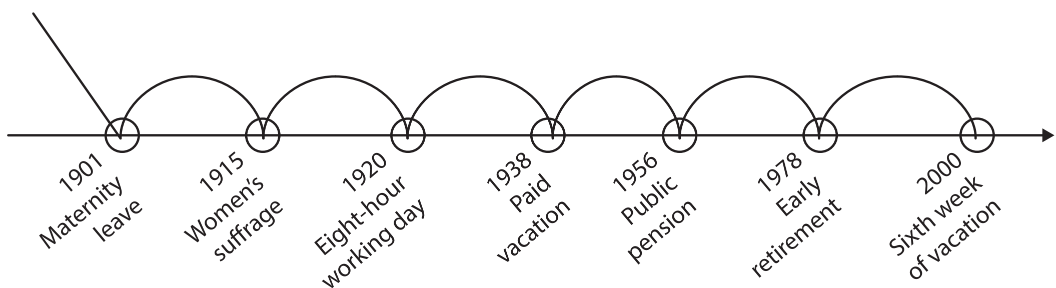

Figure 2. Historical construction of community in the RGA campaign "Community works" (translated and adapted campaign illustration), 2013

There is no essentialist conception of community (in fact, "community cannot be taken for granted", according to the campaign website), since it is the consequence of historic struggles and it must be shaped if security and freedom are

to be ensured. This means that community does not pre-exist politics but that it is constituted through collective action. The RGA positions itself through this campaign as the defender of welfare state policies (the space abandoned by social democracy) and proposes a collective subject that competes with that of the radical right-wing without being nationalist and exclusionary, even though it narrates the historical development of communities in the Danish context. Furthermore, the RGA articulates the historic demands of popular movements from a diachronic perspective and, although it was not the party responsible for legislating at these diverse moments, it identifies with and assumes such struggles through time. This campaign provoked criticism from the left. The RGA member Niels Frølich (2015) criticized the populist turn of the RGA and complained that, instead of highlighting the party's visions for the future, the campaign underlined defensive stances as a "reaction to the politics of others". However, it must not be ignored that the constitution of community, as a historic, collective subject, is also essential to articulate a new discourse that offers a more inclusive political project. A community based sense of identity is less associated with class-based left-wing ideology and more based on a sense of belonging and recognition realized through the achievement of being together.

Despite this attempt to name an "us" through the signifier of community and the associated attempt to ground a populist logic in this nodal point, the RGA fluctuates in the way it names the collective subject of its political project. For instance, like many other Danish political parties, the label "Danes" is frequently used as well. Part of the difficulty with the constant use of "community", or other signifiers, is that the RGA's antagonistic field is constituted in opposition to two groups: the national elite and the EU. Whilst community efficiently expresses common values and articulates a sense of protection, even against a minority, it does not work so well in opposition to the EU elite (since community would be the "Danish community" and its use seems unnecessary in this case). Moreover, the notion of community is not capable of individualizing the members of the group, as in the use of plural referring to "Danes" or by characterizing "people" as "ordinary people".

Against the elite

In its definition of the antagonistic field, the RGA identifies the elite (the minority) as "them" but different groups are differentiated at the national and European levels. Although there is an understanding of capitalism as a global phenomenon, the national and European realities are treated as different entities and the RGA positions itself in two different camps. The RGA reproduces the "underdog" vs. "those in power" logic but in relation to different groups: the national elites (and

the implementation of the "politics of necessity" as hegemonic model) and the EU (as threat to national sovereignty).

An alternative to the politics of necessity

As mentioned above, the programme of principles reflects an antagonism between two classes: the class of owners and the class who sells its labour power or receives income transfers. The former is depicted as: "a small minority [that] owns and controls equities, factories, land, commodities and infrastructure. Thus this small group of people wields huge influence over the development of society" (Red-Green Alliance, 2014). Other groups also work and identify with this minority. Although in the programme of principles the minority is presented in terms of class, and class struggle, the party has later opted for talking more frequently about "elite" or "power elite" (magtelite), thus reinforcing the populist discourse. Although both "class" and "elite" reflect a polarization into two groups, the deployment of "elite" enables the inclusion of both economic and political groups whose interests are intertwined and support each other. Besides, the critique of this economic and political elite is more attached to current hegemonic formations like the "politics of necessity" (nødvendighedens politik), i.e., economicist reform politics.

The term "politics of necessity" was coined by the Social Democratic Minister of Finance, Bjarne Corydon, to legitimate the economic measures carried out by the former social democratic-led government coalition (2011–2015). It became part of "common sense" (Hansen, 2016) and imposed an economic rationality in which the "politics of necessity" should be applied regardless of whether a left-wing or right-wing government was in office. Thus, politicians must take drastic decisions, following austerity politics and cuts in the public sectors, because it is economically necessary. There is no option for alternative economic solutions. Political decisions end up being irrelevant since the economic logic predominates.

The importance of articulating a discourse against the "politics of necessity" rests on the fact that it offers a framework beyond the left/right wing distinction. Firstly, the "politics of necessity" is a kind of politics associated with neoliberal governments but frequently implemented by social democratic actors as well. Secondly, this politics constitutes a new political axis: new vs. old parties. The parties that did very well in the 2015 elections were precisely the parties opposed to the "politics of necessity": the radical right-wing Danish People's Party, the ultra-neoliberal Liberal Alliance, the green The Alternative, and the RGA. These four parties, characterized as protest parties by David Trads (2015), articulate differentiated visions of society that challenge the narrow margins of manoeuvre imposed by economic essentialism. However, there are also considerable differences between these parties.

The RGA opposes the “politics of necessity” to the “Danish model” meaning the welfare system and labour market model strongly attached to the shaping of “community”. It reproduces the division of the political struggle into two antagonistic camps: companies and the rich (those who benefit from tax reliefs) vs. ordinary wage earners (suffering from the dismantling of the public sector), thus articulating the conflict differently from the formulations included in the programme of principles. Politicians support the interests of the rich in the name of “necessity” so there will be no investment in sustainable jobs or better social services. Pernille Skipper, political spokesperson of the RGA since 2016, emphasizes the need for fighting against the “common sense” generated by the “politics of necessity” and points at the question of whose necessities are being fulfilled: “It is probably too much to hope for that the right-wing, the top level of the Danish business sector, and the power elite in Denmark one day will say: “okay, you know what, let us use the money on the nursing homes for the elderly this time.” On the contrary, they are wrong when they call it a ‘necessity’ to do the opposite” (Skipper, 2016a). In other words, the revolt against the economic and political elites can only be achieved through a revolt against the “politics of necessity”.

Reflecting on the US elections, Skipper claims explicitly that the “power elite” must be contested by a progressive change, and that the creation of an alternative against the “politics of necessity” will be the only way to overcome the “power elite”. The opposition to the elite cannot take the form of the radical right-wing: “We can create a society where the struggle with the elite and increasing inequality does not mean hatred. We can create change. Especially if we do not leave politics to those, who hold the soft seats at Christiansborg [the Danish Parliament]” (Skipper, 2016b). Here, it is Skipper who explains the populist position: the revolt against the elite implies assuming the responsibility of doing politics. Politics, in this sense, is not the prerogative of politicians who are part of the elite and who do not listen to the interests of the people. Change in society and by society is a necessary step to challenge the elites and to perform a politics closer to people’s interest. However, it must be noticed that Skipper refers directly to the elites, as “them”, but the “us” is more diffuse (also along her article) and identifiable with society at large.

The articulation of an opposition of the community against the elite and its “politics of necessity” as the new common sense, enables a politicization of economic and social conflict in a wider sense that is not reducible to class struggle. But there is another dimension of the cultural hegemony that is more difficult to challenge: the new nationalism and its own revolt against the cultural and academic elite. Thus far, the radical right-wing has set the political agenda on these topics (see Chapter 1, this volume). The new nationalism (Dueled, 2011) assumed by the conservative-liberal government interconnects national identity politics and immigration policies, as well as revitalized national unity in culture,

with clear distinctions between us and others (reinforced by assimilation policies). Migration has become the major topic of political discussion in Denmark and few parties (the Social Liberal Party, The Alternative and the RGA) have challenged this hegemonic model. Moreover, the Danish People's Party has led the revolt against the so-called "cultural radicalism" or, in other words, the "tyranny of opinion" of the "judges of good taste" (Lykkeberg, 2008), through reclaiming ordinary Danes' common sense in opposition to experts' assessments.

The RGA, despite its populist turn, faces difficulties in both fields. Although solidarity with refugees has been strong in civil society in recent years in Denmark, an exclusionary sense of national community (strengthened by assimilationism and tougher immigration restrictions) remains hegemonic. The shift towards increasing identification of the RGA with the ordinary Danes (as seen in the quote by Skipper or in recent measures like the RGA MPs' voluntary renunciation of retirement privileges) is complicated since the left is traditionally associated with intellectual elitism and with a defence of multiculturalism. It can be concluded that the formation of a collectivity opposed to the economic and political elite is still incapable of being articulated without a discourse, which challenges the hegemonic new nationalism and skepticism towards the "cultural elites".

An alternative to the European Union

One of the historically key features of the RGA has been its rejection of the project of European integration of the EU. Nowadays it is indeed the only party, which advocates for an exit from the EU, exploring instead other forms of international solidarity. These solidarity forms are not clearly defined but strengthening cooperation with the other Nordic countries or developing the so-called Plan B for Europe are some of the examples that the RGA mentions. It was not until 2017 that the RGA decided to participate in the European Parliament elections. Previously the RGA had supported another anti-EU formation, namely the People's Movement against the EU (Folkebevægelsen mod EU). The decision to introduce its own electoral list by the 2019 European Parliament elections would entail an election coalition with the People's Movement against the EU, and this new development does not change the fundamental position of the RGA: the call for a referendum so that Denmark can leave the EU. In this sense, the RGA coincides with the populist discourse in its defence of national sovereignty (recovering people's power to make decisions) and against global neoliberalism. Nonetheless, especially after the victory of Donald Trump in the US and the Brexit campaign in the UK, the defence of national sovereignty is perceived as a consequence of nationalism and xenophobia. The discursive articulation must avoid the reduction to nationalism, although two difficulties can be envisioned: the globalist discourse (in its multiple

manifestations from neoliberal to cosmopolitan) frames any kind of contestation to globalization as nationalist, and the RGA has had a tradition of separating national from EU politics which makes it difficult not to perceive its position as a nationalist one. In this section, I want to show how the RGA is moving towards a more populist framework to foster its demand for national sovereignty, and also how other parties, particularly the Socialist People's Party, position the RGA as a nationalist party due to its rejection of the EU. As mentioned above, the notion of "community" is abandoned at the international level, and the categories of "Denmark", "Danes" or "Danish people" are dominant. Furthermore, the hybrid form (socialist and populist articulation) competes with a stronger nationalist stance in opposition to EU interference.

Pelle Dragsted discusses national sovereignty in relation to the EU and explains why the left-wing questions free trade (and agreements such as CETA and TTIP) and social dumping. He emphasizes that demands for more democratic scope, sovereignty and fair labour conditions characterize the left-wing whereas right-wing politics, quite on the contrary, reflects the "model of the neoliberal elites for globalization" (Dragsted, 2016). A similar rejection of nationalism and comparison with the radical right is found in his claim that progressive forces must aim to "regain power of popular rule and to regulate the so-called free movement of capital and labour force" (Dragsted, 2017). The defence of national sovereignty is thus framed into a populist discourse opposing neoliberal elites with popular rule whilst the differences between right and left-wing (populism) are essential since the RGA's case for sovereignty is not based on a nationalist imaginary but on a call for more equality and redistribution.

Pernille Skipper, in a newspaper debate with Holger K. Nielsen and Steen Gade of the Socialist People's Party, assumes the populist logic by opposing "ordinary people" with "EU elites" to justify the need for leaving the EU. This is summarized when she says: "Globalization does not work for ordinary people. It works for the elite" (Skipper, 2017). Skipper attributes 'inequality' and 'insecurity' to the EU, and consequently, to the emergence of right-wing nationalist parties. National parties, or national parliaments, cannot take decisions, it is argued, since the real decisions are taken by the economic and political elite of the EU. The antagonistic camp in this case makes any attempt of democratization or of ensuring more equality, security and solidarity within the existing framework impossible. The opposition against the (neoliberal) EU elites does not lead to claiming European improvements for the people. The only option to face those elites is to leave the EU and to undertake an undefined way of international cooperation. This is where the response against EU neoliberalism evolves into a sort of nationalism, since retreating to the national area is presented as the only possibility of opposing the European elites.

The debate between the RGA and the Socialist People's Party about the EU is important, since the RGA has gained part of its votes from precisely the Socialist People's Party. The latter first took a populist turn in 2007 with Villy Søvndal as leader and later lost electoral support after participating in the coalition government with the Social Democratic Party and the Social Liberal Party from 2011 to 2014. The two parties strongly disagree on the EU. The Socialist People's Party changed its historically critical position in the 1990s and now supports the EU integration process. For this reason, the Socialist People's Party is interested in promoting its European profile in opposition to the RGA. The current leader of the party, Pia Olsen Dyhr, compares the latter with the radical right, with Marine Le Pen and with Geert Wilders (Olsen, 2017). A prominent member of the Socialist People's Party, Steen Gade, does not recognize the existence of EU elites that share common interests, and reproduces the ideological logic of left vs. right division in his reproach of Skipper for renouncing of the EU as a field of struggle:

> It is interesting – and perhaps also telling – that Pernille Skipper in her response to Holger K. [former leader and current MP of the Socialist People's Party] does not relate at all to the EU as a political field of struggle, between right and left, between black and green, in the same way as we experience it in Denmark in the Parliament, the regions and the municipalities. Places where I would have written right-wing or ultra liberalists, Pernille Skipper continuously uses the completely unpolitical word, the EU elite. Not a single word on the fact that there is a center/right-wing majority in Europe with an increasingly strong right-wing populism. (Gade, 2017)

Gade reduces politics at the national and European levels to parliamentary politics and rejects any kind of conflict beyond party politics. By doing that, the influence of economic powers remains unproblematized and the margins of change are quite limited. On the other hand, Skipper challenges the left vs. right dichotomy by the introduction of the EU elite and points to a problem, which is greater than the decisions taken within the parliaments while referring to the existing kind of democracy in the EU. However, as mentioned before and as criticized by Gade, the solution offered by the RGA consists in abandoning the EU field. Thus, the possibility of a different European articulation, opened up by the populist discourse against the EU elites, is closed and restricted to the national arena.

Conclusion

When Pelle Dragsted (2015) proposed that the RGA should work to be perceived less as a party of the "red bloc" and more like an "independent" party in opposition

to the old parties, he also advocated the development of a sort of left-wing populism which would be capable of presenting an "us" that would be strong but different from that of the radical right. As argued in this chapter, naming "us" and fixing a nodal point such as "the people" to articulate such a populist discourse in Denmark is not an easy task. The references to "(ordinary) wage earners" and "Danes" are the most used nodal points. The attempt to articulate a discourse around "community" as a historic collective subject shows the possibilities opened up by a Danish left-wing populism. "Community" would include the notions of freedom (as precondition), security and equality and, since we are dealing with a community that is always in the making, we are dealing with a heterogenous and inclusive project. The problem is that insofar as it is a collective subject that articulates the historic chain of demands, it is still unclear how to articulate this new subject while including a broad range of groups, from the unemployed to refugees.

On the other hand, the RGA definition of the antagonistic camps is clearer than the way it articulates and conceptualizes its collective subject. The RGA maintains a clear distinction between the national and European arenas, although in both cases contestation is towards the economic and political elites. At the national level, the elites are associated with the imposition of the so-called "politics of necessity", which opens up a terrain of political contestation that is larger than the terrain offered by the left vs. right opposition. The RGA reclaims welfare policies and the Danish model as an alternative. At the EU level, the rejection of the EU integration project means that the only alternative to defending national sovereignty is to recover it by leaving the EU. These features and the articulation of the left-wing populist discourse of the RGA are synthetized (see Figure 3).

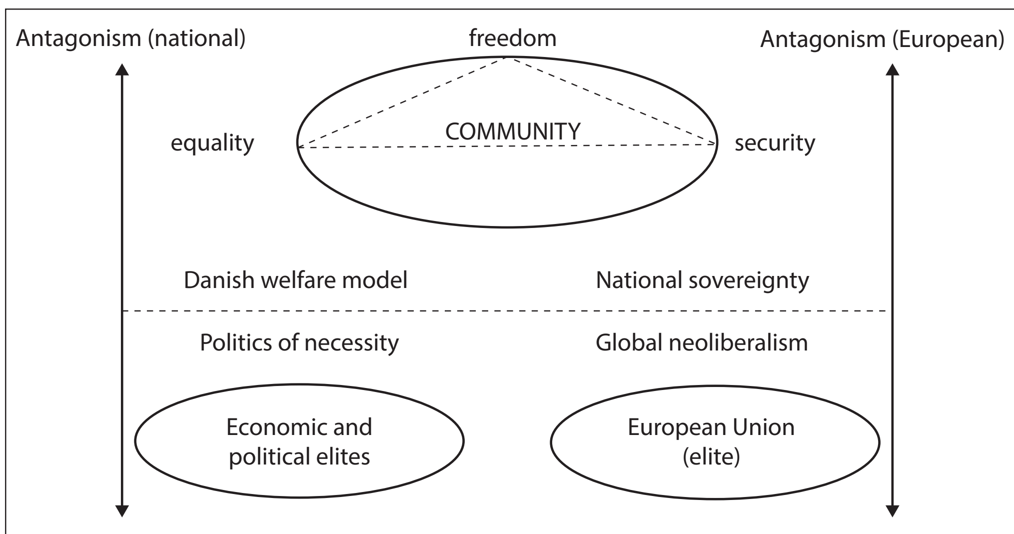

Figure 3. Articulation of RGA discourse

It is quite clear that the RGA has developed a populist turn with its own characteristics, due to its particular history as a party and due to the Danish context, particularly since Schmidt-Nielsen became the RGA's political spokesperson in 2011 and since the new programme of principles was approved in 2014. Although the socialist principles are defended and still define the political identity of the RGA, the idea of a class struggle, led by the working class, has gradually evolved into the idea of a peaceful revolt against the economic and political elites. This is reflected in the electoral growth of the party in the last two elections (achieving a more diverse kind of voters) but also in the difficult positioning vis-à-vis other parties: the activist and green approach of The Alternative, the proximity to the Socialist People's Party, the need to attract the voters of the Danish People's Party, and its role in relation to social democracy.

The resulting hybrid form of populism faces, in any case, some difficulties. The first difficulty is precisely its position towards social democracy. As a parliamentary support party during the social democratic-led government, the RGA already faced difficulties in keeping a balance between its principles and the need for pragmatism. However, its unconditional support for a social democratic candidate was criticized from within the party. For this reason, at the party's annual meeting in 2017, it was decided that the RGA would not support a social democratic-led government unconditionally if this would entail taking measures to promote inequality or to introduce more restrictive policies for refugees. In this way the RGA attempts to shape a more independent profile and to attribute itself the capacity of influencing the political agenda. A second problem is the internal contestation and the critique directed at the top level of the party for abandoning the socialist and revolutionary principles and becoming a new version of social democracy. Finally, and more substantially, the difficulties of shaping a Danish populism, which is not intertwined with any form of nationalism, are evident. All parties, from left to right, participate in the nationalist framework, which the Danish People's Party has made hegemonic. The challenge for a Danish populism, besides opening up a new space for progressive and inclusive politics, is to explore whether there is an alternative to the nationalist framework and how this alternative can be reframed to reflect the values of a progressive and inclusive community where the conflict is aimed towards the elites and not towards those who do not fit into the category "Danes", namely the "non-Danes".

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CHAPTER 7

Performing 'the people'?

The populist style of politics in the German PEGIDA-movement

Andreas Önnerfors

This chapter analyses the construction of the people (*das Volk*) in the populist style of politics as performed in the German PEGIDA-movement. Pointing at the ambiguities of the term in the German political post-unification discourse, he demonstrates how PEGIDA traces its legacy back to the GDR citizen movement and to the idea of resistance against a dictatorial system still awaiting a final redemption. PEGIDA presents *Das Volk* as the legitimate representative of the German population, threatened in its very existence by the machinations of a toxic combination of evil-minded domestic elites and trans-national migration. Önnerfors locates the linguistic and performative strategies of PEGIDA within a larger European New Right (ENR) discourse and argues that it combines elements from mono- and multifascism.

Keywords: post-unification Germany, PEGIDA, das Volk, populism

Introduction: Who are 'the people' in post-unification Germany?

Who are 'the people'? In contemporary post-unification Germany, this question has no easy answer since it touches upon contentious issues of national identity, resource settlements and representation in a country divided yet united by the experience of two totalitarian political systems during the twentieth century (see Chapter 8 and Chapter 11, this volume). When, in the autumn of 2014 PEGIDA, the 'Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the Occident', took to the streets of Dresden gathering tens of thousands of supporters within weeks, Germany was faced with a seemingly new and perplexing type of social movement that stroke a chord of popular resentment with contemporary political affairs (Wodak 2015: 189–190). This chapter seeks to map how PEGIDA managed to evoke the image of 'crisis' as a driving force to construct, represent and articulate the voice

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and the claims of 'the people' as a political audience and actor in order to create a performative stage for the expression of diffuse political positions coagulating around narrative strings circulating in a more general German and European New Right (ENR) discourse (Moffitt 2016: 113–33). In this introduction, I will outline the general scope of the chapter, briefly treat the conceptual history of the term '*das Volk*', provide a brief historical background of the contemporary New Right discourse in Germany, and elaborate on the theoretical and methodological implications of a performative perspective for an analysis of the populist political style of PEGIDA attempting to overcome common shortcomings of scholarly approaches to populism (see introduction, this volume). Finally, I will discuss the selection of sources, an insider-account of 200-odd pages covering roughly the first ten months of PEGIDA's existence: Sebastian Hennig's book *Pegida – Spaziergänge über den Horizont, Eine Chronik* ("Pegida – Walks across the horizon. A chronicle", 2015). Solid research into PEGIDA has hitherto mainly been carried out through sociological observations available mainly in German. I will summarize the findings of these studies before I move on to dissect the above-mentioned insider account. I will analyze how 'the people' is shaped and styled both as an actor and as an audience through multi-platform medialization, hyper-mediality and performativity of PEGIDA. In the last part of this chapter I will discuss how PEGIDA ties into contemporary European New Right discourse and offer some thoughts for future trajectories of research.

Between 'ethnos´ and 'demos' – reflections on the German concept 'Volk'

The German terms *Volk* in and *Nation* have an intriguing conceptual history, covered by Reinhart Koselleck in an article of almost 300 pages, published in the standard reference work *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* (abbreviated GG; Koselleck, Gschnitzer, Werner, Schönemann 1978/2004: 141–431; Mathias 2018/1; Mathias 2018/2; see Chapters 8 and 11, this volume). Although Koselleck and his co-authors outline a grandiose account of the shifting meanings of these extremely charged terms, what concerns us most in this chapter is the question whether different conceptualizations of *Volk* are traceable in the West and East German political discourse between 1945 and 1990 and how these different notions might have informed the New Right discourse of PEGIDA. Koselleck and his co-authors distinguish a political and a more diffuse ethno-cultural historical use of *Volk*. In the political sense, *Staatsvolk* is understood as a constitutional community or legal assembly, the core of legislative legitimacy. *Volk* in the ethno-cultural sense refers loosely to a collective united by language, culture and a shared past. Developing this understanding and based upon the analysis of a comprehensive PEGIDA language

corpus, Mathias (2018/2: 44) elaborates the semantic tonality of the lexeme 'the people'. She distinguishes four (potentially overlapping) fields of significance in an "oscillating content of meaning" ("oszillierender Bedeutungsinhalt"), dynamically intersecting in linguistic performance: ethnological, biological, political and constitutional usages and pragmatic constructions.

Given the long German history of heterogeneous particularism and the relatively late formation of a more or less unified national state (1871), the first attempt to enforce a homogeneous and levelled idea of a pure German people (based on racial imagination) occurred during the Nazi regime. Any Herderian notions of a genuine German *ethnos* collapsed in 1945, perverted as they were into an aggressive ideology of Arian supremacy during Nazi rule. During the Cold War, German notions of the people were re-defined in accordance with the ideological positions on both sides of the Iron Curtain. Koselleck and his co-authors state that

> [t]he different political conceptualizations of both states [FRG (Federal Republic of Germany) and GDR (German Democratic Republic)] had an importance not to be underestimated at the level of law, symbolism, and history of reception. The different linguistic regimes or differentiations were not only a barometer, but even more an immediate ratification of what '*Volk*' is or was meant to be.
> (Koselleck et al. 1978/2004: 421)

Koselleck and his co-authors then develop how *das Volk* assumed meaning in the respective constitutions of the FRG and GDR (democracy literary understood as *Volksherrschaft*, the reign of the people or popular sovereignty) as both states initially claimed to represent the entirety of Germany (see also Mathias 2018/2: 45). Making matters even more intricate, the FRG adopted a very loose legal definition of belonging to the German people in 1961. This was due to a complex post-war situation marked by a huge influx of displaced persons of German origin from the eastern territories of the former German Reich as well as an influx of people expelled from other parts of central and eastern Europe. Even after 1990, millions of people of more or less German descent emigrated from the former Soviet Union and claimed German citizenship.

Koselleck and his co-authors ascribe the Western German notions of *Volk* a stronger semantic continuity. This is due to the fact that this concept is embedded in the democratic constitution or *Grundgesetz* where it refers to the entirety of Germany with the outspoken aim of future re-unification. From the outset the situation was similar in the GDR even though a number of ambiguities were introduced over the decades. Almost following a populist figure of thought, the GDR-legislation of 1952 abolished the territorial division of the country in different states and claimed that the "big capitalists" and the "big land owners" (the elite) of the old German state had consciously distanced themselves from the "working

people". In contrast, the socialist state, in close proximity to the working people, was able to "represent an invincible force", participating in government through consultation. In the GDR-definition, the people consisted only of those willing to fulfill societal progress. All others belonged to the "category of enemies of the people" (Koselleck et al. 1978/2004: 423–6). As we can see, the GDR notion of *Volk* neither represents a consistent constitutional nor an ethno-cultural community but is conceptualized within the Marxist paradigm of class antagonism. Consequently, not every German belongs automatically to the people by right of birth. His or her belonging can potentially be revoked if s/he turns him- or herself into an enemy of the people. The signifier *millet* (the people) has undergone a very similar metamorphosis (from democratically inclusive to exclusive, resting on antagonist definitions) in the language of the Turkish AKP (see Chapter 4, this volume).

According to Koselleck and his co-authors, it was the GDR citizen movement of the late 1980s which reclaimed a constitutional meaning of the term chanting '*Wir sind das Volk*' – 'We are the people' – demanding self-determination on weekly Monday rallies across the streets of the Republic of Workers and Peasants during the last year of its existence. The recourse to *das Volk* suggested legitimacy in representing a legal assembly in the constitutional sense. In the GDR, Koselleck and his co-authors claim, "the regulations of language disavowed both the parameters of everyday language as well as self-defined theoretical premises" (Koselleck et al. 1978/2004: 428) turning the term into an 'ideologem', a symbolical ideological marker open to manipulation from the side of the dominant system (Mathias 2018/1: 157). While celebrating its 40th anniversary in October 1989, the political nomenclature of the GDR toasted inside the *Palast der Republik* in Berlin, while protesters outside, on the opposite shore of the Spree chanted, "Here stands the people, not inside" (Fischer 2009). The divide between the representatives and the represented could not have been illustrated clearer and thus the term *das Volk* (in the sense of a legitimate decision-making body or *demos*) received its semantic persuasive power in juxtaposition to its abuse by the GDR political elites (Paukstat and Ellwanger 2016: 94). Seen as a particular 'discursive event', the use of the concept of 'the people' in the GDR citizen rights movement must therefore be understood as embedded "in a wider frame of social and political relations, processes and circumstances" (Wodak 2009: 1).

In the very last paragraph of his article, Koselleck and his co-authors prophetically predicted that the German reunification would create 'burdens of consequence' (*Folgelasten*) that still needed to be (discursively) conceptualized. They spoke of the "enormous pressure of mutual adaptation" and of the need for semantic expansion of the notion of "constitutional patriotism" of a German *Staatsvolk* (Koselleck et al. 1978/2004: 430). Also, in the light of multicultural tendencies and migration

movements the term 'German' potentially had to be modified in the future. After German reunification, it appeared unlikely these claims would be recycled within a new political setting and again infuse its language with meaning (Paukstat and Ellwanger 2016: 93–107; Mathias 2018/2: 41). This would however change profoundly with the emergence of the PEGIDA in autumn 2014, a "right-wing populist movement of indignation" (Vorländer et al. 2016: 139). PEGIDA (*Patriotische Europäer Gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes*, 'Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the Occident') mobilizes popular disaffection with current political affairs in Germany since its creation. By choosing Dresden and the format of Monday-rallies, PEGIDA not only tapped into the legacy of the civil rights movement during the last years of the GDR, but also adopted its main rallying cry, '*Wir sind das Volk*' or 'We are the people' (Mathias 2018/1: 41–51; Mathias 2018/2: 155–167; see Chapter 11, this volume). This recycled image of 'the people' in a transformed discursive setting draws from prevailing frustrations in post-unification Germany, fuelled by the recent refugee crisis. Today, the notion serves to stage the people as an actor as well as an audience in order to legitimate populist elite criticism and xenophobic othering.

With Koselleck's chilling predictions in mind, I claim that the populist New Right discourse of PEGIDA exploits persistent tensions and unfulfilled expectations regarding popular representation and articulation of popular political will. Populist performativity has dynamically charged the concept of '*das Volk*' with new meanings adapted to the new settings of political language in Germany.

The development of the contemporary new right discourse in Germany

The discursive strategies of the ENR are part of a conscious 'metapolitical' strategy to challenge existing prerogatives of interpretation and to conquer the public discourse at large (Bar-On 2001: 333–351). In his survey of the development of the German right, Salzborn (2016: 36–63) argues that what we witness today is a struggle for "right-wing cultural hegemony, an attempt to achieve influence in the pre-political sphere". We are dealing with a meta-politics that aims to generate "conservative cultural revolution". Its main aim is to intellectualize right-wing extremism and "to take control of public debates, shaping them on a theoretical meta-level by coining particular ideas, terms and meanings" (Salzborn 2016: 38). New Right positions are infused by ethno-nationalism and "residues of fascist ideology" and calls for "cultural regeneration" (Griffin as quoted in Salzborn 2016: 38). The ENR-aspiration of meta-political hegemony implies a strategy that avoids and opposes traditional means of political representation such as parliamentary party politics. Its orientation "towards influencing attitudes and value judgements on

a wider social level" (38) clearly implies an ambition to affect the prerogative of interpretation of key policy areas and key concepts in the political discourse.

According to Salzborn, the failure of previous nationalist parties on federal and state levels in Germany prompted the German New Right to adapt forms of activism preparing the ground for a larger acceptance of right-wing positions. The strategy of political mimicry was adopted, copying "the terminology and strategies of political opponents and work them into one's own public discourse in a camouflaged way" (Salzborn 2016: 39; Bar-On 2009: 241–264). Its discourse now includes traditional leftist environmentalist, anti-capitalist, anti-US, and anti-NATO positions. At the same time, the concept of "ethno-differentialism", the idea that ethnic inequality is an organic and natural matter of fact, is an ENR attempt to rebrand outright racist positions. The ENR has developed an 'ethnopluralist' vision of Europe, where each ethnic community fulfils its destiny best within well-defined (national) borders, a return to late nineteenth century positions. Its anti-universalism is not (yet) aggressively supremacist, exclusionary or expansionist (as in Nazi ideology) but nevertheless promotes the ideal of segregation, "a strict spatial separation and geopolitical division of people according to ethnic and cultural criteria" (Salzborn 2016: 41). In the following I will argue that the political style of PEGIDA needs to be understood in the context of a wider German and ENR discourse that makes use of a narrative about crisis and a need of cultural regeneration.

Theoretical and methodological considerations

As argued in the introduction to this volume, "it is useful to consider populism as a communicative style, as a performative strategy, and even as a mode of politics, with a logic of its own." With such an approach (style, strategy, mode, logic), it is possible to avoid conceptual shortcomings of the term (such as vilification, essentialization or over-emphasis) and rather focus on the socio-linguistic construction, performance and articulatory praxis of central concepts such as 'the people' and their diverging articulations in various cultural and historical settings across the political spectrum. Although my theoretical vantage point is anchored in the tradition of *Begriffsgeschichte*, which predominantly bases its analysis on intra-textual constructions of meaning as embedded in specific historical contexts and their change over time (and an ideal of unambiguous decoding of meaning), treating the language of PEGIDA necessitates another approach, acknowledging dynamic construction and performativity, fluidity, hybridity and ambiguity. Rather than a static given, populism is a discursive practice (see Chapter 1, this volume). Its fundamental lexeme, 'the people' is dynamically constructed (without any pre-discursive or pre-political ontology) and adapted to huge varieties of

socio-political settings. PEGIDA's political language does not coagulate in a cluster of clearly decipherable concepts in the writings of a prolific leading ideologue, a voluminous program or a grandiose manifesto. Rather it can be characterized as a (live-) performed multi-media word-cloud that simultaneously displays a number of (sometimes conflicting) hybrid concepts on online and offline platforms, propelled by a semiotic construction of identities in hypermedia environments (Madisson 2016). PEGIDA's fuzzy style of expression poses difficulties for conventional political semantic taxonomies with which it would be possible to unambiguously decode its discursive core. Moreover, 'calculated ambiguities' and a 'dynamic mix of substance and style' are part and parcel of ENR language games (Wodak 2015: 3, 52–54).

Nevertheless, there are discernable narrative strings connecting the language of PEGIDA with a larger ENR discourse. PEGIDA's political style involves a communicative performance that pushes (or pushed) the limits of accepted political discourse in Germany and aims to normalize its scandalizing approach to contemporary German politics.

Initially I intended to approach PEGIDA discourse as Victor Klemperer analyzed the slow day-by-day re-semantization of German general and political language with totalitarian Nazi-newspeak in his 'Lingua Tertii Imperii' (*LTI – Tagebuch eines Philologen*, 1946). However, such an effort would have no clear starting point and would have been difficult to delimit in time since we are dealing with ongoing events. As Mathias research has demonstrated (2018/1 and 2018/2), it is however possible to use big data as assembled in a PEGIDA-corpus (extracted from roughly three hundred thousand Facebook-postings) to analyze a specific thesaurus and its development over time and thus to uncover a "matrix of perception" and "worldview of its community of speakers" (Mathias 2018/1: 166–167). The re-semantization of political language as expressed by PEGIDA is made to appear as a sub-conscious phenomenon from below more than as a conscious imposition from above. In the light of existing contacts between different actors on the German political right, the extent to which ENR strategies to conquer the level of 'meta-politics' interfered with the rise of PEGIDA (and its linguistic framings of German politics) remains however to be studied more carefully.

In understanding PEGIDA's performativity, Wodak's concept of a 'discursive event' embedded in a wider socio-cultural setting offers a fruitful approach. Four layers of context are to be taken into account: "the *intertextual and interdiscursive relationships* between utterances, texts, genres and discourses; the extra-linguistic social/sociological variables; the *history and archaeology* of texts and organizations; and institutional frames of the specific *context of a situation*" (Wodak 2009: 7). Wodak claims also that discourse is "related to a macro-topic (and to the argumentation about validity claims such as truth and normative validity which

involves social actors who have different points of view); a cluster of context-dependent semiotic practices that are situated within specific fields of social action; socially constituted as well as socially constitutive" (Wodak 2009: 7). In the case of PEGIDA, it is therefore relevant to ask what macro-topics are exploited with(in) its performative populist style and with(in) its "semiotic practices".

I will also rely on the framework developed by Benjamin Moffitt who places the notion of performativity at the center of his understanding of populist projects; in order to capture the dynamic nature of PEGIDA's semiotic practices. In *The Global Rise of Populism: Performance, Political Style, and Representation* (2016), Moffitt outlines a new approach for understanding populism as a political style defined as "the repertoires of embodied, symbolically mediated performance made to audiences that are used to create and navigate the fields of power that comprise the political, stretching from the domain of government through to everyday life" (Moffitt 2016: 28–9). Moffit argues that previous attempts at capturing the nature of populism have significant shortcomings that can be overcome by taking a performative perspective. Hitherto, populism has been studied as an ideology, a strategy, a discourse or as a political logic. Researchers such as Mudde have pointed at the thinness of populism as an ideology, at the core of which lies a juxtaposition of the 'pure people' versus the 'corrupted elite' and an expression of an unmediated *volonté générale* (as quoted in Moffitt and Tormey, 2014: 382). However, such a minimal or thin approach to populism creates problems of classification, since similar indicators are to be found across the traditional left–right spectrum (see Chapter 1, this volume).

Populism has often been understood as a strategy, i.e. as a conscious attempt to mobilize the un-institutionalized masses to the benefit of a political leader. In contrast, Moffitt argues that it is difficult to understand populism as a simplified organizational culture because public support potentially manifest itself on many different levels.

At the discursive level populism frequently falls short of a normative program and includes diffuse linguistic elements, coding schemes and speech acts (Moffitt 2016: 21). Yet according to Moffitt, text-based material only provides half of the picture since the performative, visual and aesthetic elements of discourse are what brings populism to life. Last but not least (see Chapter 1, this volume), researchers like Laclau have argued that populism can be equated with the logic of the political condition as such. As such, populism is "historically linked to a crisis of the dominant ideological discourse, which in turn is part of a more general social crisis [and crisis of representation]" (Moffitt 2014: 191) and has to be understood in the context of a dynamic between satisfied and unsatisfied demands between claimants (as political subjects) and leaders through which unsatisfied claims are articulated. To my mind, this is a crucial point, since populist discourses not

primarily address the complex modalities of 'representation' in the sense of 'being represented in democratic institutions organized along ideas in political theory of a separation of powers' (as traditionally researched and theorized in political studies), but rather focus on voices (perceived as) unheard, marginalized or neglected. There is a vertical relationship between the people and the elite. Both signifiers operate as nodal points in the formation of an 'underdog' perspective (see Chapter 1, this volume). It is less about solid ideologies manifesting themselves than about liquid discursive styles fueled by real or perceived subalternity and sentiments of inferiority. Remaining within this metaphor, it is thus more about the unarticulated underdog, who's discontent barks remain unheard or are ignored and thus need to be amplified and channeled.

Moffitt's critique against Laclau's theoretical approach (that fits well into established materialist explanations of socio-political change) is that there are numerous empirical counter-examples that run contrary to Laclau's theory of populism as a universal hegemony determining the essence of politics. For instance, and we will return to this aspect when looking at the case of PEGIDA, there are movements "refusing to articulate demands through a leader, or not articulating concrete demands at all" (Moffitt and Tormey 2014: 384).

What then are the elements of a performative approach towards populism as proposed by Moffitt? And how can this approach be applied in studying discursive and social constructions of 'the people' methodologically? How can the dynamic nature of symbolically mediated performance and embodied action be captured? Three features of populism as performative political style are highlighted by Moffitt: (1) 'the people' versus 'the elite' (or rather 'the other'); (2) 'bad manners'; and (3) the permanent invocation of crisis, breakdown and threat. Juxtaposing the 'true people' against perceived or real 'elites' appears as a constitutive element of most populist positions (and recognized by scholars of populism). Since populism always involves an invocation of a sense of crisis, 'particular others' are targeted in connection to the elite orchestration of societal breakdown. For instance, in the contemporary political climate in Europe, political elites are blamed for orchestrating the refugee crisis. At the same time, Muslim refugees are being targeted as absolute and incompatible others alien to a presumed European culture. In the conspiracy fantasies of anti-Muslim imagination (clearly expressed in Breivik's so-called 'manifesto'), liberal and cultural Marxist elites of Europe have plotted an attack against Europe in secret collaboration with Muslims in general, 'Islamization' is seen as a vicious strategy aimed at destroying national states, Christian religion, 'traditional values' and gender roles (Önnerfors 2017: 163–4). 'Bad manners' in populist political style refers to a disregard for 'appropriate' modes of acting in the political realm and favoring a tabloid style of politics with elements of slang and swearing, political incorrectness and the use of anecdotical evidence to support

populist claims. Expressions of 'bad manners' are opposed to the rigidity and rationality of the conventional political system. Finally, as already mentioned, a permanent evocation of crisis, breakdown and threat is needed in order to sow and perpetuate distrust of the complex machinery of modern governance. Populism as a political style is in need of emergency, favors short-term and quasi-utilitarian solutions over conventional 'slow politics'. Moffitt goes as far as to claim that crisis is not external to populism, but rather one of its inherent features, the oxygen without which its flames would suffocate (Moffitt 2015: 189–217).

Selection of sources

PEGIDA is notorious for its rejection of media and other representatives of the 'system' (such as academic researchers). This rejection makes it challenging for an 'etic' outsider to penetrate the sphere of 'emic' insiders (Lett 1990: 130), particularly when the task from a methodological point of view is to capture performative elements beyond discursive textuality. However, PEGIDA also engages in hypermedial multi-platform activism whereby offline and online modes of mediatisation mutually reinforce each other. For instance, the Facebook-account of PEGIDA links to a plethora of videos that show conventional offline modes of political activism such as rallies, speeches and PR-stunts. Hundreds of videos are also available on YouTube uploaded by representatives as well as by followers of the movement. These digital sources facilitate 'nethnographic' approaches that enable us to study embodied action in the performative political style of PEGIDA online. Yet it is easy to drown in the sheer amount of resources (often visual in character) and it is therefore rather difficult to apply viable and systematic methods of extracting significant data. For the readers of this chapter it is though highly recommended to encounter the performative staging of PEGIDA's political style in its unfiltered fashion. For a more systematic approach that still elaborates upon non-textual aspects of political style allowing to capture significant narrative strings of PEGIDA discourse, I have chosen to focus on a printed insider account, Sebastian Hennig's *Pegida – Spaziergänge über den Horizont, Eine Chronik* (Pegida – Walks across the horizon. A chronicle; 2015). Hennig (born 1972) is a convert to Islam, but was in autumn 2014 still attracted to follow the banner of Anti-Islamisation and continuously contributes to the German far-right journal and Putinist mouthpiece *Compact*. More interesting than to speculate about this psychological bias is his background and socialisation in a particular East German mind-set. It is against this backdrop Hennig constantly evaluates occurrences around PEGIDA and where the year of *die Wende*, the 'Turn', 1989 assumes a particularly symbolical discursive meaning for the concept of *das Volk*.

Hennig's book, covering the foundation of PEGIDA between 2014 and 2015 documents rallies and events has in a number of reviews and articles been proclaimed to tell the truth.[1] Considering the book is written by an acknowledged representative insider, it constituted the main empirical core of this chapter. A close reading allows for new insights into the way followers of PEGIDA linguistically construct and discursively perform their worldviews. All translations from German are my own. However, before we move on to the analytical part of this chapter, it is important to provide an overview of early research into PEGIDA's appearance on the public stage conducted in Germany.

PEGIDA on the public stage

Provoked by global political events, in autumn 2014, a small group of friends in and around Dresden in eastern Germany connected via Facebook and sparked off an initiative that at its peak brought around 25,000 people onto the streets and that also has developed a significant online activity (see Önnerfors 2017 and 2018). Under the banner of PEGIDA, *Patriotische Europäer Gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes*, 'Patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of Europe', the movement has continuously mobilised popular disaffection with current political affairs in Germany. Between 2014 and 2018, PEGIDA has also significantly extended its reach – now claiming between twenty and thirty sister-organizations within and outside of Germany. Being the first to observe PEGIDA and its 'evening walks' extensively on the streets, Professor Hans Vorländer of the Technische Universität Dresden and his team have published their results in a book titled *Pegida and Right-Wing Populism in Germany* (2018). PEGIDA, the authors write, can be seen as "paradigmatic for a process of political outrage, polarization and disinhibition" (Vorländer et al. 2018, p. xiii). Anger and outrage were mobilized and channelled by the movement and propelled in a "spiral of mutual escalation" in opposition to harsh condemnations by politics and media. As a result, civil society was divided

1. http://www.pegidabuch.de (with a number of links to reviews); https://www.sachsen-depesche.de/kultur/anders-als-man-erwartet-sebastian-hennig-und-sein-buch-„pegida-–-spaziergänge-über-den-horizont".html; http://www.flurfunk-dresden.de/2015/11/21/pegida-spaziergaenge-ueber-den-horizont/; and for a more critical reading http://michaelbittner.info/2015/10/28/pegida-von-innen-die-chronik-spaziergaenge-ueber-den-horizont-von-sebastian-hennig/; http://www.arnshaugk.de/index.php?v=0&korb=;&autor=Hennig,%20Sebastian; all accessed 6 January 2017. The first print run was 2000 copies. Currently (as of September 2017), the edition is sold out on amazon.de. The book has its own Facebook-page, https://www.facebook.com/Pegida-Spaziergänge-über-den-Horizont-404550896422490/?hc_ref=SEARCH&fref=nf, visited 6 January 2017.

into two distinct camps, reinforced by polarized hyper-medial online environments (Madisson 2016). However, it was offline, by occupying public space on the streets of Dresden (and elsewhere) PEGIDA gained "communicative [and thus discursive] power". Through "performative techniques of symbolic staging" rituals were established that created loyalty and a sense of belonging in a community of like-minded, frequently branded as 'Pegidistas'. The case illustrates also how techniques of social mobilization together with traditional forms of community-building (symbols, habitus, sociolect) and communication (traditional, but in particular social media) effectively were interlinked. Thus, the potential for right-wing electoral mobilization was uncovered, absorbed effectively and successfully by the AfD (see Chapter 11, this volume). These overlaps demonstrate the populist dynamics of contested political issues in general and in particular the master frame of migration that so profoundly has re-shaped and challenged European politics increasingly since 2015. 'Resistance' against the German *Willkommenskultur* practised by *Gutmenschen*, the 'Culture of Welcoming' and 'Do-Gooders', which such as the Swedish pro-migration slogan 'Öppna era hjärtan' / 'Open your hearts' has been vilified as "pathological altruism" or "the banality of good" (Mathias 2018/2: 49). In its joint efforts, German right-wing populism took force with issues such as "rejection of immigration, mistrust of the religion of Islam, fundamental criticism of the political and media elite, the dissatisfaction with liberal and representative democracy and the fear of heteronomy" (Vorländer et al. 2018, p. xiv). As in other European countries, PEGIDA contributed to 'discourse innovations' in framing typical topics in circulation among the ENR, related to identity, nationalism, statehood and democracy. What in particular is noteworthy is that PEGIDA, instead of formulating a clear normative program, rather engaged in a diffuse style of populist performance in which unspecific indignation was voiced against politics and media, representing the 'system' (Mathias 2018/1: 157). To this was added vitriolic "Islamophobic and xenophobic thrust as well as its mobilization of ethnocentric and national-conservative sentiments", creating a reservoir for the outraged, alienated and relatively deprived: "resentment became socially acceptable" (Vorländer et al. 2018, p. xiv). Through a long series of direct observations (online and offline), conversations and correspondences with PEGIDA supporters compared to other available studies, Vorländer and his team have been able to present the most comprehensive study on PEGIDA so far. What is particularly important to notice (since it provides with explanations of the prevalent sense of retrotopia) is that a majority of so-called 'Pegidistas' share a transformative experience, which refers to the change of political systems from oppressive state communism to a society ruled by law and new constitutional arrangements in place during the last quarter of a century. Many representatives of this generation share hence a sense of that their expectations with regards to life careers has

not been matched by the realities, something Bauman (2017: 94–96) explains with the 'relative deprivation perspective' or an 'affective reaction of indignation towards sensed grievances' (Mathias 2018/1: 157). The gap between (perceived) expectations and (perceived) reality has rather widened and has been blamed on the 'refugee crisis' and those purportedly responsible for it. Thus unsurprisingly, the largest foothold of the movement is thus to be found among "the middle-class of Dresden and Saxony and its fragile segments", fearing loss of status, wealth and social capital. The majority is predominantly male, between 30 and 60, employed (or self-employed) with a relative high level of education and income. Having a final degree in natural sciences or engineering is remarkably frequent (Vorländer et al. 2016: 53). Other significant uniting features are no religious and no party affiliation. Most Pegidistas display however direct support for the German protest party *Alternative für Deutschland (AfD)* which subsequently has developed a significant mutual interrelationship with PEGIDA and similarities in the discursive construction of 'the people' in political rhetoric (see Chapter 11, this volume). Surprisingly, the concepts expressed by the name of PEGIDA were not given as motives for the protest. The main reason was "a general sense of distance between politicians and people." This was on par with "discontent with asylum politics", followed by "discontent with media coverage" and "discontent with the political system of the German Federal Republic". Considerably lower followed "discontent with migration and integration politics" and in the bottom "reservations against Islam" (Vorländer et al. 2016, p. 67). Although these statements might have cloaked outright Islamophobic or anti-immigration positions, it appears that the perceived divide between rulers and ruled (or 'elite critique' as typical part of populist discourses) has led to a deep sense of alienation that has been catalysed by the more recent cluster of issues concerning the 'other': migration, refugees, and asylum politics.

The combination of high levels of emotionality, a confronting attitude, the way of displaying indignation and the successful attempt to unfold communicative and discursive power on prominent squares and streets in Germany creates – according to Vorländer and his co-authors – a protest movement of a new kind, a "right-wing populist movement of indignation" (Vorländer et al. 2016, p. 139).

As a rule, the events in Dresden were composed of three performative parts: (1) a stationary opening rally, followed by (2) the 'evening walk', which was concluded by (3) a final stationary rally. The rallies were marked by speeches and addresses, and powerful dynamic was frequently developed between speaker and audience when the latter interjected a variety of chants like 'We are the people', 'Media Liars' (*Lügenpresse*), and (surprisingly frequently, and in English) 'Ami, go home!' (Vorländer et al. 2016: 49). During the rallies and walks a great many banners and signboards with different, sometimes conflicting, slogans were exhibited

(50–1). Pegidistas also carried various flags that increasingly assumed meaning. Apart from the German national flag, those of Israel, France, Ukraine, and most notably Russia have been displayed, as well as German regional flags (from both existing areas and those of older periods of German history) and lambda banners from the pan-European Identitarian movement. The intensified use of the so-called 'Wirmer' flag, a national flag designed during the Nazi resistance and appropriated and reinterpreted by the German ND, is particularly charged. This flag places the German colours of black, red, and gold in an arrangement like that of the Norwegian flag. It has since become a symbol of PEGIDA, insinuating that the current political system of Germany can be compared to a totalitarian state and that supporting PEGIDA is an act of resistance (51–2). As a closing ritual during the second rally of the evening, if it was dark enough, participants would raise their mobile phone flashlights or lighters 'to let the politicians see daylight', and end (or substitute on summer evenings) by singing the German national anthem (47).

These protests, moving offline beyond the online community of social media and taking to the streets with action, had two unifying and recurring themes: (1) 'diffuse and critical, partly aggressive resentments articulated against Muslims, asylum-seekers and refugees'; and (2) '[resentments] against elites in politics and media of the Federal Republic' (137). Media attention amplified the impact of the movement, not least because of assumptions related to the background and agenda of the Pegidistas (they were frequently portrayed as socially excluded right-wing extremists) not were grounded in empirical reality, which in turn fuelled anger among the local population (18–20).

At the zenith of its present development, at the turn of the year 2014 to 2015, most sympathizers, concluded Vorländer and his co-authors, could not clearly be characterized as right-wing extremists, Islamophobes, or xenophobes, as was the recurrent spontaneous conjecture of media and political commentators. Only about a third of the 'evening walkers' displayed diffuse xenophobic sentiments and attitudes. Instead, most were fundamentally critical of the politics, media, and type of representative democracy in the FRG (138). The name of the movement, 'Patriotic Europeans Against Islamization of the Occident', however, still signals an ideological 'line of attack' (31).

The media are a main target for PEGIDA sympathizers who frequently express a deep and potentially irreconcilable crisis of confidence. Not only are media representatives vilified as 'liars', but the media are considered to be entangled with elite political rule and branded as 'system media', a term very close to the newly pejorative term 'mainstream media' prevalent in contemporary New Right discourse. The media are therefore no longer perceived as integral to a deliberative democracy, where they perform a quasi-official role as fora for public opinion. Instead mainstream media are suspected of manipulation and conscious disinformation.

The initial negative coverage of the PEGIDA protests is thereby taken as proof. Moreover, the media stand accused of engaging in 'cover-ups' in relation to policy areas relevant to PEGIDA's agenda. This all plays into a sense of political alienation and a weakening of the belief in existing democratic structures among a substantial part of the electorate that feels disempowered and disconnected from the abstract decision-making process of representative democracy. Right-wing populism has arrived in the well-educated and well-off camps of the German middle classes, who are increasingly asking identity questions and displaying anxieties about their loss of economic status, political influence, security, and cultural belonging. These processes accelerate in a generation that already has experienced a major systemic change (German re-unification) as a formative (and not necessarily successful) event in their life stories (117).

The sort of populism promoted by PEGIDA might best be characterized as 'identity populism', emphasizing a certain identity (perceived as traditional) and tending to devalue the 'Other' through a 'radicalization and essentialisation of [one's] own cultural belonging' (127–8 and sources quoted therein). This opens up for a wider scope of issues under the umbrella of coinciding crises as opposed to a traditional view of populism as the political pursuit of single-issues. Another difference between PEGIDA and conventional populist movements is the absence of a clear leader (see Önnerfors 2017). Despite Bachmann's important coordinating role, the choir of voices in PEGIDA is rather polyphonic: 'populist phenomena and elements of ideology can develop public potency without being ignited by demagogic figures' (128). Without spelling it out, this is of course very close to the contemporary concept of 'leaderless-ness' promoted in both left- and right-wing movements. PEGIDA's populism displays 'a political mentality in which defensive solidification-processes of existing conservative-ethnocentric and historic-regressive orientations are expressed and are positioned against perceived threats [to one's] own cultural identity' (128).

This sense of threat, desire for self-defence, and feeling of disempowered victimization was furthered by profound societal transformations over the last twenty years: the opening of borders, the digital revolution, economic globalization, and the acceleration of changes caused by globalization. These factors attained a new dimension through mass migrations that catalysed the experience of alienation. Thus, the crisis of representative democracy is evident on three levels: (1) representative decision-making processes appear too complex (fuelling expectations of direct democracy as a universal remedy, typical in populist political imagination); (2) globalization divorces political power from territory and the logic of national jurisdictions (Bauman 2017: 21, 44); and (3) the media have succumbed to a 'dramaturgy of the visual' in media democracies where boundaries between fictionalization and politics are blurred (Wodak 2015: 12). As Vorländer and his

co-authors put it, 'uncoupling democracy as a representative political system of decision-making and democracy as societal way of life' might explain the dynamics involved in the mobilization of PEGIDA (130–1). A great part of the electorate is thus exposed to political actors who fill a real or imagined void with attractive (populist) propositions. All these developments are enhanced by undigested, still existing and powerful East–West biases in Germany and a profound lack of mutual trust. As I will argue, PEGIDA's conceptualization of *das Volk* is at the interface of these complex processes of identification.

Protocols of performativity: Styling 'the people' as actor and audience

"Through mass alone, the sensation of unbeatable power is evoked. The chants '*Wir sind das Volk*' break in and flow out as waves [...] they develop like a natural phenomenon. A breeze increases to a windstorm and then it wanes again, this is how the calls arrive." (Hennig 2015: 42, see also 35, 45, 50, 127, 145, 146, 157, 166 and 171) These words (which can be compared to numerous YouTube videos from different PEGIDA-rallies) are part of a first-hand insider account, *Pegida – Spaziergänge über den Horizont, Eine Chronik* ("Pegida – Walks across the horizon. A chronicle.") published in 2015 by author and artist Sebastian Hennig. The book provides with a multi-layered and complex narrative of roughly the first ten months of the movement. Hennig's almost 200-pages-chronicle of different rallies and meetings is introduced by a peculiar foreword in its own right. Its author Michael Beleites was an environmental activist and campaigner during the time of the GDR and studied agronomy, consulted the Green party and worked with the Stasi Record Agency in Saxony. In his foreword, Beleites elaborates on parallels between 1989 and 2014/15: "Problems have accumulated, the dimension of which cannot be expressed with the language regime of the prevalent political system" (11). According to Beleites, legitimate concerns articulated by PEGIDA were countered and stigmatized by the 'homogeneized press' as expressions of Nazi sympathies. 'Homogeneized' refers to the German term *gleichgeschaltet*, immediately creating associations with the totalitarian usurpation, control and coordination of parties, press and civil society under Nazi rule. Beleites claims that the invocation of the GDR civil rights movement in 1989 not has lost its legacy and is surprisingly relevant: "In our country, communication between state and society obviously is disturbed" (11). The removal of taboos related to the issue of asylum politics has led to a split in the German society with only few attempts to create a space for dialogue. It almost appeared as if the "political correct German of the newspapers" had invaded the people's discourse and that PEGIDA's activism proved this to be wrong (12). The ruling system is characterised by a

"one-dimensional political system of coordinates" where pressing issues cannot be addressed. The bias in German politics is promoted by "an education of the people" through *Sprachregime*, literally "language regimes", but perhaps better conceived as 'linguistic order' in a discourse (14). System language equates critiques against asylum politics with a desire to re-open Auschwitz, denounces the "biological fact of geographic racial diversity of human beings" as racism, and criticizes critics of the "parasitic economy" as expressing Nazi positions (14). In such as situation, people recall the end of the GDR when absurdity of the matter evoked popular anger. No one believed the state media any more.

Beleites now extensively discusses the downsides of migration and interprets European generosity as cementing colonial patterns of behaviour. Population growth constitutes an ecological threat. Mass migration causes a brain-drain, as well as uprooting and alienation. With reference to the controversial Italian population geneticist Cavalli-Sforza, it is claimed that moving people outside their acclimatised ecosystem goes against human nature. Since there is no standard climate, there will also be no standard human being. As North America forcefully proves, this will only lead into a cultural abyss. Beleites claims further that "it cannot be ignored that for many PEGIDA-protesters the Islamisation of the Occident was seen as a lesser (and less acute) problem compared to an Americanization of Europe" (18). The "Anglo-American destruction" of Dresden in February 1945 is frequently referred to.

According to Beleites, current developments might lead into a re-cultivation of villages and small-scale agricultural production, a solution both for Germany and the countries from which migrants arrive (thus tying into the ethnopluralist vision of Europe as constituted of a 'hundred flags', Bar-On 2001: 338). Quoting Islamic scholar Hossein Nasr, Beleites makes essentialist claims related to Islam and religion in general, underscoring their principal incompatibility with presumed 'Western values'. The current problem in Germany is a problem of representative democracy. People have to be motivated to stay in their countries of origin and migrants have to be given prospects for returning to the countries where they are supposedly rooted. The associated problems cannot be addressed with(in) a language that conforms to the system. Finally, Beleites refers to his own experience. Also, the crumbling GDR was a society that people actively escaped from. However, the system fundamentally changed when those who cried "We want out!" were drowned and outnumbered by those who chanted "We stay here!": "not escape, but the determination to remain forced the despot to withdraw" (22).

It is possible to observe how Beleites here amalgamates eco-fundamentalism with anti-Americanism and essentialist assumptions about a natural order of races (and religions) within given climates adapted to pre-existing preconditions. He argues for the ethnopluralist division of space. All these factors speak against

migration. And legitimate concern cannot be raised within existing language regimes preserved by ignorant power elites aiming at total control.

Throughout the book, Sebastian Hennig also makes references to 1989 and the feeling how an original achievement of the GDR population to end its totalitarian rule by coordinated peaceful civilian resistance instead turned into a victory of the 'system' FRG. In the official system discourse of the FRG, according to Hennig, *Wir sind das Volk* turned into *Wir sind ein Volk*, "We are *one* people", thus neutralizing popular expressions of political will (23–24). 'The people', devalued after 1989 to *Bevölkerung*, 'population' and *Zivilgesellschaft*, 'civil society', however "now comes forward again and look: it is beautiful" – it is made 'great again', to paraphrase Trump (92, 93, 36, 136). Hennig says (58) that constituting 'the people' in the context of the rise of PEGIDA is a completely new role for the population. It will take some time before it has grown into this new condition. As recorded by Hennig, PEGIDA-speaker Festerling repeatedly made the case for a "psycho-political change of society", possibly referring to this process of reconnecting to the people inside the population (148). The people has an imminent 'spirit', *Geist*, as a whole it is beautiful, good (36, 27, 101). Moreover: "In its obscure impulse, the good crowd is well conscious about the right path ahead" and "we are the Good Guys. We are the people. What will follow now?" (180).

Hennig claims that PEGIDA represents a cross section of society, which accurately can be called the people and appears to be a new power to count on, displaying non-compliancy on the streets: "The people now assembles as if it would have waited for the occasion" and "The people has become non-compliant" and refuses to take orders from a political caste (the elite) chasing it towards the abyss (25 and 96–97). This ties in to a history of resistance, "alert love of the homeland and individual moral courage" already in place during the GDR. Parallels are made between local activism against mining of Uranium in 1989 and the lodging of asylum seekers in 2014, thus placing environmentalist and anti-refugee activism on an equal pair (29–30).

A Muslim himself, Hennig is in pains to justify the motto of PEGIDA, but explains that protests in 1989 also were unspecific. The name of the movement is rather directed against '-isms' of all kind, this is where true danger lies. Germany is exposed to the logics of externally heated conflicts and now has to balance the destabilization (caused by "colonial roguery") of the Middle East and is forced to be involved in proxy wars (31). Even more, the German people are victims and hostages of a foreign policy it cannot influence.

The inner voice of the people (*vox populi*) is channeled through the speakers of PEGIDA, first and foremost its main representative Lutz Bachmann who turns into a medium of expressing "the indignant voice of the people" (34). One speaker demonstrates how the PEGIDA-rallies "can profit from a popular charm

of resistance" (124). Bachmann is also to a certain degree described as an anti-leader, cunningly improvising and leaving leeway for heterogeneity: "Why define clear goals in a confusing situation? It is more important first to leave the view open in order to recognize the situation" (183–84). Hennig is fascinated by the diversity and 'cocktail'-character of the movement ("The lamb grazes next to the lion") and his comments on the huge variety of speakers and their respective concerns demonstrate some level of critical, if unsophisticated, awareness (89, 96, 102, 152 and 178). As a reader of his account one cannot escape the impression that the impact of rather extreme positions in some of the speeches is underestimated. Furthermore, the author's own religious bias seems to cause him to filter out, ridicule or reduce the significance of clearly Islamophobic statements. Consider his comments on the guest appearance of Geert Wilders in April 2015, characterised by Hennig as "the Molotow-Ribbentrop pact of PEGIDA" (75, 91–93, 96, 147). A Coptic speaker is accused of brewing a myth "according to a Jewish-Zionist recipe" related to the allegedly violent persecution of his minority by Islam. This is not the only passage in the book where the reader gets the impression that Hennig's Muslim sympathies also incorporate latent anti-Israel or even anti-Semite patterns of thought (see also 178). But more importantly, Hennig concludes that "sociologically speaking, Pegida is the middle German equivalent of the popular movement of the moderate Egyptian Muslim brotherhood" (85) and to be located in the centre of German society. Hennig claims that the moderate Muslim brotherhood has distanced itself from its radical origins and is merely an expression of the will of indigenous people in Egypt who want to live according to their own customs, much like the German *Volk*. In all its absurdity, this claim merits further investigation since forms, expressions and performances of populism of course not are limited to European space (see Chapter 4, this volume).

Throughout his chronicle, Hennig is obsessed with the different flags displayed by participants of PEGIDA-protests: the flags of the old kingdom of Saxony, of the old and defunct provinces of the German 'Reich' such as Silesia, the 'Spartan' lambda-flag of the Identitarian movement and of course the 'Wirmer'-flag of the conservative German resistance under the Nazis (79, 133, 163, 173).

When reading Hennig's account, his repeated and idyllic enthusiasm towards the public display of flags at the occasion of a mass rally creates a creeping feeling of persistent 'ostalgia'. In general, the impression is reinforced that PEGIDA is able to mobilize layers of East German society and culture that have been psychologically sublimated during the last 25 years and are wide open to 'retrotopian' exploitation, locating visions for the future in "the lost/stolen/abandoned but undead past" (Bauman 2017: 5). For many people growing up in the GDR, the societal glue created by collective rituals is often idealized as a positive value in Hennig's account, despite its ideological content. No wonder that standard bearers, chants

and public singing are elements creating "goose bumps" (*Gänsehaut*) among the participants as it often is stated on PEGIDA-related social media.

Hennig's chronicle suggests that the anti-religious rhetoric of PEGIDA might have roots in the secular education of the GDR. As Vorländer and his team have demonstrated in their empirical studies (2016), a majority of participants do not regard themselves as religious, subscribe to general discontent regarding fundamentalist Islamic religious positions while embracing cultural elements of Christianity in German culture, such as the singing of Christmas carols, displaying a cross in the colours of Germany during rallies and favouring a cross as a symbol on the 'Wirmer'-flag (Hennig 2015: 45–46).

At a number of occasions, Hennig praises the presence of young PEGIDA-sympathisers from the milieu of Hooligans and security functionaries of local soccer fan clubs. "Such a movement is not initiated without the virile power of youth. This was not different in 1813 as it was in 1989 or a quarter of a century later" (53 and also 97). With 1813, Hennig refers to anti-Napoleonic activism among German students forming militias fighting for the liberation of Germany. Their legacy is celebrated in the German right-wing student fraternities still existing today, *Burschenschaften*. Hennig explains that "the development of subversive riots directed against the state into a people's movement [*Volksbewegung*] critical of the government" is dependent upon the condition that ordinary people are able to unite with "radicals" and "neutralise their potential for violence" (53). This close relationship displayed its full potential of political violence during the Chemnitz riots of autumn 2018, an event rocking the foundations of political order in Germany.

In Henning's eyes, 'people's movement' (*Volksbewegung*) promises a re-vitalization of political activism, a 'people's democracy' (*Volksdemokratie*) (53, 57–58) as *demos* giving itself a true constitution instead of the interim Grundgesetz (146, 157). The 'community of the people', "a community of solidarity between the ostracised and the able" (*Volksgemeinschaft*) can actually oppose current affairs and exercise resistance (69 and 177).

Hennig frequently notes anti-American sentiments voiced in PEGIDA. Individual speakers condemn in US warfare in the Middle East in conspiracy terms as a joint venture of IS/Daesh and the CIA, describe the Taliban and al-Qaeda as creations of the US, ultimately causing the refugee problem. The US is also denigrated as an occupying power, "leave Germany, leave my fatherland!" one speaker exclaims. Such positions are met with chants such as "Ami, go home!" (57 and also 125, 127, 136, 139, 147, 152, 159, 184). This slogan, at many occasions quoted by Hennig, has a revealing history of reception, since it was coined as an anti-American motto in the early GDR, transported into the language of 68-protests against the Vietnam-war and re-surfaced later in the West-German anti-proliferation

movement of the 1980's. With the Chief conductor of the Dresden Staatskapelle Christian Thielemann, exceptionally a high-profile representative of German cultural life has argued in favour of tuning in with the PEGIDA-protesters. In an interview with Hennig printed in the book, he described the contemporary climate of German discourse as follows: "for certain things we have only the choice between slogans and political correctness and have no differentiated language. To be able to speak and to listen belong together. People do not listen anymore, which concerns me" (66). Hennig draws a parallel to the actors of the Dresden theatre who in 1989 stepped outside their roles to participate in the protest against the regime and thus insinuates potential support from cultural workers.

Hennig's book is replete with references to the previously mentioned "Media liars" (*Lügenpresse*): "Journalistic language has deteriorated", journalists are placed on a crossroads between their "indigenous" readership and "the demands of the quasi-religious democracy-fundamentalism of a leadership [of printing houses] almost exclusively originating from the old Federal Republic" (77–78); annoyance with media is caused by the idea that "all discourses are West German discourses and spearheaded by West German elites" (82). Apart from the fact that there is obvious pride in the civilian overthrow of the GDR-regime, at a number of occasions Hennig refers to speakers and positions formulating blatant 'ostalgia', dreaming of GDR-youth organisations and idealizing the GDR's social order (123, 145, 156, 162). One speaker is even able to incite chants like "Our adversary is the Federal republic. We are the people! – Our adversaries are [constituting] the society. We are the people!" (125), thus juxtaposing *das Volk* as a community, *Gemeinschaft* with both the political entity and society [*Gesellschaft*] of the FRG (Chapter 11, this volume). Throughout Hennig's book, he creates the impression that the political rulers of the FRG are engaged in an assault against its own population. The rhetorical aim of his argument is to place blame on and to delegitimize the German government.

For Hennig, Democracy is in reality a *Demokratur*, a word that represents a corruption of 'democracy' and 'dictatorship' (55). Despite of his own religious belonging, Hennig records positions in PEGIDA claiming that the spread of Islam on German soil is paralleled by Christianisation that occurred a millennium earlier and seen as a weapon of mass extinction. The elites are alienated from and opposed to the people. PEGIDA wants to achieve another relationship (48, 54, 184, 188). But more radically framed, the elites are accused of a conspiracy to replace the people. One PEGIDA-speaker asks rhetorically, referring to Goebbels infamous 1943 *Sportpalast* speech about the total war: "Wollt ihr den totalen Austausch des Volkes?" – "Do you want the total replacement of the people?" or *Umvolkung*, 're-peopling' or 'ethnomorphosis' (125 and 159, see also Mathias 2018/1: 16). This thought insinuates that the expulsion and marginalization of the

indigenous population is a conscious goal pursued by the elites, an idea ("The Great Replacement") saturating the so-called 'manifesto' of the Christchurch terrorist attack in 2019 (Önnerfors 2019). Following Hennig's account it is during the summer of 2015 that German elites were accused of being 'traitors of the people' or *Volksverräter* for the first time (126, 129, 137, 156) – an idea later paralleled by the branding of British supreme court judges as 'enemies of the people' in the wake of the Brexit referendum. Festerling, one of the PEGIDA-leaders quoted by Hennig speaks even of a "mass rape of European countries" (147–48). Another statement reads "We don't want to become Indians in our own country", i.e. a persecuted indigenous minority, evoking anti-American stereotypes of the GDR-period (156). In August 2015 Festerling stated, framed more radically: "The treatment of the asylum issue is a declaration of war of the political establishment against us." If the Germans only stood together, the entire dump would collapse within a week (167). Now, Festerling claimed, it was time to deport asylum seekers and to leave the EU, which was followed by chants "Deport, deport!" and "Exit, exit!" respectively (169, 172, 173, 174). EU-criticism is of course a standing topic of PEGIDA: instead of "a functionalised Euro-bureaucracy" the aim is to develop "an organic Europe of fatherlands" (53, 173). Hennig concludes his book as follows: "In Dresden commences the salvation of the European spirit from the European Union, nurturing hope for Peace which Germany has been waiting for since 1918" with other words questioning the legitimacy of the Versailles treaty (188). According to Hennig time will eventually show if defiance of death will have to be mobilised, only then any PEGIDA-references to resistance under the Nazis will prove right.

Taken together, Hennig's account allows us an (faithful yet filtered) insight into how 'the people' is styled both as actor and audience through multi-platform medialization and performativity in PEGIDA. The essential legitimacy of 'the people' as an actor is constructed subtly in Beleites' foreword by developing a diffuse eco-deterministic and organic argument in which each people occupies a given territory just like a population occupies a particular natural habitat, a pseudo-scientific justification of ethnopluralism. If this natural equilibrium is disturbed, chaos will be the inevitable consequence. This is why a universal human order is impossible and why mixing up different human populations poses an almost ecological threat, which is exemplified by the case of the US. The true danger lies therefore in the (ethnic) Americanization of Europe (as an ethno-genetic crucible), and the marginalization of its indigenous population. Evoking contemporary crises in German politics (particularly refugee migration as a macro-topic), Beleites highlights the linguistic dimensions of the evoked contemporary crises in that the challenges not even can be framed within existing linguistic order of the official 'system' discourse. Language ultimately structures the scope of the political as such. And Beleites claims further that if this connection not is observed,

systemic crisis is inevitable – the collapse of societal order is foreshadowed by the breakdown of its discursive order. It also clear that there is an ideological battle between PEGIDA and its commentaries/adversaries of stigmatizing the respective other with evocations of references to the Nazi era. On the one hand Beleites calls the contemporary German media and elite ‘homogenized’, on the other hand he defends PEGIDA against accusations of standing for Nazi values. In doing so he is able to mobilize and reinforce the idea of that the FRG is a regime replete with a system ideology which simply replaced the GDR nomenclature as a new the dictatorship (of ‘democratorship’, democracy corrupted). Thus, the original impulse of popular uprising has never been perfected and awaits its final redemption in the future. Again, linking the situation to the final years of the GDR, there is a similarity on the level of language: the gap between reality and its description (in the official system language) widens to a critical point after which there only remains a final collapse of credibility.

Hennig reinforces the idea that the contemporary crisis of German politics manifests itself through the linguistic order imposed by the (West German) political regime and its ready henchmen, the ‘media liars’. Furthermore, when styling ‘the people’ as a political actor self-mobilized through PEGIDA, he repeatedly refers to the unfulfilled role of the GDR civil rights movement that now has to resurface as a true voice of popular resistance from below against elite power exercised from above (not least by triggering global conflicts spilling over to Europe). The German population carries within itself a spiritual category, ‘the people’ that is able to rise again. In the final passage of his account, Hennig traces the unfulfilled potential of German people back to 1918. Thus, he ties into conspiracy theories extolled in radical right fringe groups such as the so called ‘Reichsbürgerbewegung’ denying the constitutional sovereignty of the FRG. The elites turn into enemies of the people (and its legitimate claims) through engaging in a sinister plot of replacing it. These ‘others’ are therefore not mere adversaries but antagonists that pose an existential threat to the autochthonous ‘self’. Hennig legitimizes PEGIDA as a representative cross-section of German society, hailing the heterogeneous yet united composition of the movement. Tying into these figures of though is the argument of Lutz Bachmann as an improvising anti-leader and the general fuzziness of PEGIDA as a tool against oppression. The cocktail character of the movement is evaluated positively as a process of fermentation, as the accumulation of frustration up to a boiling point that will soon erupt. At the same time, PEGIDA’s heterogeneity supposedly denotes the existence a lowest common denominator of collective resistance among the people, symbolized by all kinds of signs displayed in the forms of flags, ranging from defunct territorial units (the Kingdom of Saxony) to late modern rightwing pan-European protest movements (Identitarians). The coalition of different phalanxes (from violent to

non-violent) promises success for a truly popular movement that is able to lead the systematic change ahead (bizarrely enough placing PEGIDA on pair with the Muslim Brotherhood).

PEGIDA as part of the ENR discourse

In the last part of this chapter I will conclude with a discussion of the way PEGIDA ties in with contemporary European New Right discourse. I will also offer some thoughts for future trajectories of research. PEGIDA most certainly makes use of the populist division between 'the people' and 'the elites'/'the others' discussed by Moffitt and others. It also promotes 'bad manners' in that the PEGIDA rallies (and online medializations) are staged as opportunities to voice undigested indignation and frustrations in fuzzy and contradictory expressions. Moreover, its critiques are aimed at the technocratic political systems of Germany and the EU. PEGIDA actively reproduces a sense of crisis, breakdown and threat through its vocabulary, speech acts and framings. In the imaginaries of PEGIDA and its allies, Germany, Europe and the world find themselves in a permanent state of crisis.

Following Rasmus Fleischer (2014: 53–70) the contemporary European far right represents two ideological currents with a number of significant features each: 'mono-fascism' and 'multi-fascism', in which (support for) Israel turns into a dividing feature. Whereas previous (and still vivid) generations of right-wing rhetoric were clearly saturated by anti-Semitic notions and an anti-Israel perspective, 'counter-jihadist' positions merge with a pro-Israel stance against the alleged Islamization of Europe. Within transatlantic counter-jihadist networks, the presence of Muslims in the West has been portrayed as "a symptom of the general weakening of western civilization, caused by an enemy within: a conspiracy of 'cultural Marxists' "(Fleischer 2014: 54). However, according to Fleischer, this trend should not be exaggerated, since there are considerable overlaps between 'pro-Zionist' and anti-Semitic positions in, for instance, the Christian Zionist apocalyptic world view. Furthermore, anti-Islamism and anti-Semitism are not per se mutually exclusive; they can occupy different functions as semiotic markers in a larger pattern of conspiracy discourse. And last but not least there are significant qualitative and distinctive differences in the tropes of the conspiracy narrative. Modern antisemitism, for instance, always had a component of anti-capitalism or was directed against an alleged plutocracy in media, politics and finance, a feature virtually absent in the anti-Muslim narrative, in which the psychology of cultural racism is at play instead.

Fleischer considers counter-jihadist positions a constitutive feature of 'mono-fascism', which attempts to counter the presumed imperialist agenda of Islamic

world domination. Mono-fascism thus adopts the Huntington-like thesis of a 'clash of civilizations' wherein Europe/the West is portrayed in a dualist and mutually exclusive opposition to the Islamic world. 'Multi-fascism' does not share this universal reading of civilizational conflict, but has adopted a romanticist conception of the world as divided between different original indigenous cultures and subdivided into separate territorial entities, that is, 'ethno-pluralism'. However, and here a link to counter-jihadism is established, Muslim immigration (instigated by the corrupt political elites and other 'enemies within' orchestrating civilizational suicide) is blamed for the extinction of cultural difference. Taken together, mono- and multi-fascism in Fleischer's definition constitute a polysemous body of concepts with a considerable degree of overlap.

It is at the crossroads of these two idealized positions that PEGIDA constructs its image of a German people rising to resistance. Judging from the name of the movement, it is solidly placed within a civilizational Western mono-fascism, 'Patriotic Europeans' reject the 'Islamization of the West'. However, behind this official brand with its quasi-scientific conspirational explanation of Europe exposed to a slow undermining development we find more complex ideological positions ranging from outright exclusive nationalism to Identitarian pan-Europeanism. Hennig himself displays an ambiguous position with regards to Israel: he positively notes the presence of Israeli flags at PEGIDA-rallies while at the same time expressing anti-Semitic patterns of thoughts. A striking element requiring further study is the role of 'ostalgia' as a post-Soviet element in the ENR discourse in neo-authoritarian and post-democratic states in Eastern and Central Europe (eastern Germany included) and as exemplified by Levonian and Furko (2018, in this volume). Ostalgia falls into two (contradictory) sub-categories. On the one hand, the societal order of state socialism is idealized and some of its performative features are celebrated (such as rallies, flags, chants, uniforms). Bauman highlights for instance how the last Soviet decades are idealized as a 'golden age' in contemporary Russian retrotopian longing (Bauman 2017: 10). On the other hand, the resistance against dictatorial state socialism is invoked as a source of inspiration and legitimacy, pointing at the possibility that these two phenomena are part of some sort of collective Stockholm syndrome. By linking back to a previous stage of victimization, unfulfilled traumas of liberalization appear to be mobilized. These traumas in turn were triggered by a perceived failure of the 'system' and its linguistic apparatus in the wake of the refugee crisis (that constantly is/was evoked as a framing meta-topic). The particular experience of the East Germans is however portrayed (at least by Hennig) as a potential and dormant fertilizer of a renascence of the German *Volk* in general. PEGIDA thus ties in with romantic 'multi-fascist' or ethnopluralist conceptions of the European people as a collection of distinct organic entities. Another set of ideas linked to *das Volk* is related to existential

anxieties exploited during the refugee crisis of 2014 and 2015. As one speaker put it at a PEGIDA-rally: "There is a human right to fear" (Hennig 2015: 158), the fear of foreign infiltration and of fundamental alienation expressed under the fuzzy conceptual umbrella of a presumed 'islamization'. This irrational fear originates both from an insecurity related to one's own culture (what constitutes the German *ethnos* or 'the West' culturally?) and a xenophobic fear to be overrun by a predatory, fanatic, supremacist and fundamentalist other, whose aim is total domination (Wodak 2015; 20–22, 66–68). The identity of the 'self' is constructed as a negative blueprint of the 'other' (compare with Paukstat and Ellwanger 2016: 99). Here demographic nightmares such as a 'war of the wombs' are invoked, the fear of a biopolitical weapon in a civilizational war of population displacement and extinction (*Umvolkung* or 'ethnomorphosis'). If the juxtaposition of *das Volk* to the Muslim 'Other' (refugee and asylum seeker) refers to an *external enemy* who overruns the country (the biblical charged image and terminology of a deluge is frequently used), the treacherous elites represent an *inner enemy*, the 'traitors of the people' or 'the system' which persistently fail in representing the people and redistributing resources (compare with Paukstat and Ellwanger 2016: 4, 98–101, 103–104). A great deal of unease, indignation, worries and anger are directed against elites who stand accused of a sinister conspiracy against their own population. Closely connected to this virulent elite criticism is the alleged crisis of representation for which a political claim of *das Volk* as legitimate and legislative *demos* as a lawful assembly must be made. *Das Volk* is more than just the population of a given territory and more than a partner in civil society, it is the ultimate source of popular will and the ultimate goal of its fulfilment. Representative democracy is therefore rejected in favour of direct, unmediated articulation of political demands and participation in decision-making. The right to popular resistance through direct action is evoked.

It is obvious that the German NR identified the discursive practices of PEGIDA as an important tool in its meta-political strategy to influence the general societal discourse in Germany. These links have not been fully explored in this chapter, but would deserve closer scrutiny, in particular in the light of recent political developments in Germany with the AfD entering parliaments in federal states and on the national level, propelled by double-digit electoral support. The interest from the side of the NR highlights the significance of key concepts as voiced in PEGIDA, for instance its re-significaiton of *das Volk* or its strategy of undermining of mainstream media under the catchphrase of *Lügenpresse*.

PEGIDA continues to stage discursive events in an intricate dynamic between online and offline performance establishing an interdiscursive relationship between '89 and contemporary political affairs in post-unification Germany. This relationship can only be decoded when taking historical continuities of expressions and terms in the German political discourse of both GDR and FRG into

account while excavating their historical layers of meaning. Choosing a diffuse political language and style, PEGIDA was and is able to attract relevant segments of the German middle class. Extra-linguistic performative and linguistic variables were thus matched in a way that created considerable momentum in a significant spectrum of the German electorate, with potentially game-changing consequences as a result.

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CHAPTER 8

The discursive construction of the people in European political discourse

Semantics and pragmatics of a contested concept in German, French, and British parliamentary debates

Naomi Truan

Who are the people? As a semantically underspecified noun, the lexeme "people" and related terms such as "citizen(s)" or "constituent(s)" lead to various representations and are filled with competing meanings. By undertaking a cross-linguistic analysis of the semantic value of nouns denoting human referents in France, Germany, and the United Kingdom, this paper investigates how the "people" (*people* in English, *Volk* in German, *peuple* in French) and related linguistic expressions (notably *Mensch, Bürger, citoyen*) are discursively staged in national parliamentary debates on Europe.

The people represent the entity Members of Parliament (MPs) speak *to, about,* and *on behalf of*. In political sciences, mentioning the people immediately raises concerns about a populist message or stance. To which extent, then, does the reference to "the people" or "a people" pertain to a populist stance?

Based on an annotated corpus of forty-four national parliamentary debates between 1998 and 2015, this paper uses mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative) to assess how the "people" are referred to across the political spectrum in the British House of Commons, the German Bundestag and the French Assemblée nationale. By taking into account a large amount of speakers across different times and cultures, the analysis shows that the reference to "the people" – partly in opposition to "a people" – is a basic component of political discourse, thus indicating that the mere mention of the "people" cannot be regarded as a feature of populist rhetoric.

Keywords: people, citizen, constituent, populism, political discourse, parliament, comparison, Germany, France, United Kingdom

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Introduction: Referring to the "people": A cross-linguistic perspective

Who are the people? In the political realm specifically, the reference to the people leads to various representations and is filled with competing meanings. By undertaking a cross-linguistic analysis of the semantic value of nouns denoting human referents in three European countries (France, Germany, and the United Kingdom), this paper investigates how the "people" (*people* in English, *Volk* in German, *peuple* in French) and related linguistic expressions (notably *Mensch, Bürger, citoyen*) are discursively staged in national parliamentary debates on Europe.

The people represent the entity Members of Parliament (MPs) speak *to, about,* and *on behalf of*. In political sciences, mentioning the people immediately raises concerns about a populist message or stance. To what extent, then, does the reference to "the people" or "a people" pertain to a populist stance? To put it briefly, populism can be defined as an appeal to the people, seeking to establish and maintain an immediate (i.e. without mediation) relationship between politicians and citizens. Is that to say that the relationship between a populist stance and the mention of the people is univocal? Can the frequency and the distribution of the noun "people" be regarded as a sign of populism? As Hubé and Truan (2016: 187) state: "But this question is more intricate than it seems, because it actually casts doubt on representative democracy." Should the common appeal to the people not be viewed as a sign of democracy? Is not the attempt to include a vast majority of the population precisely the essence of democracy?

The paper is structured as follows. I begin by presenting the link between populism and the people from a theoretical point of view. After discussing the semantic properties of the "people", I proceed with a contrastive corpus-based analysis of the noun "people" revolving around the lexemes *people* in English, *Volk* in German, and *peuple* in French.[1] I present two specificities concerning the use of *Volk* and *peuple* in German and French contemporary politics, respectively. In light of the polysemy of English *people* compared to German *Volk* and French *peuple*, other nouns such as *gens* in French or *Menschen* and *Leute* in German are also taken into account, although they do not build the core of the present chapter. The necessity to include more lexemes in French and German pertains to the broader semantic scope of English *people* compared to its French and German counterparts. As will be accounted for in this paper, it is necessary to add the

1. In an effort to smooth the transitions between three different languages and parliamentary cultures, I will follow this rule: when referring to the forms in their general discursive representation (which might be encoded differently in the three languages considered, English, German, and French), inverted commas will be used, e.g. "people". When referring to *people* as an English lexeme, italics will be used.

lexemes *Leute* or *Menschen* in German and *gens* in French to adequately refer to the semantic scope of English *people*.[2]

On the assumed relationship between people and populism

Populism: The impossible definition?

Despite the difficulty of providing a rigorous definition (Hubé and Truan 2016),[3] populism relies on at least one feature: the "appeal to the people without any mediation" (Touraine et al. 1997: 227).[4] The apparent neutrality of this definition obscures the fact that the term often has negative connotations (Ihl, Chêne and Vial 2003: 11; Taguieff 2002: 21, 25). In this sense, the concept of populism plays a normative role.

By asking whether there is only one populism or whether it comes in many forms, Dezé (2004: 179) takes into account the fact that populism is a phenomenon with various expressions across time and space. Is there a populist core enabling a cross-linguistic perspective? Laclau (1977: 166) emphasises "the continued potential of populism across the political spectrum" and "sees no necessary correspondence between a populist mindset and any given political ideology, provided a project can convincingly be articulated with 'popular tradition'" (Higgins 2013: 59). Taguieff (2002: 84) goes a step further, stating that populism can adapt to any kind of ideology, suggesting a definition of populism in terms of adaptability (see also Higgins 2013: 58).

Applied to the parliamentary debates under investigation (that will be presented later), this definition enables us to analyse the corpus without any prior hypothesis on which party or parliamentary group is "populist" or "more populist" than another. Contrary to Chapters 7 and 11 (this volume), this contribution does not take into account political movements often regarded as populist such as Pegida or Alternative für Deutschland since they were not represented in Parliament in the period covered by the corpus (1998–2015). The UKIP is represented by only

2. This list could also be extended to encompass the noun "population" (*Bevölkerung* in German, as suggested in Chapter 11 of this volume, and Retterath 2016, see below). Given the scope of the present paper, it nevertheless appears reasonable to focus on a limited set of lexemes cross-linguistically.

3. This contribution is not a theoretical attempt to (re)define the concept of populism, but a corpus-based linguistic analysis relying on criteria commonly mentioned by scholars in political science. For a theoretical approach, see Chapter 1 of this volume.

4. Original quote: "l'appel à un peuple dépouillé de toutes ses médiations".

one speaker at the British House of Commons, Bob Spink, who has been elected as a member of the UKIP[5] and utters only one question during the debate of 29 March 2010. Even if Spink's utterance contains two occurrences of *people* ("Did the Prime Minister discuss referendums at the summit so that *British people* could vote on the Lisbon treaty, which all three main parties promised them they would be able to do? Or does he think that *the British people* have simply got it wrong?"), highlighting from me, a single utterance cannot be regarded as representative of a whole political movement (for a detailed contribution on the UKIP, see Chapter 9 of this volume).

Minimum requirements to be a populist

A common thread runs through the work of several scholars, that of the reference to the people in contrast to the (corrupted) elite: "populism is the appeal of a leader to a people against politicians and intellectuals who betray them"[6] (Touraine et al. 1997: 239). Mediation is judged as useless, unnecessary, limiting and/or harmful (Taguieff 2002: 84). Populist stances "unify in their desire for ways to express alignment with the ordinary people, or of granting the enunciator warrant to speak on the people's behalf" (Higgins 2013: 58).

But the dilemma of populism appears when the speaker stands in parliament: as representatives, Members of Parliament embody the very mediation deemed undesirable. Parliamentary debates necessarily imply elected politicians currently in a position of power, which means that there is inevitably a gap between speakers (MPs) and listeners ("the people"). MPs may enunciate their proximity to the citizens, but they face a paradoxical situation, since they precisely belong to the representative system that prevents people from voicing their opinions directly.

Populists in the parliament: An oxymoron?

The corpus of parliamentary debates in the present study offers an interesting perspective from the point of view of elected speakers only. Based on an annotated[7] corpus of forty-four national parliamentary debates on Europe between 1998 and

5. Spink is considered to be from the UKIP only in 2008, see his official affiliations on the website of the House of Commons: https://www.parliament.uk/biographies/Commons/member/1214 (accessed on 12.11.2018).

6. Original quote: "Le populisme est l'appel d'un leader à un peuple contre les politiques et les intellectuels qui le trahissent".

7. The corpus is encoded according to the guidelines of the Text Encoding Initiative (TEI) for the following variables: speaker, sex, party, party type, opposition/majority, constituency. On a text level, micro segments are encoded as well (for instance, reported speech).

2015,[8] this paper uses mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative) to assess how "the people" are referred to across the political spectrum in the British House of Commons, the German Bundestag and the French Assemblée nationale.

By taking into account a large number of speakers (225 MPs in the German corpus, 302 in the British corpus and 159 in the French corpus), the analysis shows that the reference to the "people" is a basic component of political discourse. This finding suggests that despite national specificities, the need to discursively represent the "appeal to the people" by mentioning "the people" cannot be linked with any parliamentary group. In other words, the mere use of the noun "people" or related terms is not a sufficient criterion to gauge whether a speech or a speaker is populist (also see De Cleen for a theoretical contribution in this regard, this volume). Before exploring in greater detail how the noun "people" is distributed amongst the MPs and how it is used, minimal features of the idea of "the people" regardless of party and partisanship are examined.

Semantic properties of the "people"

Shared semantic properties in English, German, and French

The lexeme "people" refers to a group including many individuals, more specifically humans [+ Animate, + Human], as opposed to animals and other creatures. When building a noun phrase or being the head of a noun phrase, the noun "people" usually activates a generic reference as defined by Lyons (1999: 179): generic noun phrases "are used to express generalizations about a class as a whole".[9] This is specifically the case when used as a bare plural (*people, Menschen, Leute*), but also in some definite plural NPs (*the British people, les gens, die Menschen, die Leute*).

Morphologically, *Volk* and *peuple* trigger singular agreement. They are thus collective nouns, which have been defined as a noun in the singular denoting an entity consisting of a grouping of elements belonging to the same category (Lecolle

8. The three corpora are described and freely available in open access under a CC BY-SA 4.0 license on the ORTOLANG platform:

https://hdl.handle.net/11403/fr-parl for the French corpus (Truan 2016a);
https://hdl.handle.net/11403/de-parl for the German corpus (Truan 2016b);
https://hdl.handle.net/11403/uk-parl for the British corpus (Truan 2016c).

9. Exclusionary uses of "people" whereby "people" refers solely to a specific category of the population or to a nationality are also quantitatively well represented. In these cases, it could be argued that the generic reference does not fully hold true. Yet, I consider that this relates more to the adjective that redefines and narrows the scope of reference of "people" than to the lexeme "people" as such.

2007). Grouping heterogeneous humans by neutralising the category of gender [±MASCULINE/FEMININE] (Dubois and Dubois Charlier 1996: 131) is a choice lexically, but also argumentatively motivated. By contrast, nouns such as *Bürger* in German and *citoyen* in French ("citizen") can display both masculine and feminine forms. In German political discourse specifically, it has become usual – or politically correct – to use both forms: among 261 occurrences of *Bürger* as a lemma in the corpus, 152 are feminine. This means that in 58% of the cases, the NP becomes *die Bürgerinnen und Bürger*, almost systematically in this word order (plural feminine form followed by the plural masculine form).

Cognitively speaking, the singular form of *Volk* and *peuple* in German and French, respectively – and of *public* in English, which cannot be addressed in detail here due to space constraints – contributes to a conceptual process of meaning construction resulting in a unique and simplified categorisation of the multiple entities included in the reference to human referents.

According to the basic definitions of the Oxford English Dictionary, the Duden, and Le Grand Robert de la langue française, some semantic features remain unchanged (invariants) in the three languages (also see Chapter 11 of this volume, for a comparison of the Duden and the DWDS for German *Volk*). First, the lexemes *people, Volk* and *peuple* refer to a group [+ GROUP], possibly with a sense of belonging [+ UNITY]. The second semantic characteristic relates to nationality [+ NATION], which seems to be an extension of the first feature in the socio-political field: it is assumed that living in the same country might create a feeling of community.[10] Finally, a third possible shared semantic feature relies on the opposition between the people and the elite which has fuelled many studies on populism.

Whom do the lexemes people, Volk, *and* peuple *refer to?*

The various layers of representation encapsulated in the lexemes *people*, *Volk*, and *peuple* is consistent with the German semantic tradition of *Begriffsgeschichte* (i.e. conceptual history). In line with Kämper (2005: 102), I propose to consider the noun "people" as a concept or *Begriff* (i.e. as a lexical unity which exhibits the properties of relevance and complexity). By the term "relevance", Kämper understands the social meaning of a concept for political and social situations;

10. This is particularly true for English, where nationality is usually expressed by means of a nationality adjective + *people* (*the British people*), whereas French and German have nationality nouns where the reference to "people" disappears (*les Français·e·s, die Deutschen*). It is nevertheless also possible to refer to ethnic groups without the reference to "people" in English as well (*the French, the Germans, the Spaniards*).

by "complexity", she refers to the fact that a concept brings together two aspects: it puts together various components into one lexeme, but also shows a relative openness in meaning.

The semantic instability of the lexemes *people*, *Volk*, and *people* – and, to a certain extent, of related terms such as *citizen(s), Bürger*innen, citoyen·ne·s*, etc. – in political discourse is subject to a wide range of interpretations concerning the identification of their potential referents. But this is not to say that the broad scope of reference of these linguistic expressions denoting humans cannot be restricted in context – in fact, I will discuss several examples that show the contrary.

Against this background, I suggest the notion of "fluidity of reference" to account for these various layers of meaning. The notion of "fluidity of reference" renders the idea of a continuum of possible interpretations in cases where the identification of the potential referents of the lexemes *people*, *Volk*, and *peuple* remains open to multiple, sometimes even contradictory meanings.

Frequency and distribution of *people*, *Volk*, and *peuple* in the three corpora

Based on a contrastive corpus of parliamentary debates on Europe held in different national contexts, i.e. at the British House of Commons, at the German Bundestag and at the French Assemblée nationale between 1998 and 2015, Table 1 shows the frequency and distribution of the lemmas *people, Volk* and *peuple*[11] in the three corpora in comparison with reference corpora for the given languages.[12] By normalising the results per 10,000 tokens, it becomes possible to see whether a linguistic expression is more or less used in parliamentary debates than in

11. A lemma is "[t]he canonical form of a word" (Baker et al. 2006: 104). Thus, it includes the plural form *Völker* in the nominative, dative, and genitive, the dative plural form *Völkern,* the genitive singular *Volkes*. The same holds true for French *peuple*.

12. In his book chapter "Well-known and influential corpora", Xiao (2008) presents the British National Corpus "which is designed to represent as wide a range of modern British English as possible" (2008: 384). BNC Baby – which I use for this study because it enables me to make the queries in the software TXM – was "originally developed as a manageable sub-corpus from the BNC" (2008: 385) balanced according to the same rules. For German, the DWDS corpus, which is a product of the DWDS (Digital Dictionary of the 20th Century German Language) project, is "roughly comparable to the British National Corpus, covering the whole 20th century (1900–2000)" (2008: 391). Correspondingly, the Frantext database is the equivalent for French, even though the project is less advanced than its British and German counterparts and relies primarily on literary works and essays (90%).

"standard" discourse.[13] The requests based on the lemmas were performed with the software TXM.[14]

Table 1. Frequency of the lemmas *people, Volk*, and *peuple* in the British, German, and French parliamentary corpora (in tokens)

	UK-PARL	BNC Baby	DE-PARL	DWDS*	FR-PARL	Frantext**
Raw frequency	440	4181	73	44,389	170	1093
Corpus size	188,913	4,624,620	417,095	1,521,837,787*	137,620	3,728,144
Normalized frequency (per 10,000 tokens)	23.3	9	1.7	0.3	12.3	2.9

* One of the main difficulties regarding the DWDS is its constant evolution: depending on the day of the query, the number of "searchable tokens" (*recherchierbare Tokens*) differs. The numbers indicated are based on the date on which I performed the query (16.03.2017).
** The queries were conducted on "Frantext démonstration", which is based on literary texts only. The numbers presented here are thus merely indicative since they are not based on an adequate, sufficiently well-balanced corpus for comparison.

Table 1 yields extremely varied results: whereas *people* and *peuple* are both relatively common, the results show a significant underuse of the lexeme *Volk* in contemporary German political discourse. The number of occurrences of *people* in parliamentary debates markedly outranks those of *peuple* in French and *Volk* in German: English *people* is almost twice as frequent as French *peuple*, which already occurs seven times more often than German *Volk*. Admittedly, this gap can be explained by historical reasons for German *Volk,*[15] but not only. The German lexeme *Mensch* (in the plural in 427 instances out of 435) – not represented in Table 1 – occurs 10 times per 10,000 tokens, which brings it closer to French *people* (12.3 times per 10,000 tokens). In other words, while English *people* is widely used, French *peuple* and German *Mensch(en)* occur half as often. Finally, the lexeme *Volk* is noticeably underused.

13. Even though I am fully aware of the problems raised by the notion of "reference corpus" or "standard discourse", especially given recurrent discussions balance and on representativeness of reference corpora, I find these tools useful for purposes of comparison (see Teubert and Cermáková 2004: 118).

14. The TXM Desktop Software, freely accessible at http://textometrie.ens-lyon.fr/ (accessed on 16.03.2017), is an open-source platform for text statistical analysis (Heiden 2010).

15. On the particular status of the German lexeme *Volk* in a historical perspective, see Hoffmann (1991) and Koselleck (1992).

National specificities: German *Volk* and French *peuple*

Based on these numbers, I will provide elements of explanation for the specific uses of the lexemes *Volk* in German and *peuple* in French. In a second step, I will show that "the people" are mentioned in order to stage the people's assumed expectations, thus stressing the common ground uniting the reference to "the people" across languages in political discourse.

Defending the use of the noun Volk *in German contemporary political discourse: A strong stance*

Let us first have a closer look at the German specificity. As the following examples will show, the controversial use of *Volk* comes from the prevalence of the seme [+ Nation], which is totally absent from other nouns such as *Mensch* or *Leute* in German and from *gens* in French. The cautious use of *Volk* in German contemporary politics goes along with Retterath's (2016) reflection:

> The word *Volk* is rarely used in contemporary political debates in the Federal Republic of Germany. Instead, in parliamentary talks or in talk shows, politicians speak of "fellow citizens", "the people all over the country", dodge the issue, most of the time with "ungendered" figures of speech such as "the ordinary person" or use (pseudo-) individualised phrases such as "the Swabian housewife", the "nurse" or the "nanny", when the "simple people" are at stake. Another strategy consists in using the word "population", which sounds more (social and) academic, instead of "people".[16] (Retterath 2016: 3)

Interestingly, the cautious use of *Volk* is equally distributed amongst all the political parties at the Bundestag, which indicates the same unease.[17] Nevertheless, one of the rare uses of the concept (in the sense of *Begriff,* see Kämper (2005: 102)

16. Original quote: "Im gegenwärtigen politischen Sprachgebrauch der Bundesrepublik wird das Wort „Volk" selten verwendet. Stattdessen sprechen Politiker[*innen] in Parlamentsreden oder Talksendungen lieber von „Mitbürgerinnen und Mitbürger", „den Menschen draußen im Land", flüchten sich in – zumeist „ungegenderte"– Sprachbilder wie jenes von dem „kleinen Mann" oder bedienen sich (pseudo-) individualisierter Floskeln wie der von der „schwäbische[n] Hausfrau", der „Krankenschwester" oder der „Kindergärtnerin", wenn es um das „einfache Volk" geht. Eine weitere Strategie besteht darin, statt „Volk" das stärker (sozial-)wissenschaftlich klingende Wort „Bevölkerung" zu gebrauchen."

17. The specificity indicator ("indice de spécificité") is comprised between −0.0097 and 3.28 (for "no affiliation" (*fraktionslos*) with only four occurrences), which is not statistically relevant. The specificity method ("calcul des spécificités") used in the software TXM is briefly presented below and in more detailed manner in Lafon (1980).

above) during a particularly heated debate on EU enlargement, European identity, and borders shows that it is prone to metalinguistic comments and is not taken for granted:

(1) Christoph Zöpel (SPD) [majority]: This is why I would like to remind you of what characterises Europe. Europe is characterised by overcoming divisions
Dr. Friedbert Pflüger (CDU) [opposition]: Exactly!
Christoph Zöpel (SPD) [majority]: that are related to religious reasons
Dr. Gerd Müller (CDU) [opposition]: But there are differences!
Christoph Zöpel (SPD) [majority]: or divisions that are caused by the shifting of boundaries by the military forces, and finally [by overcoming] divisions because of the tragic mistake of European history, which is that **nationalist [*völkisch*], racist, ethnic criteria could in any way be a natural boundary between people** [***Menschen***]. Overcoming that is the idea of Europe. *Applause from the SPD and BÜNDNIS 90/DIE GRÜNEN and MPs from the FDP* **I'm sensitive when I hear the word "people" [*Volk*]. It relates to "nationalist"** [***völkisch***]. *Agitation among MPs from the CDU*
Dr. Gerd Müller (CDU) [opposition]: **So "people" relates to "nationalist"? Really? Unbelievable!**
Christoph Zöpel (SPD) [majority]: Dear Colleague Müller, I see it this way. I know that you don't. I hold what you say as dangerous in Europe. You have to cope with it. (DE 2003.06.26)
Christoph Zöpel (SPD) [majority]: Deshalb möchte ich noch einmal daran erinnern, was Europa ausmacht. Europa macht aus, zu überwinden, dass es Trennungen
Dr. Friedbert Pflüger (CDU) [opposition]: Richtig!
Christoph Zöpel (SPD) [majority]: aufgrund religiöser Gegensätze gibt,
Dr. Gerd Müller (CDU) [opposition]: Es gibt aber Unterschiede!
Christoph Zöpel (SPD) [majority]: dass es Trennungen aufgrund von Grenzverschiebungen durch Militärerfolge gibt, und schließlich, und schließlich, dass es Trennungen durch den tragischsten Irrtum der europäischen Geschichte gibt, nämlich dass **völkische, rassistische, ethnische Kriterien in irgendeiner Weise natürliche Grenzen zwischen Menschen sein könnten**. Dies zu überwinden ist die Idee Europas. *Beifall bei der SPD und dem BÜNDNIS 90/ DIE GRÜNEN sowie bei Abgeordneten der FDP* **Ich bin schon sensibel, wenn ich das Wort Volk höre. Es hat seine Assoziation zu „völkisch"**. *Widerspruch bei der CDU/CSU*
Dr. Gerd Müller (CDU) [opposition]: **„Volk" zu „völkisch"? Unglaublich!**
Christoph Zöpel (SPD) [majority]: Herr Kollege Müller, ich sehe es so. Dass Sie es anders sehen, weiß ich. Ich halte das, was Sie sagen, im europäischen Sinne in der Tat für gefährlich. Damit müssen Sie leben. (DE 2003.06.26)

Even though the etymological association between *Volk* and *völkisch* can hardly be contested (see Chapter 11, this volume),[18] the conservative MP Müller considers this view to be "unbelievable", interrupting his colleague even though the strictly regulated turn-taking system of the parliament normally does not allow him to.[19] The perceived incongruity of this remark triggers a direct reaction of Zöpel through a direct form of address ("Dear Colleague Müller"), even though the majority of interruptions at the Bundestag ordinarily remain unnoticed or uncommented.[20] Even after this interruption, the Conservative MPs Pflüger in (2) and Müller in (3) still feel the need to respond to Zöpel through a short intervention (*Kurzintervention*). Silberhorn comments on this terminological matter at the beginning of his speech in (4):

(2) Dr. Friedbert Pflüger (CDU) [opposition]: Dear Colleague Zöpel, a short remark first: **If you can't go ahead with the expression "German people" [*Volk*] without thinking right away about "nationalist" [*völkisch*], then it's your problem**. We don't share this view. *Applause from the CDU/CSU* **There is a German people and we commit to it. This has nothing to do with nationalist traditions**. There is a big difference. (DE 2003.06.26)
Dr. Friedbert Pflüger (CDU) [opposition]: Herr Kollege Zöpel, zuerst eine kurze Vorbemerkung: **Wenn Sie mit dem Ausdruck „deutsches Volk "nichts anfangen können und dabei sofort an „völkisch "denken, dann ist das Ihr Problem**. Wir teilen diese Sichtweise nicht. *Beifall bei der CDU/CSU* **Es gibt ein deutsches Volk und zu ihm bekennen wir uns. Das hat mit völkischen Traditionen nichts zu tun.** Da gibt es einen großen Unterschied. (DE 2003.06.26)

(3) Dr. Gerd Müller (CDU) [opposition]: Madam President! Ladies and Gentlemen! Colleague Pflüger has presented his perspective regarding Turkey. […] Colleague Zöpel, it also shows that those who are against Turkey's accession to the EU cannot be totally wrong, if you, Colleague

18. See the DWDS (http://www.dwds.de/wb/Volk#et-1, accessed on 21.10.2016), which shows that the adjective *völkisch* appeared in the 16th century as a derivation from *Volk* (Old High German *folc*), which has been attested since the 8th century A.D.

19. See: "A Member of the Bundestag can talk only when the president has given them the floor." ("Ein Mitglied des Bundestages darf nur sprechen, wenn ihm der Präsident das Wort erteilt hat.") (§27 "Tagesordnung, Einberufung, Leitung der Sitzung und Ordnungsmaßnahmen", http://www.bundestag.de/parlament/aufgaben/rechtsgrundlagen/go_btg/go06/245164) accessed on 21.10.2016).

20. Only 215 out 1251 interruptions in the corpus trigger a reaction from the legitimate interrupted speaker, i.e. 17,19% of the (unauthorised) interruptions (Truan 2017: 132).

Zöpel, alert about **nationalistic or national dangers**. I belong to those who say No to Turkey's accession to the EU right now. (DE 2003.06.26)
Dr. Gerd Müller (CDU) [opposition]: Frau Präsidentin! Meine Damen und Herren! Der Kollege Pflüger hat unsere Position zur Türkei dargelegt. […] Herr Zöpel, das zeigt aber doch auch, dass diejenigen, die gegen den Beitritt der Türkei sind, nicht ganz falsch liegen können, wenn Sie, Herr Zöpel, vor **völkischen oder nationalen Gefahren** warnen. Ich gehöre zu denjenigen, die zum Beitritt der Türkei zu diesem Zeitpunkt Nein sagen. (DE 2003.06.26)

(4) Thomas Silberhorn (CSU) [opposition]: Madam President! Ladies and Gentlemen! The virtually ridiculous contribution of Colleague Zöpel – **he has problems with the word "people" [*Volk*] because he manifestly associates it with nationalistic [*völkisch*] traditions** – shows that we must endeavour to make more distinctions more in this debate. (DE 2003.06.26)
Thomas Silberhorn (CSU) [opposition]: Frau Präsidentin! Werte Kolleginnen und Kollegen! Der geradezu irrwitzige Beitrag des Kollegen Zöpel – **er hat mit dem Wort Volk schon deshalb Probleme, weil er es offenbar mit völkischen Traditionen in Verbindung bringt** – zeigt, dass wir uns um etwas mehr Differenzierung in der Debatte bemühen müssen. (DE 2003.06.26)

It is interesting to note that the recognition that there is "a German people" to which the CDU-CSU would "commit" as in (2) is not linked with the willingness to make the German people participate in the political arena: the Conservatives are against a referendum on the European constitution.[21] Thus invoking the German people in this debate is not directly linked with political representation.

Since none of the interventions fuels the thesis of the CDU-CSU being discussed in this particular debate, the repetitive argument in favour of a "people" actually occurs mainly as a sign of solidarity towards party members as well as a clear signal towards voters. Apart from this debate, which happens to be rather the exception than the rule, the substantive *Volk* is mainly associated with nationalities: *palästinensisch* (i.e. "Palestinian") is the first co-occurrent of *Volk*, which is narrowly related with the fact that the State of Palestine is not recognised. Other uses of the controversial lexeme *Volk*, and especially of the definite noun phrase "the German people" (*das deutsche Volk*, 4 occurrences out of 73 occurrences of the lemma *Volk*) are restricted to the mention of past events (revolutions, the former currency, the D-Mark, the EU construction in the 50s), or to other geographic contexts such as the American constitution. These findings are an indication of the

21. See for instance: "Die CDU ist als einzige Partei deutlich gegen eine Volksabstimmung zum Entwurf einer EU-Verfassung", Spiegel online (https://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/positionen-europa-in-guter-verfassung-a-303434.html, accessed on 11.08.2018).

loaded component of the lexeme *Volk* that is never used innocuously. As Ayerbe Linares (this volume) shows, even political parties traditionally labelled “populist” such as the AfD make a cautious use of the noun *Volk*, which is used almost interchangeably with *Bevölkerung* (“population”) or *Bürger* (“citizens”).

Representing le peuple *in the context of the 2005 French referendum*

The French corpus presents a peculiarity closely linked to the context of the 2005 referendum on the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe.[22] An indication of this can be observed through the lens of the specificity indicator, a statistical tool provided in the software TXM to assess whether a lexeme occurs more or less than expected given the size of a sample (the corpus can be sampled according to different variables such as speakers, date of the debate, gender, constituency, etc.).[23] The specificity indicator according to the parliamentary group is very high for the left-wing parliamentary groups “Communistes et Républicains” (+16.3 for *peuple* and + 4.1 for *peuples*) and for “Gauche Démocrate et Républicaine” (+5.7 for *people*, but only +1.6 for *peuples*). Related to the political category “Far Left”,[24] the over-specificity of *people* is even more striking: +23.9 for *peuple* and + 5.3 for *peuples.*

The occurrences of the lemma *peuple* are distributed among a relatively small amount of speakers (31 out of 159, that is approximately 19.5%). Moreover, 38 occurrences out of 170 (22.3%) are used by one single MP, Jean-Paul Lecoq (Far Left), who massively relies on the perceived bad experience of the referendum on the Treaty of Lisbon held on 29 May 2005 (see Hainsworth 2006):

(5) Jean-Paul Lecoq (Gauche Démocrate et Républicaine) [opposition]: Let us remember: after the serious setback inflicted by the rejection of the European Constitution by **the French and Dutch peoples** in 2005, it took

22. Here it could also be noted that the French corpus consists of eight plenary debates whereas the German and the British corpora consist of eighteen debates, respectively. The relatively small corpus in the French case could have an impact on the distribution of the lemma *peuple*. More specifically, the smaller range of parliamentary debates taken into account makes an overrepresentation of a specific term in one specific debate more plausible. For more information on the data collection, see Truan (2016a, 2016b, 2016c).

23. For a presentation of the specificity method (“calcul des spécificités”) used for the software TXM, see Lafon (1980).

24. The TEI tag <trait type = “party”> was used in this corpus to create ideological categories from a cross-national perspective according to the political affiliations. “Far Left” has been used for following affiliations: DIE LINKE (Germany), PDS (Germany), Communistes et Républicains (France), Gauche Démocrate et Républicaine (France).

European leaders two years of hard thinking to elaborate an avatar of the previous constitutional treaty. […] The heads of state and government had agreed to **dodge the people**, by ensuring that parliamentary ratification is used instead of **popular consultation**, so that the use of representative democracy here serves **to avoid the direct expression of the people**. (FR 2009.10.14)

Jean-Paul Lecoq (Gauche Démocrate et Républicaine) [opposition]: Souvenons-nous: après le revers cinglant infligé par le rejet de la Constitution européenne par les **peuples français et néerlandais** en 2005, il aura fallu deux ans de cogitation aux dirigeants européens pour élaborer un avatar de l'ex-traité constitutionnel. […] Les chefs d'État et de Gouvernement s'étaient alors entendus pour **contourner les peuples**, en s'assurant que les ratifications parlementaires soient préférées aux **consultations populaires**, l'utilisation de la démocratie représentative ayant ici pour finalité d'**échapper à l'expression directe du peuple**. (FR 2009.10.14)

This restricted use of the noun *peuple* goes along with the collocational analysis: the terms "nation" (*nation*), "sovereignity" (*souveraineté*), "reject/rejection" (*rejeter/rejet*), "fear" (*peur*) and "massively" (*massivement*), which are frequent collocates of *peuple*, all point to the specific context of the French referendum. The lexical field around *peuple* only centres on the referendum, which has been looked upon as a betrayal by the French socialist and communist parties: although a majority (54.67%) of French voters raised their political voice against the referendum, the perspective of a renegotiation quickly appeared illusory. In the four debates in which Lecoq uses the concept of the *peuple* (FR 2007.12.11, FR 2008.12.10, FR 2009.10.14, FR 2011.12.06), the recurrent use of "people" reinforces Lecoq's opposition to the Treaty, on the basis of its rejection by the French and Dutch peoples:

(6) Jean-Paul Lecoq (Communistes et Républicains) [opposition]: Because in the end, if there is a new treaty it is precisely because the **French and Dutch peoples** massively rejected the Constitutional Treaty. (FR 2007.12.11)
Jean-Paul Lecoq (Communistes et Républicains) [opposition]: Car enfin, s'il y a nouveau traité, c'est bien parce que **les peuples français et néerlandais** ont rejeté majoritairement le traité constitutionnel. (FR 2007.12.11)

In the context of the referendum, the noun *peuples* is used in the plural; it does not refer to the French people specifically but to the endeavour to call upon European citizens to cast their votes. Using the French lexeme *peuples* is here noteworthy, since it would have been possible to refer to the referendums in Holland and France by using the nationality adjectives *Hollandais* and *Français* rather than the term "people".

By accusing politicians of being "afraid of the people", the speaker depicts himself as the only one capable of engaging in an authentic dialogue with the people, whom he is able to listen to:

(7) Jean-Paul Lecoq (Communistes et Républicains) [opposition]: One has to listen to **what peoples say, to what their worries and expectations are**. (FR 2007.12.11)
Jean-Paul Lecoq (Communistes et Républicains) [opposition]: Il faut entendre **ce que disent les peuples, leurs inquiétudes et leurs attentes**. (FR 2007.12.11)

This strategy echoes the German and British speakers claiming to endorse the people's point of view by depicting their fears, expectations, and desires, as we will further see in Examples (9) to (16).

Although the attempt to give the power back to the people should not be underestimated, the overuse of the lemma *peuple* by the Far Left in the French corpus remains restricted to a "discursive moment" (*moment discursif*) that has first been defined as the "outburst in the media of an intense and diversified discursive production on the same event" (Moirand 2004: 73).[25]

The significance of the debate preceding and following the referendum for French politics has already been abundantly addressed (see Mange and Marchand 2007: 121–122 for an overview). Against this background, my goal is not to stress the importance of the referendum as a media event and a discursive moment. Rather, I argue that the overuse of the noun *peuple* by the French Far Left cannot be reduced to a sign of populism but must be understood as a particular moment in French politics. Whether the appeal to the people on this occasion may be regarded as populist or not goes beyond the scope of this paper. My contribution is that apart from this discursive moment, all parliamentary groups and all MPs equally refer to the people, as Excerpt (8) shows:

(8) Gilles Artigues (UDF) [majority]: Recreating trust was, for the UDF, responding to the concerns voiced by the French in front of a technocratic way of making Europe without the people, which they sanctioned. Our fellow citizens no longer intend to approve important decisions *a posteriori*, they want to be associated with them. More democracy, more transparency is a matter of imperative that no one will be able to avoid. (FR 2006.12.12)
Gilles Artigues (UDF) [majority]: Recréer la confiance, c'était, pour l'UDF, répondre aux inquiétudes exprimées par les Français devant une façon technocratique de faire l'Europe sans le peuple, qu'ils ont

25. Original quote: "surgissement dans les médias d'une production discursive intense et diversifiée à propos d'un même fait".

> sanctionnée. Nos concitoyens n'entendent plus approuver a posteriori les décisions importantes, ils veulent y être associés. Plus de démocratie, plus de transparence, c'est un impératif auquel personne n'échappera.
> (FR 2006.12.12)

As Artigues observes, the ideal of "more democracy, more transparency" *([p]lus de démocratie, plus de transparence*) outlined in (8) should be shared by all parliamentary groups with no distinction, "no one" (*personne*) can stop this evolution.

Responding to people's (assumed) expectations

Now that both specificities of German *Volk* and French *peuple* have been addressed, I turn to the common reference to "the people" in political discourse. By doing so, one goes a step back from the concepts *Volk* and *peuple* that are typically associated with strong connotations to investigate other related lexemes such as "citizens" or "constituents".

Appealing to the people *in English: Searching for French and German "equivalents"*

In comparison with German *Volk* and French *peuple*, the referential scope of English *people* is broader. It indicates that *Volk* and *peuple* are not the only equivalent to *people*, but have to be regarded in association with *Mensch* ("human being"), as one of the translations in (1) shows. (I have translated both *Volk* and *Menschen* as people). It has been said earlier that the lemma *Mensch* yields 427 occurrences in the plural, 8 in the singular, i.e. 10.43 occurrences per 10,000 tokens in my corpus of parliamentary debates, whereas the DWDS manifests 0.54 lemmas of *Mensch* per 10,000 tokens. This shows that while the use of the lexeme *Volk* remains limited, the noun *Mensch* knows an overuse in the specialised corpus of parliamentary debates compared to the reference corpus. Similar findings are visible for the French corpus: the lemma *peuple* occurs 4.2 times more at the Assemblée nationale than in the reference corpus. Such occurrences suggest that French *peuple* – like German *Volk* – has a narrower lexical span than its English counterparts.

Thus, Members of Parliament do not avoid the reference to the people. Rather, they avoid the reference to *a* people. There is a clear overrepresentation of nouns referring to humans in political discourse: in English, French, and German, the mention of human referents dominates political discourse.

What brings *people, peuple*, and *Volk* together, and what makes them different? A collocational analysis reveals that *people, Volk*, and *peuple* present strong similarities by being primarily associated with nationalities (*British, Serbia, Afghan, palästinensisch, deutsch, irlandais, algérien*). In such cases, the reference to the people is linked with the geopolitical context and cannot be put in relation with a populist stance. There is, however, a common denominator in the uses of the nouns denoting human referents in political discourse, which is closely related to cognitive verbs such as "think", verbs of speech such as "say", and verbs expressing a will such as "want".

Formulating questions and claims through the lens of the people

A common thread running through the three corpora is the fact that the people are often mentioned in the plural as a collective entity. They occupy the syntactic position of the subject and fulfil the semantic role of the agent. Specifically, the question of representation brings *people* and *Mensch* together (the first collocates are *understand* and *vermitteln*, which could be translated as "mediate", "share", "relay").

In the British, French, and German corpora, the "people" – lexically expressed mostly with the nouns *people* or *public* in English,[26] *citoyen* in French, and *Menschen* in German – become an instrument of mediation and legitimation of the MPs' questions. An example is (9), where the noun *people*, which automatically encompasses the addresser as well, is used as a proof that the speaker is not standing alone in their beliefs:

(9) Mr. David Cameron (Tories) [majority]: I agree with my hon. Friend about many things, but on this one we do not agree. The problem with an in/out referendum is that it would put two options to **the British people**, which I do not think really complies with what **people** ***want.*** **Many people, me included,** ***are not satisfied with the status quo,*** which is why the in option is not acceptable; but **many people – also like me –** ***do not want*** us to leave altogether, because of the importance of the single market to Britain, a trading nation, so they do not want to be out. That is why I think that an in/out referendum is not the right answer. (UK 2012.10.22)

26. Interestingly, in the British corpus, the lexeme *constituents* (mostly in the plural) performs similar functions by being associated with the lexical field of expectations expressed through the verbs *want, expect*.

The NP *many people* is indicated twice as inclusive of the addresser[27] (*me included, also like me*). Given the scope of reference of the quantifier *many*, however, it would have been probably interpreted along the same lines without the specific allusion to the fact that the noun phrase *many people* encompasses the addresser as well. Despite the irony of the conclusion from today's point of view (*I think that an in/out referendum is not the right answer*), what is interesting regarding the functions performed by the NP is that the referents encoded in *many* justify the speaker's perspective. This is patent in (9) with the repetition of *which is why, [t]hat is why* that introduces the idea of a consequence: the fact that Cameron does not want an in/out referendum (event B) relies on the fact that many people do not want such a binary solution (event A).

Mentioning what the majority assumingly thinks enables the speaker to bond with the people who "do not want to be out". By mentioning them, the speaker also tells them: "You are not alone, I am here with you". In other words, the mention of "the British people" serves two complementary communicative goals: giving substance to the addresser (the "I"), and, conversely, conferring weight and authority to the ones who think like him. The discursive nature of such constructs is all the more justified in the light of the recent events – there were not so many people "[not wanting] us [the UK] to leave altogether", after all.

The role of the people can be symbolised as the one of a buffer, as (10) shows:

(10) Mr. David Curry (Tories) [opposition]: **People ask**, "Where does it end?". The forthcoming intergovernmental conference gives **them** a chance to ***answer*** that. Will the right hon. Gentleman start work now to ensure that the answer is a convincing one? (UK 2000.12.11)

Instead of uttering "Where does it end?" in his own name, the speaker introduces discourse participants he can relate to and rely on. The entity that the "people" represent functions as a multiplication of what the speaker stands for. Yet instead of uttering the question in their own name, Members of Parliament mitigate the potentially Face Threatening Act consisting in undermining the co-interlocutor's credibility by asking their questions through the voices of the people.

27. I use the term of *addresser* to refer to a speech role or discursive representation, while the term *speaker* refers to the physical person engaging in interaction. When referring to the semantic scope of a linguistic expression, the addresser is involved, not necessarily the speaker, although both may correspond on a number of occasions.

Making the people speak: Ventriloquizing as a resource in political discourse

One can legitimately ask, however, where do the people's expectations come from? Do parliamentarians rely on statistics (for instance, polls indicating what a – representative – majority of people think)? Retracing the "text trajectory" (Ehrlich, 2012) of extract (11) may provide some elements of answer:

(11) Jürgen Trittin (BÜNDNIS 90/DIE GRÜNEN) [opposition]: When you say that Europe is an answer to globalisation, then **people expect an *answer*** that will give them more security, more social security. (DE 2006.12.14)
Jürgen Trittin (BÜNDNIS 90/DIE GRÜNEN) [opposition]: Wenn Sie sagen, Europa sei eine Antwort auf Globalisierung, dann **erwarten die Menschen zunächst eine *Antwort,*** die ihnen mehr Sicherheit, mehr soziale Sicherheit verspricht. (DE 2006.12.14)

In (11), reported speech is indicated as free indirect speech. Instead of performing the people's words as quotes, they are summarized as what people "expect". This is a way for the speaker to express their opinion while representing (or claiming to represent) public opinion.

The occurrence in (11) displays a double level of reported speech that can also be referred to as an act of ventriloquizing through which "[s]omeone – the ventriloquist – is able to speak in such a way that his or her voice seems to come from the dummy or figure that he or she is manipulating" (Cooren and Sandler 2014: 230). Not only is the need for an answer expressed through the lens of the people, the deictic *you* ("Sie") in "When you say that…" links Trittin's statement with the current situation of utterance and with the direct co-interlocutors. Westerwelle already addressed the same question with the same words earlier during the session:

(12) Dr. Guido Westerwelle (FDP) [opposition]: **The best answer to globalisation** is the creation of a big European Single Market and coordinated European foreign and economic policies. (DE 2006.12.14)
Dr. Guido Westerwelle (FDP) [opposition]: **Die beste Antwort auf die Globalisierung** ist die Schaffung eines großen europäischen Binnenmarktes und eine koordinierte europäische Außen- und Wirtschaftspolitik. (DE 2006.12.14)

Interestingly enough, the utterance in (12) indirectly echoes previous statements, which were not only uttered at the time of the debate, but circulate as a shared representation amongst partisans of a deeper European integration, independently of the party:

(13) Gerhard Schröder (SPD) [majority]: It [the euro] is **Europe's answer to increased globalisation** […] (DE 1998.12.10)
Gerhard Schröder (SPD) [majority]: Er [der Euro] ist **Europas Antwort auf die zunehmende Globalisierung** […] (DE 1998.12.10)

(14) Dr. Angela Merkel (CDU) [opposition]: This big Europe is of course **an answer to globalisation**. (DE 2002.12.19)
Dr. Angela Merkel (CDU) [opposition]: Dieses vergrößerte Europa ist natürlich **eine Antwort der Europäer auf die Globalisierung**. (DE 2002.12.19)

(15) Dr. Werner Hoyer (FDP) [opposition]: The answer to globalisation's challenges is the European integration. (DE 2005.12.15)
Dr. Werner Hoyer (FDP) [opposition]: **Die Antwort auf die Herausforderungen der Globalisierung** ist die europäische Integration. (DE 2005.12.15)

In this regard, people's assumed expectations ("die Menschen erwarten") in (11) do not only (or not really) rely on the current debate, but also constitute a discursive space of shared representations within the "community of practice" formed by parliamentarians (Harris 2001: 453–454). By doing so, the citizens are reintroduced into politics – their voice is given back to them through the mediation of their representatives.

Related to the definition of populism introduced earlier, one can say that these occurrences only partially relate to the need to connect with the people. Through reported speech, Members of Parliament make people speak, but at the same time, they stress the necessary mediation it implies: parliamentarians speak *for* the people, but also *instead* of them. Yet the tendency to address the people's issues cannot be regarded as a mere populist trend, especially given the fact that the specificity indicator of German *Volk* and British *people* does not reveal any difference related to political affiliation.[28] To put it simply: the use of the lexeme "people" cannot be associated with any specific Member of Parliament or with any parliamentary group at the House of Commons or at the Bundestag.

In the UK, France, and Germany, the human referents enacted in parliamentary debates fulfil the role of the speaker of a fictitious dialogue, and, therefore, contribute to redefining the roles of the MPs. Both the plurality of referents (i.e. many) and the semantic indeterminacy associated with such lexemes (i.e. anyone) make the "people" effective enunciators in political discourse. In those

28. But the lemma *Mensch* appears slightly less within utterances of the Conservatives (CDU/CSU): −5,4 and slightly more within utterances of the socialist and left-wing parliamentary groups: +3,4 for the SPD and + 4,1 for Die Linke, respectively.

cases, I argue that "people" as a "category of speakers" "representing a whole" (Maingueneau 2000: 124),[29] and compared with other possible enunciative sources like "someone", activates [+ PLURALITY] more than [+ INDETERMINACY]. When speaking on behalf of the "people", speakers do not intend to identify the referents, but to use them as a strategic argument: from a rhetorical point of view, it is of no interest to know exactly *who* said it – or, in other terms, whom the "people" refer to – but rather to know that it has been said by an important amount of people, therefore legitimising the MP's words. This may be why modality is absent in the occurrences of the corpus; the speaker usually does not mitigate their claims (for instance by saying *people may want* or *what people probably expect*). In fact, MPs are usually pretty confident about what they have to say about the people.

Throughout the examples where what people want, feel, need, or fear is presented, the binary opposition between "the ordinary people" and the politicians sometimes appears between the lines:

(16) Mr Tony Blair (Labour) [majority]: I think that **many members of the public** *understand* exactly what is going on. **They** *want* **us** to present the facts calmly, which is what we try to do – it is the best antidote to scare stories of any kind. (UK 1998.12.14)

In such occurrences, the people are represented as an entity distinct from the parliamentarians – a pattern particularly visible in the construction *they want us* in (16), where the people correlate with the syntactic position of the subject and the semantic role of the agent while the Members of Parliament are put in the position of the object of the demand.

Picking the noun denoting human referents: "Citizens" and "people" in contrast

Although the focus on specific examples for a close-reading analysis does not render justice to the multiplicity and the complexity of the linguistic expressions involved in the representation of human referents, an overview of the competing linguistic expressions denoting humans is finally offered. In German, the forms *Bürger* and *Mensch* occur in similar contexts and apart from semi-fixed NPs such as "people with disabilities" (*Menschen mit Behinderung*, 2 occurrences in the corpus), or "young people" (*junge Menschen*, 6 occurrences), there is no significant difference in their contexts of use. The lexeme *Mensch* that corresponds to "people" is semantically less precise, shows a relative openness, and is accordingly

29. Original quote: "classe de locuteurs", enunciator "représentant d'un ensemble".

used almost twice more often (435 occurrences vs. 261 occurrences of "citizen"). Although one could have expected that the noun "citizen", with a focus on civil rights, would have been used in a more restricted fashion, this is not the case and both terms often seem to be used interchangeably. Since French does not have an all-encompassing noun such as "people", the representation of human referents is divided between *citoyen, concitoyen*, and *compatriote*, the former being oriented towards Europe and the last ones towards the national level.

A first explanation is semantic. Since English *people* has a broader scope of reference, it is proportionately used in a broader range of contexts. The frequent co-occurrence of *people* and the relative pronoun *who* also confirms this claim: the wide semantic range of *people*, associated with its extensive use, goes along with a need for specification through a relative clause:

(17) Mr. Tony Blair (Labour) [majority]: However, there is a growing view that a successor regime is not properly in place and, to safeguard our interests and those of **many people who work in companies** connected with the trade, it is important to get an extension. (UK 1998.12.14)

(18) Mr. Tony Blair (Labour) [majority]: My hon. Friend is absolutely correct that the Serbs continue to act as she says toward **people who are fleeing from Kosovo**. (UK 2003.06.23)

In these examples, the referential scope of *people* is restricted through the determinative relative clause, which applies the propositional content only to some extent, i.e. to an identifiable category of referents, which encompasses categories of population whose characteristics (like working in companies, fleeing from Kosovo) are clearly detectable. Out of 53 occurrences where *people* immediately co-occurs with *who* in the British corpus (*people who*), 32 occurrences refer to specific categories of population in a given context as in (17) and (18).

Yet 21 do not refer to people with specific attributes, but to a certain class of individuals who turn out to be problematic for political discourse: sceptics. In these cases, the relative clause does not enable to identify *who* exactly those people are (where they come from, what they do…), but builds a class of opponents:

(19) Mr. Tony Blair (Labour) [majority]: There are **people who see the future of Europe as a federal superstate**. I do not believe that they are in the majority; I think that they are in the minority. (UK 2000.12.11)

(20) Mr. Gordon Brown (Labour) [majority]: Unlike the Conservative party, however, I am prepared for Britain to be part of a taskforce to look at how we can improve the management of the EU; **only people who are blinded by Euroscepticism** would oppose any form of co-operation in Europe. (UK 2010.03.29)

These occurrences play an important part in depicting the heterogeneity of voices in political discourse. Mentioning their opponents' views enables the speaker to reaffirm their own position. Contrary to what one might think at first glance, the "people" are easily identifiable through their linguistic co-text. In (20), the NP *people who are blinded by Euroscepticism* unambiguously refers to the Conservative Party mentioned earlier in the same plenary session. As I have stated earlier, "people" cognitively activates [+ PLURALITY]. In this example, the seme [+ INDETERMINACY] is not aroused at all. The reference to *people who are blinded by Euroscepticism* instead of the "Conservative people" serves two main argumentative goals: on the one hand, it extends the reference to people who are not affiliated with the Conservative party, but would share the same views on this matter; on the other hand, it describes the Conservative party, associating it with pejorative terms.

From these examples, we can see that English *people* consequently exhibits a certain plasticity. The term "plasticity" is used for lexical units that are as likely to occur in contexts where out-group members are referred to as in contexts where in-group members are instantiated. Borrowing from the general understanding of the term, I retain the idea that some lexical units have the property of being easily shaped by their linguistic co-text and can adapt to changes in their environment. The lexeme *people* is used both in contexts involving out-group and in-group members, while German *Mensch* only serves communicative goals associated with in-group members. Note, however, that *some people*, by restricting the number of discourse participants involved in the class "people", is more likely to be associated with out-group members.

French has no real equivalent for *people* and *Menschen*. The term *personnes* (exclusively in the plural, as opposed to the singular form *personne*, which means "nobody"), is first very infrequent (11 occurrences), second limited to semi-fixed expressions or to the mention of events and facts (for instance, *11 000 personnes furent arrêtées par la police française*). The nouns *gens*, which is colloquial, and *individu*, which has a legal connotation (like English *persons* in the plural), both occur only once. The quasi-absence of the *plurale tantum gens* confirms Cappeau and Schnedecker's findings on the more frequent occurrence of *gens* in oral corpora (Cappeau and Schnedecker 2014: 3033), and conversely, tends to show that parliamentary debates function more as written genres than oral ones (see De Cock 2006). To speak about people, French thus has to – has lexically no other choice – mobilise categories that relate to civil rights ('(fellow) citizen', i.e. *citoyen*, *concitoyen*, *compatriote*).

Conclusion: The reference to the people, a property of political discourse

The quantitative and qualitative analyses have shown that the linguistic behaviours of *Volk* and *peuple* in the German and French corpora are associated with more restricted scopes than the English noun *people*. This contrastive discursive analysis of parliamentary debates has demonstrated that *people, Volk,* and *peuple* can hardly be considered as equivalents in contemporary political discourse on Europe. One of the major findings relies on the activation of [+ Plurality] rather than [+ Indeterminacy] for the pragmatic uses of "people" in parliamentary debates.

The English lexeme *people* is the least restricted term and applies to various co-texts. This makes it suitable for neutral expressions, where an attribute is added in order to point to a specific category, for instance based on nationality (*British people*). It can also be used for argumentative purposes such as denigrating political opponents. Whereas German *Volk* is barely used in parliament for obvious historical reasons, its counterpart *Mensch* takes on some of the features of *people*, especially the need to speak on the people's behalf. The French lexeme *peuple* remains limited to a specific discursive event in our corpus, the referendum on the constitution of Europe. The fact that French MPs draw less heavily on the features [+ Plurality] and [+ Indeterminacy] of "people" does not necessarily mean that the strategic use of argumentation, intended to create a common ground upon which they can then develop their political views, is not activated in French political discourse. Rather, it suggests that communicative goals are expressed through a mosaic of linguistic expressions in the respective languages. Instead of resorting to "the people", French parliamentarians may for instance resort to the third-person pronoun *on* (that can be translated as "one" or generic "you") (Truan 2018).

The various, sometimes even contradictory meanings of *people, Volk*, and *peuple* can be accounted for with the notion of concept or *Begriff* drawn from Kämper (2005: 102) and with the idea of "fluidity of reference". These lexemes are "concepts" insofar as they are both socially relevant and semantically complex, thus making them key linguistic items for diverging interpretations. The fact that English *people* is as likely to occur in context where it refers to the doxa and in contexts where it refers to out-group members is an indication of its plasticity, which I have defined as the ability to activate different semes – and thus to arouse different meanings – according to the context.

Recalling the link with populism, one might ask: given the wide distribution of the lemmas *people*, *Mensch,* and, to a certain extent, *Bürger* and *citoyen* in the corpus under investigation, should all or none of the speakers be considered to be populist? In the same vein, one has to ask whether the will of the French Far Left to connect to the people by emphasising the importance of referendums is a populist stance.

For many authors (Laclau 1977: 166; Taguieff 2002: 21, 25; Ihl, Chêne and Vial 2003: 11; Dezé 2004: 179; Higgins 2013: 59), populism fits into the essence of democracy itself and can be understood as a common feature of many political actors in traditional representative democracies. Bouillaud (2001: 300) for instance wonders: "Do not we run a risk seeing populism in every rallying that is not restricted to an elite?". Hermet (2001: 46) similarly refuses to describe populism based on the idea that it addressees the people since "this symbolic appeal to popular sovereignty characterises also democracy." The quantitative findings do not enable us to extrapolate on the "appeal to the people" being a special feature of a specific parliamentary group.[30] This might be related to the fact that Members of Parliament are already in a position of power, whereas parties traditionally viewed as populist such as the AfD (Alternative für Deutschland) did not sit in parliament in the period (1998–2015) considered.

By refusing to describe some political parties or parliamentary groups as "populist" prior to analysis, this project presents findings without ideological bias. In line with van Leeuwen (this volume), I argue that the mere mention of the people is not a sufficient criterion to distinguish a populist discourse from other types of discourse. Indeed, all parliamentary groups refer to the people in approximately the same frequency. Nevertheless, there are differences in terms of contexts of apparition. The qualitative analyses have shown that German Conservatives are less reluctant to acknowledge the existence of a German people. Similarly, French Communists are more willing to put the spotlight on the importance of the people in decision-making processes.

These findings do not allow for the extrapolation of a recurrent link between specific parliamentary groups and so-called populist stances. Yet, they demonstrate that the "people" is a discursive construct subject to controversy and meta-discourse. Even though parliamentary debates are not explicitly addressed to the citizens, they are nevertheless designed with this mass of unspecified targets in mind, with all their different, if not contradictory political views. In this sense, the reference to "the people" or "a people" enables the speakers to subsume this complex patchwork of individuals while conveying an impression of unity by means of the symbolic and semantic reduction to a single lexeme. This makes "people" an extremely productive and malleable concept. While speakers do not utter the same reservations or hesitations towards other similar lexemes such as "citizen(s)", the need for an inclusive stance in which "the people" are actively involved through cognitive verbs ("want", "expect") and verbs of speech ("ask") remains constant throughout the political spectrum and across countries.

30. The results for the French corpus are still restricted to a specific debate on a particular theme.

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CHAPTER 9

Standing up for 'real people'

UKIP, the Brexit, and discursive strategies on Twitter

Samuel Bennett

Right wing populism has always been exclusionary in nature and relies on classic positive in-group/negative out-group constructions (van Dijk 1998). This chapter investigates how the UK Independence Party (UKIP) discursively constructed 'the people' during the 2016 'Brexit' referendum campaign. It will be argued that 'the people' were defined in opposition to two key groups: Elite mainstream political actors and migrants. The consequence of this strategy has been the legitimisation of race hate crimes and a further conceptual separation of 'the people' from the political classes. Data is taken from the UKIP twitter account and I qualitatively analyse this by paying particular attention to topoi and to the discursive construction of 'the people' as a social actor.

Keywords: UKIP, Brexit, referendum, Twitter, social media, populism, critical discourse analysis, argumentation

Introduction

On 23 June 2016 the British electorate voted to leave the EU. That the referendum even came about is due in large part to the increasing prominence of the right-wing populist UK Independence Party (UKIP), then led by Nigel Farage. Since 2010 the party had become a thorn in the side of both the Conservative and Labour parties. From Labour it had taken working class votes from those who felt left behind by the modernising principles of New Labour, whilst on the right, it had become the most trusted party on immigration and began to appeal to traditional Conservatives who were wary of David Cameron's brand of social liberalism.[1]

1. This included a more inclusive approach to equality issues (marriage, social justice and poverty) in attempt to shed the 'nasty party' label.

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As a right-wing populist party, UKIP under Farage positioned ‘the people’ as *the* central concept in their electoral discourse. The party made, and continues to makes use of prototypical appeals to ‘the people’, as noble, pure and under threat. The people are thereby juxtaposed vertically with ‘elites’ and horizontally with outsiders (in this case immigrants). Nowhere was this strategy more visible, and I would argue fruitful, than during the ‘Brexit’ campaign. This chapter traces the discursive strategies and micro-linguistic realisations of this imagining of ‘the British people’.

I argue that populism is a repertoire of performative and linguistic strategies used to mobilise a population (see introduction and Chapter 1, this volume). Following this, I firstly highlight the rise of Twitter as form of political communication and then explain that Twitter is uniquely suited to right-wing populist political movements. Section 4 provides the socio-political context of the Brexit referendum and Section 5 introduces my methodological and theoretical approach to critical discourse analysis, which focuses on the “increasingly conceptual nature of discourse”, i.e. public discourse is largely a contestation over key concepts (Krzyżanowski 2016: 308). Section 6 is devoted to the qualitative analysis and interpretation of data taken from UKIP’s Twitter account as well as embedded videos, images and hyperlinked texts. Finally, in the concluding section I explain the wider consequences stemming from UKIP’s discourse strategies.

Populism

Rather than being an ideology in the sense of a coherent set of ideas, I understand populism as a specific discursive strategy (see introduction and Chapter 1, this volume). That is, it is a specific repertoire of verbal and non-verbal social practices that can be deployed by public sphere actors in order to mobilise support for a particular set of activities within the field of politics. It is a “flexible way of animating political support” (Jansen 2011: 83) or, as Aslandis (2015: 12) posits, a schemata of interpretation that allows users “to locate, perceive, identify and label” complex social practices. As argued elsewhere in this volume, populism operates as a discursive and political logic.

It is hard to imagine any form of democracy in which political actors do not make reference to ‘the people’ (Stavrakakis 2014; see introduction, this volume), but in populist politics, ‘the people’ are central (Chapter 1, this volume). They are the victims, the solution and the authorisation for action, all at once. Taking a discourse-theoretical perspective on populism, I argue that ‘the people’, as a homogenous bloc, do not exist *a priori* (see Chapter 1, this volume). Populist actors must construct the populist subjectivity by producing an empty signifier (Laclau

2005: 40); they must bring 'the people' into being by producing those they claim to represent (Moffitt and Tormey 2014). In speaking of 'the people' there is a reification of the concept (see Chapter 1, this volume). Indeed, we can speak of different, context specific "people-related signifiers" with in populist discourse. The discursive content of populism relies, on an us/them bifurcation. The pure and noble people are set in antagonistic opposition vertically with elites and horizontally with outsiders (Jansen 2011: 86; see introduction, this volume). Panizza (2005: 3) defines populism as an "anti-status quo discourse that simplifies the political space by symbolically dividing society between the people (as the underclass) and its other". It is also important to recognise that within this construction elites are constructed as a "small and illegitimately powerful" group (De Cleen, this volume) whose interests run counter to the much more numerous 'people'. This antagonistic collective action frame relies on a denial of internal pluralism. There is only one 'people' and one common good (Müller 2014: 487) and differences within the in-group are erased, or at least backgrounded (Panizza 2005). Indeed, the "ideal homogeneity" of 'the people' is only possible by excluding specific parts of the wider population (Jagers and Walgrave 2007: 319) or those who are different from us. Aslandis (2015: 1) sees it as a constructed "antagonism between the people and elites, against the backdrop of popular sovereignty". The 'elite' are constructed as corrupt and "defrauding 'the people' of their rightful political authority" (Ibid., 9). This goes beyond typical adversarial political discourse, because, as Mouffe (2005) notes, moral arguments cannot be managed by democratic processes and so, in reaction to this threat from above and outside, there is only one possible reaction: take back control.[2]

This overall macro strategy is operationalised by a combination of discursive, visual, performative and aesthetic acts (Moffitt and Tormey 2014: 386). Populist rhetoric can often be characterised by particular manifestations of simplicity, directness, use of colloquial language, and fallacious appeals to common sense (*argumentum ad populum*). This allows actors to position themselves as prototypical members of 'the people', who are able and willing to act on their behalf (Sakkit and Pettersson 2016: 157). Such a strategy feeds into an anti-intellectualism that Wodak (2015: 3) calls the "arrogance of ignorance". Oftentimes, populist politicians will use slang, swear and make politically incorrect statements. This again places them closer to the putative 'people'. It is also a strategy of reverse framing (Kelsey 2015) that uses liberal values of free speech and tolerance to both exclude others and paint supporters of social liberalism as illiberal (Müller 2014). Such rhetoric is not accidental. As Wodak notes, right wing populist politicians "intentionally

2. For Mouffe (2013) the role of agonal democracy is to transform antagonisms into adversarial agonist relationships.

provoke scandals by violating publically accepted norms" (2015: 12). This sets in train a cycle of scandal, denial, refination of the scandal, and victimhood (Ibid., 19) which, as it becomes mediatised – however negatively – enhances the visibility of the party and furthers its ends.

A final characteristic of populist political parties is their dependence on the popularity of charismatic leaders (e.g. Hugo Chavez, Geert Wilders, Rodrigo Duterte and Nigel Farage), populist leaders often emphasise their personal features in order to hide the structural weakness of the party (cf. Aslandis 2015) and the contradictions within their policy. Visual media such as television, as well as new media (see Section 3, below) allow for the political to become spectacular (Moffitt and Tormey 2014), which is a boon to populist actors who rely on charisma rather than on content. Populist movements are, then, often cults of personality that invoke a close or direct bond between a leader and his or her 'people' (Müller 2014). Such movements use a range of performative and discursive strategies to create an illusion of closeness. In addition, the leader is presented as belonging to the people, being its saviour and the right person to steer the country out of the crisis (cf. Wodak 2015; Kelsey 2015).

Twitter as a site of populist discourse (re)production: An alt-space for the alt-right

Since its launch in 2006 the micro-blogging service Twitter has swiftly become a mainstay of national and transnational public spheres. On average there are 320m active monthly users globally and roughly 17m users in the UK alone (Statista 2016). The platform is used primarily to disseminate and receive information and opinion. Zappavigna has characterised Twitter as a "multiparty, temporally fluid and highly intertextual" medium (Zappavigna 2012: 195). Though this is a characteristic of other social media platforms as well, Twitter can be set apart in terms of its speed.

Whilst Twitter offers the possibility of unfettered access to a multitude of positions and perspectives, there remains a question of whether Twitter is "an agenda setting device and an application for advancing issue-based campaigns or whether certain elite figures are able to set the agenda" (Adi, Erickson, and Lilleker, 2014). On the one hand, there is the argument that Twitter replicates the current public sphere that is dominated by elite actors and that this medium merely enables them to address wider audiences (Albu 2014: 5). On the other hand, KhosraviNik and Zia (2014: 757) contend that social media empower "ordinary receivers" to be producers of texts. Moreover, KohsraviNik and Unger (2016) note that such platforms potentially enable generally apolitical publics to take part in political debate. From

a research perspective it is important to bear in mind that Twitter users are not representative of wider populations and that findings should not be automatically extrapolated to society as a whole. Quantitative surveys and polls conducted on Twitter are unreliable indictors of broader attitudes.

Nevertheless, I have argued elsewhere (Bennett 2016) that Twitter provides a very fruitful source of texts for critical discourse analysts. Firstly, I see the platform as a primary gateway for locating and analysing secondary and tertiary levels of texts within longer intertextual "discourse chains" (Fairclough 1995: 11). Individual Tweets can be useful texts in and of themselves, but by taking a multimodal and multi-generic approach and including hyperlinked and embedded texts in the analysis, researchers can look "for traces of intertextuality, interdiscursivity and, recontextualization of social practices and discourses" (Bennett 2016: 6). An analysis of secondary level texts can indicate wider trends of discursive production and social practices. In turn, such trends may point to the ways in which a given issue is being framed in wider societal discourses, and to the dominant, or at least common forms of its micro-linguistic realisation (grammar, lexical choice, argumentation etc.).

Focusing on Twitter, I would argue that the current populist revival around the world relies to a large extent on new media and social media. I thus propose that *the operational and functional logic of social media uniquely allows for the political logic of populism to be enacted*. As argued above, populist political movements will try to create the image of a direct bond between their leaders and the people. The forging of this bond occurs outside of traditional political systems (i.e. parliamentary democracy) and addresses sections of the public who feel neglected by mainstream politics. In the public spheres of the twentieth century communication became increasingly mediated and political actors were reliant on mainstream media to get their message across. This benefited dominant political actors and those with ties to media outlets while excluding other voices from the public sphere. This situation provided a powerful incentive for actors with minority positions to create an alternative public space away from mainstream political discourse. Since its inception Twitter has come to be used by elite agenda-setting public sphere actors (Adi, Erickson, and Lilleker 2014). The e-politics and e-diplomacy practised on Twitter offers such actors a direct route for communication between politicians and their publics a route that does not require reliance on more traditional third-party media outlets. In theory at least, Twitter gives lay-users the chance to directly correspond with public actors they would otherwise be unable to contact. This is particularly useful for political actors who have limited access to mainstream media and for members of the public whose views and opinions

would not be covered by such media.[3] As KhosraviNik and Zia (2014: 757) note, modern social media allow for the construction of non-mainstream identities and provide space for a "new dynamic of social and political power for non-elite text producers resisting the discourses of established institutions". Thus, Twitter offers an alternative public space in which it is possible to air alternative views. Among other things, it is therefore a useful channel for actors practising far-right politics and other forms of extremism. It is *an alt-space for the alt-right*.

In order to construct this image of a direct leader-follower bond, populist leaders emphasize certain personal features (e.g. Nigel Farage's visual performances of smoking and drinking). Visual media have allowed for the personalisation of politics, with a popular focus on how actors, especially party leaders, perform (McAllister 2007). However, I would contend that social media platforms enable personalisation even more, via multimodal texts of different genres that highlight the 'personable' nature of the actor rather than through the more obviously stage-managed media performances of traditional politics such as policy speeches and media appearances. In this way, Twitter closely resembles rallies, town hall meetings and hustings.

As Wodak (2015: 19) has argued, right wing populist politicians "intentionally provoke scandals by violating publically accepted norms" which are then subject to denial, redefinition, victimhood and dramatization. This is done in order to gain media coverage (Deacon and Wring 2016) which relies on sensationalism for sales and clicks. The inflammatory or politically incorrect statements that are the lifeblood of right wing populists are even better suited to the temporally fluid platform of Twitter. Twitterstorms (sudden spikes activity based on a hashtag or user) start on Twitter and are then "picked up by the traditional press and through various feedback loops and reache a wide audience, even those who are not on Twitter" (Techopedia 2016). This offers populist political actors a very cost-effective media strategy and a degree of media access that would normally not be available to them. As such, Twitter broadens the range and number of potential receivers of populist messages.

3. It should be noted though that right wing political actors often represent their own interventions as taboo and 'saying what can't be said', whereas in reality their topics of focus (immigration, integration etc.) are some of the most widely discussed issues in politics. Linked to this, media and political parties who represent themselves as mainstream or moderate find efficacy in creating a *cordon sanitaire* around extremist actors and discourses (Littler and Feldman 2017). This allows them to employ similar discourses but from 'safe' (non-extremist) positions.

The awkward squad: A 'mutiny within conservatism' and UKIP's rise to prominence

The referendum result and the rise of UKIP as a national electoral force should not be thought of as new phenomena, but rather as the by-products of longer historical processes within British politics and society. Britain's post-war relationship with Europe and its supra-national European institutions can, at best, be described as ambivalent. Whilst leaders of the Conservative and Labour parties have been consistently supportive of (continued) membership, they have had to deal with considerable back-bench rebellion on so-called European issues. Europe has been a politically toxic issue for the major parties and an Achilles heel for Tory leaders in particular. The topic of Europe has played a substantial part in the resignation of the last three Conservative Prime Ministers. The political commentator Matthew Parris observed that the rise of UKIP was down to a "mutiny within conservatism" (2014). Successive Conservative leaders have continued to support membership, but the party members have become increasingly euro-sceptic as EU-integration has deepened. The right wing of the party (both MPs and grassroots members) has become ever-more vocal, especially after the 2008 financial crisis. In response, in 2013 Cameron stated that he would hold an in-out referendum if EU institutions were not reformed – a promise that was also included in the 2015 election manifesto. The referendum was held on the 23rd June 2016. The final result was a 52–48 result to leave.

Whilst Cameron did experience considerable internal pressure from his party to call the referendum, that he was placed in this position at all was largely due to the rise of UKIP on the UK political scene. Deacon and Wring (2016: 1) describe the party as neo-populist, "not extremist in character" and attempting "to convey an aura of respectability and restraint" in attempt to distance themselves from established extreme right-wing parties such as the British Nationalist Party. However, this belies their strong, anti-immigration, nativist tendencies, which are more in line with right-wing populism (Wodak 2015). The party was set up in 1993 but it was originally a single-issue party that sought to change policy rather than seriously challenge for votes (Ford and Goodwin 2014). Up until 2010 UKIP received minimal coverage in the mainstream media and was not taken seriously by other parties. Its politicians were also dogged by bad publicity, something that the Conservative party tried to play up in the media. In 2006 David Cameron labelled them "a bunch of fruitcakes, loonies and closet racists, mostly" (BBC 2006). At the 2010 election UKIP decided to "diversify their policy portfolio" (Deacon and Wring 2016: 3) signifying their populist turn by taking advantage of the public outcry over the MPs' expenses scandal and taking an overtly anti-establishment position. This was followed by improved election results in the 2013 local elections

(25% of the vote) and in the 2014 European elections, where it gained the most votes (26.6%) and got 24 MEPs elected into office. At the 2015 general election they fielded 624 candidates, returning just one MP but quadrupling their vote to 12.6%.

The rise of UKIP can be put down to a number of factors. The first is a change in public attitudes. For the past twenty years British society and politics has been dominated by socially liberal attitudes and policy. During this time Labour and the Conservatives both focused on middle class moderate swing voters, which is where their activists and large parts of the media came from (Ford and Goodwin 2014: 281). At the same time, many working-class supporters ceased to identify with the Labour party but rather than switching to the Conservatives, they stopped identifying with mainstream parties and instead found their views to be more in line with the populist appeal of UKIP (Ibid.). At the same time, Cameron's "compassionate conservatism" annoyed traditional conservatives. UKIP used this dissatisfaction and argued that the Conservative party had betrayed its ideological roots (Kelsey 2015).

Linked to this is UKIP's move away from being a single-issue party. They employed a fusion-strategy, which merged their traditional critique of Europe with a critique of immigration, as a way of overcoming the low electoral salience of the EU (Ford and Goodwin 2014). Traditionally the Tories had been seen by the electorate as the party most trusted to control immigration, but since 2010 UKIP has had ownership of the issue at a time when it became the most salient voting issue (Dennison and Goodwin 2015: 169–170), a process that has been developing since the 2005 election, if not before (Bennett 2018a). One offshoot of this was a shift of immigration discourse to the right. In order to counteract UKIP's position, Cameron's government introduced increasingly harsh policies, exemplified by the introduction of the 'go-home' vans in London by the then Home Secretary Theresa May in an attempt to combat illegal immigration. Farage actually criticised these as being crass but also acknowledged that they owed something to his party's influence (Deacon and Wring 2016). The Conservatives were compelled into implementing stricter policies, because of UKIP's 'ownership' of the issue.

However, the 'Brussels-plus' approach (the fusion of a critique of Europe with a critique of immigration) (Dennison and Goodwin 2015) was not only anti-immigrant, it also addressed the frustration and dissatisfaction with the functioning of politics and the negative view of Labour and Conservatives. As Dennison and Goodwin (Ibid.: 186) argue, UKIP's success has been down to its metamorphosis from a single issue party to one that appealed to a "socially and attitudinally distinctive electorate" that felt their views were not being represented in government (Ford and Goodwin 2014: 281). These were the 'left-behind': older working class, white voters with limited educational qualifications and who were "pessimistic about their future economic prospects" (Ford and Goodwin 2014:

277). The party mobilised the socio-economic divides that had been growing for two decades and gave them a political expression (Ibid.). It was able to tap into a "values-driven backlash among voters towards a universalistic and cosmopolitan outlook that had dominated politics and media" for almost a generation (Dennison and Goodwin 2015: 185). This successful mobilisation of societal divides was aided by a much more receptive populist media than before: Traditionally Conservative-supporting newspapers such as the Daily Mail, the Sun and especially the Express, wanted to be seen as kingmakers and their legitimacy rested upon their claim of an "empathic connection with 'ordinary people'" (Deacon and Wring 2016: 7)

Their success in carving out a distinctive space on the populist right wing of British politics is no doubt also due to their three-time leader Nigel Farage. Like many populist leaders, he portrays himself (and is portrayed by media) as different from other politicians (Ewen 2016). He presents himself as moral and trustworthy and as an "'avuncular', erudite everyman" (Deacon and Wring 2016: 5) rather than as the ex-merchant banker that he is. He is also a 'character', a straight-talking, "gloriously non-PC" man of the people (Kelsey 2015: 17), who has cheated death on more than one occasion. This "manipulation of ordinariness" (Deacon and Wring 2016: 7) is a political strategy that foregrounds his alcohol and cigarette consumption and 'English gent' attire as a way of placing him close to the people and often to be found in a pub. It also positions him in opposition to other career politicians and party leaders who are branded as "weak, bland, boring or geeky" (Kelsey 2015: 15) and out of touch with the people.

Methodology and data collection

'Concepts' in discourse theory and CDA

In order to analyse populist discourse and attempt to explain the lure of populist political strategies, one can focus on the way key concepts are discursively constructed, and on the way certain groups are placed in opposition to each other. The analysis of the data below is based upon a broadly post-structural theory of society and discourse, which is a cornerstone of critical approaches to discourse analysis and which sees discourses as "practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak" (Foucault 1972: 50). That is, discursive and semiotic practices, the act of discourse (re)production, are both constituted by and constitutive of social practices and the larger social structure. Linked to this I would like to bring in Laclau and Mouffe's (1985) discourse theory in which "the whole social field is understood as a web of processes in which meaning is created" (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002: 1). Social phenomena – and language as one such

social phenomenon – are never finished or total and "it is through conventions, negotiations and conflicts in social contexts that structures of meaning are fixed and challenged" (Ibid.). However, crucially, "meaning can never be ultimately fixed and this opens up the way for constant social struggles about definitions of society and identity, with resulting social effects" (Ibid.).

Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory is also close to a number of CDA approaches to analysis, including Fairclough's dialectical-relational approach (1995) and, more recently Krzyżanowski's Discourse Conceptual Approach (2016, cf. below). In their theory of discourse, Laclau and Mouffe propose that social actors place signs (lexical items as signifiers) in different relations to one another and in doing so these signs acquire new meanings. A discourse is formed "by the partial fixation of meaning around certain *nodal points*" (Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 112). The nodal point itself does not acquire meaning until it becomes part of a wider network of concepts (signs). Elements that are particularly open to being bestowed with different meaning are known as floating signifiers (Laclau 1990: 28). These signs absorb meaning and symbolism from its users (Mehlman 1972) and there can be high levels of contestation about this meaning. Krzyżanowski combines elements of conceptual history or *Begriffsgeschichte* (Koselleck) with CDA. For Koselleck (2002: 418) "not every word is a social or political concept". Those words that do become social or political concepts do so because they "possess, one may say, certain potential to capture or encapsulate social meanings as well as a substantial claim of generality" (Krzyzanowski 2016: 312). Krzyzanowski points out that there are three types of concept: *Grundbegriffe* (key social and political concepts, or in Laclau and Mouffe's parlance, nodal points), *Nebenbegriffe* (sister-concepts), and *Gegenbegriffe* (counter concepts). Figure 1 shows how in-depth CDA research can uncover these concepts in the discourse of migrant integration (Bennett 2018a)

Of key importance for this paper is the fact that counter concepts are understood in opposition to key concepts. In populist and other exclusionary discourses, concepts that represent (groups of) social actors will only be understood in opposition to other groups – i.e. 'the people' versus 'elites' or 'migrants' – traces of which can be identified with rigorous linguistic analysis of texts across multiple social and semantic fields. This struggle over the definition of key actors and concepts is often extremely pronounced in times of social upheaval and crisis, when there is a high level of disagreement over social practices, institutions, processes and national groupings in the public sphere.

CDA draws our attention to processes of recontextualisation whereby texts are subjected to meaningful transformations. The most important ground work for critical linguists' appropriation and integration of recontextualisation comes from Bernstein, who saw it as "a principle for appropriating other discourses and

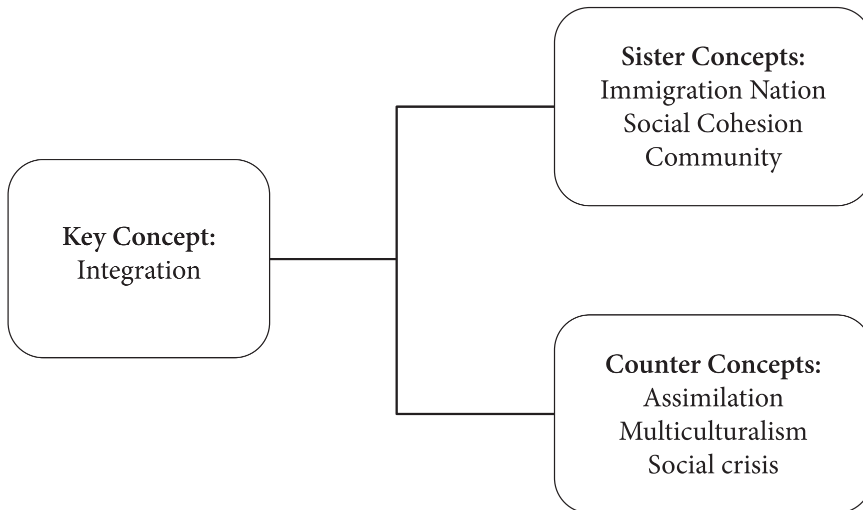

Figure 1. Conceptual map of 'integration' in elite public discourse

bringing them into a special relation with each other for the purpose of their selection, transmission and acquisition" (1990: 183–184). A hierarchy of discourses is thus produced. However, recontextualisation is not neutral or accidental but rather a "complex strategic process of establishing a certain hierarchy of discourses" so that "any recontextualised discourse becomes a signifier for something other than itself" (Bernstein 1990: 184) and this in turn works to sustain "the hegemony of certain discursive frames" (Krzyzanowski 2016: 314). When analysing texts, then, researchers should pay attention to interdiscursivity – the synchronic and diachronic connections and relationships between discourses. For example, one could investigate how discourses of migration are linked to discourses of public services, national identity etc.. As Richardson and Wodak (2009) have indicated, populist and extreme right wing political actors often recontextualise historical texts (or phrases), which in turn point to "subtle historical continuities" in their discourse production. Linguistically, this can be realised through argumentation schemata or the use of implicatures and pre-suppositions (Ibid.).

Data collection and categories of analysis

The data was collected through a three-stage process. In the first stage, primary level texts (individual tweets of max. 140 characters) were collected. All tweets were retrieved from UKIP's official Twitter account @UKIP for the period of June 3rd to 30th 2016. This included a three week period in the run-up to the referendum and a subsequent seven-day period afterwards. The data collection

retrieved 932 tweets.[4] In the second stage the sample was downsized with the use of deductive keywords pertaining to, firstly the representation of 'the people' as a (homogenous) social actor and, secondly UKIP's key policy concerns over the last 10 years. Four keywords were chosen: *people* (n = 64), *migration* (n = 25), *immigration* (n = 33) and *borders* (n = 33). This gave a revised total of 122 tweets once duplicates had been removed. As mentioned previously, Twitter and other social media allow for unique examples of multimodality, often as a form of legitimation, and of (hyper-) recontextualisation. In the final stage of data collection all links and embedded material (photos, images, and videos) were downloaded for later analysis. Forty five tweets (37% of the total number of tweets) included some form of material other than the original tweet or re-tweet.

For the fine-grained, qualitative analysis of the data I pay particular attention to topoi usage and to the discursive construction of social actors (van Leeuwen 1996; Reisigl and Wodak 2001; KhosraviNik 2010). KhosraviNik (Ibid.) has proposed a three-level framework for analysing social groups focusing on actors, actions and arguments and while I do not follow this approach entirely, I do analyse all three domains proposed by KhosraviNik. With regard to the construction of social actors, nominative and predicative strategies can be analysed (Reisigl and Wodak 2001) by focusing on the qualities, agency, role allocation of actions. Linguistically one can thereby focus on attribution, verbs, adjectives, pronouns, modality, space and time (van Leeuwen 1996). Following Reisigl and Wodak (2001: 50) referential strategies can also be based on synecdoche whereby "a specific feature, trait or characteristic is selectively pushed to the fore as a 'part for the whole', as a representative depicter".

In addition to an analysis of the construction of social actors, I will provide a discourse analysis of UKIP's topoi. Topoi differ from topics. Whereas *topics* are the key themes within a text or discourse fragment, *topoi* are specific argumentation strategies that are used to persuade interlocutors. Topoi or argumentation schemes are 'headline' tropes that connect discourses and give texts a level of coherence by "creating connections between utterances and areas of experience, bridging contradictions, generating plausibilities and acceptances" (Wodak 2001: 35). Within pragma-dialectical theory, van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1992: 96) see the use of topoi as "a conventionalised way of representing the relation between what is stated in the argument and what is stated in the standpoint". Topoi can be used strategically to persuade the recipient and although they are not static there are some topoi that are particularly salient in populist discourse, including burden

4. Initially, the intention had been to also include material from Nigel Farage's own account but this was rejected because the UKIP account retweeted all of his tweets as a matter of course, and so to include his account would have merely meant repetition of results.

(e.g. '*Fears over impact on jobs and public services*'), crisis (e.g.'*we must act now to save our country*') and threat (e.g. '*immigration is hurting us*').

Analysis

The people…

Unsurprisingly the trope, or topos, of the people was a recurring presence in the data and relied on two specific, and often co-present argumentation schemes: *argumentum ad populum* and *argumentum ad verecundium*. Within populist strategy, the two are closely linked: The people (constructed as an absolute majority) are the authority. Thus within the wider discourse of the Brexit, the people were a nodal point or key concept around which other discourses and argumentation schemes were subordinate to.[5]

(1) RT @JonathanArnott: An unelected member of the House of Lords seems to be unhappy with the British people deciding their own future. (June 10, 2016)

(2) RT: @Nigel_Farage: Establishment must accept the result. The British people voted to take back control of our borders & our democracy. (June 28, 2016)

(3) UKIP Leader @Nigel_Farage: Trade is not made by governments, nor by bureaucrats it is done by people #ITVEURef. (June 7, 2016)

(4) #UKIP Leader @Nigel_Farage – 'I believe the best people to govern Britain are the British people themselves 'on @theJeremyVine show. (June 7, 2016)

The logical fallacy of the *argumentum ad populum* was present in multiple forms. In Excerpt (1) it is formulated as an appeal to democracy – i.e. the people are said to have the sovereign right to decide and this right is said to be challenged by an 'unelected' actor. This negative identification (cf. van Leeuwen 1996: 64) constructs the opposition to 'the people' as understood by UKIP as undemocratic. This excerpt also points obliquely to the many inconsistencies and contradictions in UKIP's political campaign for the UK to leave the EU. During the run-up to the referendum political actors called for rights to be repatriated back from Brussels and that the British parliament should be sovereign. And yet, here, that very same parliament, or at least a member of it, is constructed as an actor that opposes what the people want. In Excerpt (2) the same argumentation scheme is present but in the form of an appeal to the many. The (group) actor is assimilated as 'the British

5. Unless otherwise stated, all excerpt texts are from the @UKIP Twitter account.

people', which serves to create an image of homogeneity of action. Again this is a common part of populist ideology – seeing the people as one and downplaying differences. By doing so, the referendum result is retroactively constructed as unanimous and dissenting opinion is implicitly downplayed as irrelevant.. In turn the appeal to the many is made that much stronger than if the claim had been 52% (of those who voted) or just 27% (if compared to the total population). Furthermore, the people are constructed as active agents through the use of the active conjugation 'voted'. This is indicative of another pillar of populism: that engagement of the people in political and administrative decisions is a "central and typically uncontested value" (Clarke 2013: 211) that has been previously missing or denied. This feature of populism can also be observed in Excerpt (3) where the people are activated as the agents of trade. Lastly, Excerpt (4) is a good example of *argumentum ad verecundium* within the data. Here, the people have the authority to make decisions bestowed upon them by dint of their nationality. This tweet is a recontextualisation of a TV interview. The implicature is that non-Brits, other Europeans, or European institutions, are not in a position to make decisions about Britain because they lack the authority or necessary skills to do so.

… vs the elites

As noted earlier, a key part of right wing populist ideology is that there is an "antagonism between people and elites, against the backdrop of popular sovereignty" (Aslandis 2015: 1). In the data under examination, UKIP constructs 'the elite' as an outgroup that directly opposes 'the people'.

(5) RT @Steven_Woolfe: This is a chance to change things for the better. It's we the people vs. the Elite. Let your voice be heard. (21 June 2016)

(6) There's almost a new class war. This referendum is making clear to me when I am campaigning that it's between the rich and the poor. (@Steven_Woolfe, embedded video, 21 June 2016)

(7) RT @oflynnmep: Cam and Os now openly fighting to sustain a system where the British people are their servants, not their masters. Don't buckle. (5 June 2016)

(8) 'Project fear is the political class scaring ordinary people but with their own interest in mind' @Nigel_Farage #WATO. (6 June 2016)

(9) #UKIP Leader @Nigel_Farage put forward an honest, patriotic plan that looks out for the British people #ITVEURef. (7 June 2016)

Excerpt (5), a tweet by the UKIP MEP Steven Woolfe, included an embedded video of himself atop an open-topped bus on the campaign trail. It also included the quote found in Excerpt (6). In both tweets, the polarising us/them discursive strategy is evident even though this strategy appears in three different configurations using different collective nominations based on social class (classsonyms – a sub-strata of politonyms – see Reisgl and Wodak [2001: 49] or, in van Leeuwen's terms, a form of abstraction). In the former, it is 'the people vs elite' and in the latter this opposition is imagined as a 'new class war', as a battle between 'the rich and the poor'. At the temporal level, these excerpts are of interest as well. The video was shot and edited before the tweet. Excerpt (5) should therefore be read as a recontextualisation of Excerpt (6). Woolfe's original soundbite is given a summarised 'headline' argument – 'we the people v the Elite' – which itself contains, and indeed is enhanced by a further recontextualisation, that of 'we the people', the first words of the US Bill of Rights. This recontextualisation not only constructs the 'the people' as homogenous, but also links the demands of UKIP to the ideals of popular democracy and individual liberty.

Moreover, the presence of an almost Marxist vision of class war is continued in Excerpt 7 and 8. In 7, David Cameron and George Osborne are used as personifications of the 'remain' campaign and placed in hierarchical opposition to the rest of the population that is depicted as potential 'servants' of these politicians. This is strengthened by the wider mental models (van Dijk 1998) that are likely present with regard to these two actors and Cameron's cabinet in general, who, over time have been represented in the press as privileged members of the elite or aristocracy by mentioning educational backgrounds at Eton and/or Oxford. Excerpt (7) also points to another common theme of UKIP discourse and discourses on Britain's membership of the EU more generally: the construction of an an interdiscursive crisis, i.e. a crisis that links many other social 'crises' to a single dominant 'crisis' explained through issues related to European membership (see Bennett 2018b). Likewise, Excerpt (8) creates a distinction between 'the political class' and the rest of the population. In this tweet, Farage positions himself outside of this 'battle' contradicting his role as politician and as a member of the 'political class' he criticises. A key figure in the 'leave' campaign he and other UKIP actors position him as a saviour of the 'ordinary people'. This rather common populist discursive/performative strategy is also exemplified in Excerpt (9).

In nominalization strategies, the data also presented examples of predicational strategies as well, with certain actors' actions being negatively evaluated.

(10) This really was the people versus the establishment. It was ordinary working class people against the Brussels elite, against the big the big banks, against, big business, against project fear and I just want to know where

the chancellor is at the moment because he seems to have disappeared altogether…Now, Giles [Fraser – another panellist] spoke about the sneering now because people were angry. Y'know I'll give you an example. A Guardian columnist yesterday wrote that we got Brexit because of northern crappy towns; places like Preston, my constituency, places like Wigan and Blackburn and Burnley and I've had enough of this London-centric metropolitan snobbery which has infested this country for far too long.
(@UKIP, embedded clip of Paul Nuttall on BBC Question Time, 26 June 2016)

(11) A sovereign parliament should serve the people – for people like @SKinnock to suggest it will defy a #Brexit vote is unthinkable #Vine. (7 June 2016)

Excerpt (10) comes from an embedded clip of Paul Nuttall's appearance on BBC Question Time three days after the referendum.[6] Like Examples 5–9 it also homogenises all the British into 'the people'. However, rather than placing the people in opposition to one group, they are faced with an association of actors here: "an alliance which exists only in relation to a specific activity" (van Leeuwen 1996: 50–51) that goes against the 'public will' – albeit separate actors with the shared characteristic of not being of the people, because they are economically or politically distant from them. Later in the quote he refers to actions and attitudes of those that were against the 'leave' campaign ('sneering', 'snobbery') and claims that a Guardian journalist blamed the result on 'crappy northern towns'. In actual fact this is a de- and recontextualisation of an article by Ian Jack (who happens to have been born in Scotland and used to live in Lancashire). The article only mentioned one of the towns and never used the word crappy (Jack 2016).[7] The 'leave' voters as the victims of a particular worldview that is supposedly only present in London.[8] This idea is intensified by a metaphor of disease – infested – which works to dehumanize those who hold such a view and imply that such opinions are destructive and need eradication from the moral universe" (Perry 1983) of the UK. The tweet also juxtaposes London to a neglected countryside and so London becomes a metonymic representation that stands for many of the ills that UKIP

6. At the time Nuttall was a UKIP MEP but later became the party's leader.

7. Jack wrote an article entitled'*In this Brexit vote, the poor turned on an elite who ignored them*' In the article he focused on non-metropolitan areas and wrote "The neglected suddenly discovered they could use their EU referendum vote to get back at those who had never listened to their grievances". The word 'crap' was not used.

8. The Guardian is the *bête noire* of right-wing populist political actors and voters and is often said to be a paper for the liberal elite in London.

seeks to address (the power of 'the City', social liberalism, multiculturalism and the political elite).

Lastly, Excerpt (11) is a tweet from the @UKIP account in response to Labour MP Stephen Kinnock's claim that even after the referendum Parliament could block the UK's exit from the EU. This observation is labelled as 'unthinkable'. The tweet focuses on the ideal value of democratic sovereignty, with 'the people' as holding true power, and sheds doubt on anyone who disagrees with this. Discourse production such as this, constructing 'remain' politicians as untrustworthy and undemocratic was also present in the post-Brexit period, with Farage being particularly active in 'warning' the electorate that the fight was not over, through articles in the Times and the Express claiming that the government would renege on their promise to reduce immigration post-Brexit and the risk of a Parliament collectively defying the vote.

… vs immigration (but not immigrants)

Right-wing populist parties tend to rely upon us/them discursive constructions against two groups: internal elites and external threats. Within data explored in this paper, the external threats were represented by immigrants, or to be more precise, by the process of immigration, a nominalisation that omits reference to agency (there were only two instances of 'migrant' and none of 'immigrant' to be found in the original tweets). Of course, processes are actions performed by social actors, but by using 'immigration' the activity is included but the actor is not present. Van Leeuwen would strictly categorise such a nominalisation as a way of suppressing agency, as there is no trace in the data of the actors. However, it is clear from the action that the agents in 'immigration' are immigrants – admittedly a broad, unclear group – and it is therefore perhaps better to categorise such use of nominalisations as a backgrounding strategy that de-emphasises the agent. By relying on other stocks of knowledge, the reader is able to infer with reasonable certainty who the agent is. A likely explanation for the use of this strategy would be that UKIP seeks to avoid accusations of racism or exclusion during the Leave campaign. Instead, it prefers to focus on the question who is responsible for allowing the migration processes to continue, i.e. the UK government and EU institutions (see Rheindorf and Wodak [2017] for similar findings in Austrian public discourse on the 2015 refugee 'crisis').

In other parts of the material immigration was constructed as having a number of negatively defined effects on the UK.

(12) We've got a chronic problem in our primary schools, we've got a chronic problem with a shortage of housing, a chronic problem, people can't get

GP appointments in 21st century Britain. Why? Cos the population's going through the roof, because of irresponsible open door immigration and this vote on Thursday is a chance for us to get a grip on that.
(@Nigel_Farage, embedded video, 21 June 2016)

(13) RT @Nigel_Farage: UK's population exploding with record high net migration levels due to EU open borders. (7 June 2016)

(14) RT @Nigel_Farage: Immigration will be the defining issue of #EUref. We must Leave EU and control our borders. #bbcqt. (9 June 2016)

The above three excerpts are all variations of the topos of numbers and/or the topos of burden. Topoi include at least one or two of the following argumentative elements: data (evidence), claim (conclusion), and warrant (the assumption linking the data to the claim) (Toulmin 1969). The less information offered in communication, the more one needs to rely on wider mental models (van Dijk 1998) and on socially constructed 'knowledge' for interpreting arguments. For example, in Excerpt (12) we find only a claim and warrant. The claim is that there are 'chronic' problems in certain areas of public life. The warrant consists of two parts: a fast-growing (migrant) population and EU immigration policy are held co-responsible for 'immigration'. The suggestion is that when given the chance the electorate should vote to leave the EU. A similar but less complicated version of this topos of numbers can be observed in Excerpt (13). Here, the claim that population is rising is warranted by EU immigration policy. Moreover, this claim is intensified through the use of the thermostatic metaphor 'explode'. Lastly, in Excerpt (14) only the conclusion is explicitly stated: 'we must leave the EU and control our borders' and so the warrant and claim are left implicit. However, through the reproduction of such discourse over an extended period of time, discourse recipients become primed to interpret this tweet and to construct their own argumentation schemata in accordance with UKIP's rationale. This would lead to an easy reactivation of the UKIP link between EU membership on the one hand and immigration, a host of problems within the UK, and a lack of control on immigration on the other hand.

Interdiscursivity understood as the linking of two or more topic-related discourses played a big role in the data under examination. As such, immigration was frequently connected to themes other than border control and entry:

(15) If you take consumption of public services into account as well as consumption of benefits, EU immigration costs the UK £3 million a day.
(10 June 2016)

(16) RT @Nigel_Farage: Last year nearly 1 in 4 primary schools were full or oversubscribed. We must Leave EU and control our borders. (21 June 2016)

(17) The housing crisis has nothing to do with what happened to the banks back in 2008 and it does have to do with demand and supply in a market place, think about this: at the moment we have to build 1 new house every 4 minutes, night and day just to cope with current levels of immigration, I would say that is wholly unsustainable and what we need to do is get the net figures coming into Britain back to an acceptable number.
(Nigel Farage, embedded video clip of BBC Question Time, 11 June 2016)

In Excerpt (15) one can observe a topos of burden (cost) in the tweet. This topoi is used to argue that EU immigration constitutes a drain on public funds and symbolic public goods. Critical discourse researchers should not only look at what is manifest in a text but also at what is not immediately visible, i.e. additional information that could be present but is omitted and mitigates the strength of the truth claim made in a piece of discourse. In this excerpt the 'unsaid' might include the benefit of taxes paid by EU migrants, the work done by them in the public sector, and a source for £3 m per day claim. Excerpt (16) links the issue of open borders with EU membership and with the shortage of places for children at state primary schools. Two photographs of a billboard campaign were linked to the tweet (see Plate 1). One photo shows the campaign poster whose text was repeated in the tweet. The other photo shows Nigel Farage standing in front of this poster. His presence in the composition adds a level of personal/authorising legitimization to the claim on the poster as well as to the wider Brexit campaign. Lastly, in Excerpt (17) Farage discursively links immigration to housing issues. In a departure from – and contradiction to – traditional populist claims (see Excerpt [10]) that place banks and big business in opposition to 'the people', Farage denies the banks' culpability for the real estate crisis and transfers the blame to immigration instead.

Immigration is not only constructed as a burden to the country, it is also presented as a direct threat to the people.

(18) This is, should be, a British passport [takes out passport from jacket pocket and holds it out to the camera]. It says European Union on it. Alright, I think, to make this country safer, we need to get back British passports so that we can check anybody else coming in to this country.
(Nigel Farage, embedded video clip of ITV referendum debate, 7 June 2016)

Excerpt (18) ties together the debate over immigration control, border security in reference to the symbolic material of passports. There is a topos of threat in 'we need to make the country safer', which relies on the presupposition that the country is currently unsafe. As the specific nature of this threat is not elaborated on in the movie clip itself, recipients and analysts of this message have to take recourse to wider patterns of discursive knowledge in order to fill in the agents and actions of the argument made. With 'should be', Farage constructs a normative argument

Plate 1. Tweet by @Nigel_Farage, 21 June 2016

as to the preferred provenance of passports. The symbol of the British passport stands metonymically for British sovereignty. In UKIP discourse, the necessity of leaving Europe crystallizes in the passport issue. Resolving this problem implies a repatriation of powers of Europe to the UK. It is worth noting that the proclaimed goal of checking entrance into the UK is superfluous since the UK is not part of the Schengen zone. Consequently, anyone entering this country already must show a passport or national ID card. Like many other populist movements UKIP makes use of expressions of banal nationalism (Billig 1995) such as the British flag or the '£' sign. The latter is even part of the UKIP party logo. Along with the British passport such symbols are visual reminders of an imagined community that finds itself threatened by supposedly 'non-British' semiotic elements such as the European flag, the EU passport or the Euro (€).

Safety issues were also articulated visually. Plate 2 shows Farage speaking to the press after having given the keynote speech that launched UKIP's leave campaign. He stands in front of a poster that sports UKIP's party colours along with the

hashtag #SaferBritain. Hashtags are not merely search devices, they are also "highlighting devices" (Scott 2015, 14) that help readers to identify "the intended overall interpretation" of a tweet (Albu 2014: 8). In this case the hashtag was not widely used in later tweets. The hashtag on the poster was first and foremost 'analogue' and must therefore be read as a paralinguistic device meant to guide the reader towards an interpretation in function of the UKIP campagin discourse. In doing so, this analogue hashtag gives the speech and later discursive (re-) production a level of macro coherence.

Plate 2. Tweet by @Michael_Heaver, 3 June 2016

Finally, nowhere was the topos of threat more visible than on the 'breaking point' poster launched on the 16th June (see Plate 3).

Plate 3. Tweet by @UKIP, 16 June 2016

The breaking point poster visualises the process of immigration but also specifies the agents involved. It gives a face, race, and gender to them. It simultaneously represents immigration *qua* immigrants and immigrants *qua* immigration – othered actors performing the act of immigration – and leaves little doubt over who is responsible for the threatening 'breaking point'. The poster 'fills in the gaps' and provides data and/or warrants for all of the argumentation schemes above. Visually, the impact of the claim is enhanced by the seemingly endless line, which

reinforces the metaphorical 'wave' of immigrants. Furthermore, the green spaces can be interpreted as the British countryside (although the photo was taken in Slovenia). Elsewhere I have argued that this type of framing "implies an exodus or, rather, influx" (Bennett 2016: 15). This claim is emboldened by the large sized text 'breaking point'. This slogan has recourse to a topos of burden by means of a weight metaphor and constructs migration as a crisis that explains other systemic 'crises' in areas such as public funding, housing, education and so on. Faced with this invading horde, 'the people' are justified in voting to leave the EU. The fact that the photo was taken in Slovenia and not in a UK rural area such as leafy Kent does not diminish the rhetorical strength of the breaking point poster.

Conclusions

The language of UKIP's Brexit campaign was that of a prototypical right-wing populist party. Its key strategy was the discursive construction of a positive in-group – pure, threatened, homogenous, and with an inherent right to control its destiny. This 'people' was then opposed to two out-groups; by political elites vertically and by immigrants horizontally. The former seems to align with a definition of populism as pertaining, at least in part, to a down/up axis (see Chapter 1, this volume), whilst the latter supports the convincing claim that populism also relies on an us/them antagonism (see introduction, this volume). The campaign was a battle over the construction of concepts and counter concepts (Krzyżanowski 2016) that were symbolically significant (see Figure 2) and relied on sister concepts for their interpretation. As Wodak noted, "symbolic practices have to draw on and mobilize a common cultural structure, via appeals to common knowledge of epistemic communities" (Wodak 2015: 12). The key concept at play here was 'the people' itself.

This schema of the analysis fits nicely with the argument for populism being "a political logic centred around the nodal points 'the people' and 'the elite'" (see Chapter 1, this volume). Internally, the threat comes from the elites above, who do not listen to or represent 'the people'. The political class and the people become estranged from one another, and the fault is put with the politicians. The accusations and warnings of reneging on promises and doing 'deals' with the EU after the referendum continue to instil a high-level of mistrust not just in politicians *per se*, but also in vital democratic institutions that are seen to "obstruct the expression of genuine popular will" (Müller 2014: 489). By planting seeds of doubt in democracy and its institutions, UKIP laid the groundwork for later articles such as the Daily Mail's infamous 'Enemy of the People' headline that designated High Court judges who ruled that Parliament must vote on the decision to trigger Article 50,

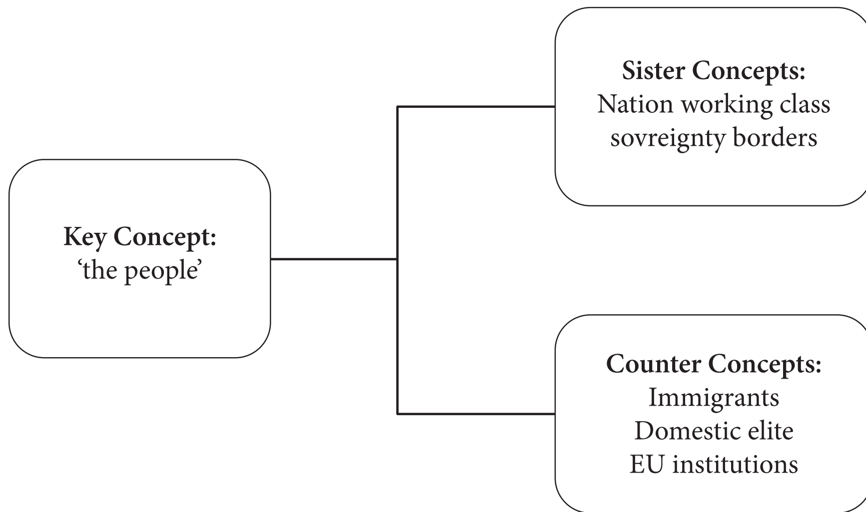

Figure 2. UKIP's conceptual map of 'the people'

rather than allow the government to make the decision without parliamentary consultation.

Where my paper differs from the point made by De Cleen is that in my schema there is also an in/out, as well as down/up antagonism (see Chapter 1, this volume). Externally, although immigrants were backgrounded by references to processes rather than people, it is clear that immigration was the key topic in UKIP's campaign. A hierarchy of topics and argumentation schemes can be identified. Traditionally, Europe had not been an important electoral issue in UK politics. UKIP's key actors, Nigel Farage especially, have discursively connected Europe to other, more salient and symbolically significant fields of social action such as public spending, such as housing, education, and health. In UKIP discourse all roads lead to Brussels, via immigration. The connection between EU membership and other 'crises' does not have to be made directly but instead is realised via implicature and presupposition. The peak moment for this argumentation scheme came in the form of the 'Breaking Point' poster. Here then, a warning over the double threat of immigration and continued EU membership was written large and thrown into the open. The implied claim is that something must be done because systemic collapse is imminent.

UKIP's rhetoric legitimated violent action against threatening social bodies and elites as can be observed in the rise in race hate crimes statistics since the referendum and in the politically motivated murder of MP Jo Cox. According to Bourne (2016), in the aftermath of UKIP's rise, "almost every utterance shouted alongside a specific racist attack was already a dominant ideological policy position". The language of the right has slowly spilled over into mainstream British politics. The Conservatives have tried to take back control of the immigration issue, first under David Cameron and since the 2017 general election Theresa May.

In turn, Corbyn's Labour has toughened its stance on freedom of movement. As a result, there is a real question of where UKIP will turn now. The turkeys voted for Christmas; with the spectre of 'hard Brexit' their initial *raison d'être* is no longer enough to sustain the party, a fact which was reflected by its poor showing in the 2017 general election, where they won just 1.8% of the vote (down from 12.6% in 2015). The most recent incarnation of party is a hard-right, nationalist, and nativist party in which the 'people' are again redefined, albeit this time along more overtly racial lines. Their 2017 election manifesto was criticised for being Islamophobic and, in a worrying call-back to the discourse of the BNP, John Rees-Evans, a UKIP leadership candidate has suggested that British Indians be paid to leave the UK to reduce the population (Elgot 2017) and under Gerald Batten, they continue to court the likes of Tommy Robinson.

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CHAPTER 10

"The people" in the discourse of the Romanian government and opposition

Between populism and the quest for democracy

Raluca Mihaela Levonian

This article analyzes the discourse of the government and opposition parties in Romania, between 2011 and 2012. It examines the construction of "the people" as a popular subject, by applying both quantitative and qualitative analysis. The results show that the government tended to present "the people" as the only agents responsible for their material well-being, while denying the possibility for them to influence the decisions taken in the political sphere. In contrast, the opposition focused on the representation of the Romanian citizens as voters who have the democratic right to decide their rulers. The opposition parties attributed to the state the responsibility for general prosperity. The opposition constructs an extended chain of equivalences between the demands of various socio-professional categories forming "the people" and a marked dichotomy between "the people" and the governing elites, which are subsequently equated with the communist dictatorship.

Keywords: Romania, populism, Left, Right, inclusion, exclusion, liberalism, social democracy

Introduction

During the last decades, the number of studies investigating the rise – and, in some cases, also the fall – of populist parties and leaders has increased considerably, following the fluctuations in international politics. Recent research has tended to focus especially on manifestations of populism in Western Europe and in Latin America, although the interest in other areas is growing (e.g. de la Torre 2015). Cases from Eastern Europe have been less widely studied from the angle of populism, although, in its incipient manifestations, populism was visible in Russia as well as in the United States (Mudde 2015: 432; Canovan 2005: 71–72). Currently, the end of the

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Soviet Union and "the crisis of socialism and communism as ideologies of subordinate social groups" (Filc 2015: 274) may represent conditions for the emergence of populist tendencies in post-communist states. The instability of the party system in young democratic regimes (e.g. Ibenskas and Sikk 2017; McAllister and White 2007) is another favorable factor for populist manifestations. Besides the ideological aspects, the economic and social context should also be taken into account, with the difficult transition towards a market economy and the widespread decrease in income. Moreover, as Hanley and Sikk (2016: 529) note, the phenomenon of corruption also plays an important role in the emergence of "anti-establishment reform parties". The presence of an anti-establishment drive is an integral element in populist projects (e.g. Roberts 2015: 147) and is therefore often embraced by actors coming from outside mainstream politics aiming to gain electoral support in a brief period of time. Since the party systems in new democratic states are marked by instability (Ibenskas and Sikk 2017: 43), one needs to ask whether populist elements may also be employed by mainstream rather than by niche parties.

In this chapter we examine such a moment in the recent past of Romania, when a conflict between two coalitions of political parties seemed to transcend ideological differences. During 2011, the governing coalition formed around the Democratic-Liberal Party (*Partidul Democrat Liberal*, henceforth referred to as PDL) faced unified opposition, represented by the Social-Liberal Union (*Uniunea Social-Liberală*, henceforth referred to as USL). Due to the latter's strong disapproval of the government's measures, the USL was accused of populism and demagogy by the governing parties. In spite of this accusation, the USL won a significant victory in the parliamentary elections in 2012, whereas the PDL obtained poor results. Investigation of the discourse of the two political coalitions sheds light on the manner in which contemporary political actors in a post-communist state position themselves and on the discursive features associated with populism in this context. This case study also sustains the observation made by Zienkowski and Breeze (this volume), regarding the necessity to avoid definitions of populism which are strictly pejorative. The conflict between the two political coalitions in Romania shows that, while one side employed the label 'populism' with a depreciative meaning, attempting to delegitimate their opponents' interventions, the other side sustained an inclusive form of populism, pretending to voice the demands of all Romanian citizens. The investigation of such articulatory practices in the context of Romanian politics also contributes to the understanding of the complicated relationship between populist politics and democracy (Zienkowski and Breeze, this volume; De Cleen, this volume).

Beyond the ideological options, the distinctions between the two party coalitions seemed to be constructed around different manners of articulating 'the people'.

Definitions of populism as an ideology cannot be applied to the present case study, since the formation of the USL overcame the ideological options of two mainstream parties and triggered modifications of their political programmes. At that time, the political debate focused on the construction of a special relation of articulation, presenting the USL as the only 'true' defender of the citizens' interests and constructing a fracture between 'the Romanian people' and the political party which had won the last elections.

The theoretical framework for the analysis draws on Laclau's theory of populism as a starting point and on some more recent interpretations of it. According to Laclau, the emergence of a 'people' is determined by two conditions. The first condition refers to the formation of an internal border between "the people" and the power structures and to the construction of an antagonistic relationship between both. The second condition requires that the unfulfilled demands of 'the people' be articulated through a logic of equivalence (Laclau 2005a, 2005b). As De Cleen (this volume) points out, it is important to remember that the categories 'the people' and 'the elite' are both constructed in and through discourse and the meanings attributed to them are fluid and subject to "contestation and redefinition" (Laclau 2005b: 40–41). In this regard, the definition of populism as a political logic provides a useful theoretical base, as it brings into discussion the construction of an antagonistic relation between 'the people' and 'the elites' on a down/up axis (De Cleen, this volume).

Another relevant addition to Laclau's work regards the construction of 'the people' through processes of inclusion and/or exclusion. In debate between the Democrat-Liberal government party and the opposition parties, both sides accused each other of 'excluding' categories of 'the people' from political representation. The alienation of citizens from the state institutions due to "various forms of social exclusion or political marginalization" (Roberts 2015: 141) forms a precondition for the emergence of populism. Filc (2011) distinguishes between inclusive and exclusionary populism. Through inclusive populism, previously marginalized or subordinated groups "constitute themselves as political subjects opposed to the dominant bloc" (Filc 2011: 223). In contrast, exclusionary forms of populism emphasize the differentiation of 'the people' from a minority of from a foreign Other. Filc (2015, 2011) further identifies three main dimensions, the cultural, the economic and the political one, which are most frequently employed in the constructions of 'the people' in populist discourse. De Cleen (this volume) also observes that, although the power lying at the centre of the relation between 'the people' and 'the elite' is political, it may also regard social, economic and cultural status. In this regard, the analysis below will focus on the cultural, the economic and the political dimension in the construction of 'the people' in speeches issued by the two political formations involved in the debate. Furthermore, taking into

account the communist past of the country, we can assume that contemporary manifestations of populism in Romania will tend to be of the inclusive type. During communism, the citizens were excluded from the distribution of resources, as they lived in poverty. They were also excluded from political representation, as elections were mostly formal and no other parties except the Communist Party were active. By employing an inclusive populist logic, contemporary parties will promise to allow the access to power and to redistribute resources among a wider group of 'the people'.

The process of inclusion which emerges in populist discourse may constitute a link between populism and democratic politics. When populism allows the representation of previously excluded segments of population, it brings a contribution to democracy and may even be "a source for the renewal of democratic institutions" (Stavrakakis and Katsambekis 2014: 123–124). Filc (2011: 223) also considers populism to be a "democratizing process", yet he acknowledges that populist inclusion can never be complete, as specific groups will always be excluded from the generic category of "the people". A similar idea is expressed by Rancière (2016: 102) who notes a paradox: although the existence of 'the people' as an entity is asserted and assumed by state constitutions, there can never be 'one people', only a plurality of peoples. The aim of political groups is to ultimately represent the will and the interests of the people. However, the likelihood of achieving this objective is far from certain since 'the people' can never be a fully homogeneous entity or a social actor in and by itself. It can merely be represented as such.

Background to the case

Since "there is no such thing as a prototypical populism" (Zienkowski and Breeze, this volume), it is important to pay attention to the particular characteristics of each case of populism under discussion. Such characteristics may be the result of social, economic, historical or political factors.

After the fall of the communist dictatorship in 1989, the new democratic regime attempted to achieve a balance between the executive, the legislative and the judiciary powers, in order to avoid dictatorial tendencies. The new Romanian Constitution limited the duties of the President to the domains of foreign affairs and state defense, requiring him to exert "a role of mediation between the state powers as well as between the state and the society" (*Romanian Constitution*, Chapter 2, Art.80). In order to fulfill the role of a mediator, the president has to give up his political affiliation, even if one or more political parties supported him during the electoral campaign. In the Romanian state system, the highest legislative role is allocated to the Parliament, which is formed by the Senate and

the Deputy Chamber. However, the President has the obligation to nominate the Prime Minister at the proposal of the party that has won the elections. In this manner, the President maintains a specific form of control over the government, which represents an argument for considering Romania a “semi-presidential republic” instead of a parliamentary one (Stan 2013: 13).

When the centre-right wing candidate Traian Băsescu won the presidential elections in 2004, he proposed the voters a more authoritarian type of political leadership. He treated the political parties in different ways, openly preferring the PDL during his two presidential mandates. The two cabinets presided by the Democratic-Liberal leader Emil Boc enjoyed the explicit support of the president.

Emil Boc gradually became unpopular due to economic measures such as heavy budget cuts, the reduction of the wages in the public sector and the reduction of state pensions. The voters' trust in the main governing party, the PDL, also diminished because of accusations of corruption and unfair distribution of funds, repeatedly made by a part of the media, such as the television news channel Antena 3. Gradually, the PDL started to be perceived as a “cartel party”, exploiting the resources derived from public office instead of truly representing the voters (Roberts 2015: 149). The disapproval of voters affected President Băsescu's popularity since he was perceived as being closely involved in the internal affairs of the state. The crisis of representation stemmed from the perceived reluctance of the governing parties to consult with the citizens about the austerity measures. Furthermore, certain legislative measures were taken without debate in the Parliament, which increased the discontent of the opposition.

In 2011, the main parties in opposition were the Social Democratic Party (*Partidul Social Democrat*, henceforth referred to as PSD) and the National Liberal Party (Partidul Național Liberal, henceforth referred to as PNL). The former has remained the main political actor representing the centre-left until today. whereas the latter adopted a centre-right ideology. As a response to the government that also controlled the parliamentary majority, these two parties allied with the smaller Conservative Party, thus forming the Social-Liberal Union. This political alliance was officially constituted on 5 February 2011 (e.g. Georgescu 2011). The formation of the USL encountered a certain degree of skepticism (e.g. Duca 2011) since it seemed that the left wing could no longer represent a significant political force in Romania after the last electoral victory of the Democratic Liberals. Moreover, this alliance was interpreted by PDL members as an act of betrayal on behalf of the PNL, which was accused of having shifted towards the left side of the ideological continuum. The alliance seemed to serve a pragmatic rather than an ideological purpose. The results of a survey conducted in December 2010 showed that almost 80.9% of the respondents considered that Romania was “heading in the wrong direction” (*Adevărul,* 21 December 2010). By opposing the governmental measures,

the opposition created a bond with the majority of the frustrated electorate. Another factor that may have influenced the constitution of the USL regards the possibility for a unified opposition to represent "a stronger threat" to the governing parties (Maeda 2015: 773).

The alienation between the citizens and the governing parties became more visible in the year that preceded the resignation of Prime Minister Boc, at the beginning of 2012. Although three Labor Ministers succeeded each other in 2011, the socio-economic situation of a large part of the population remained difficult, fueling a long series of "unsatisfied demands". Newspaper articles indicate that social tensions increased during this year and that protests of specific groups of citizens took place almost every month of 2011 (e.g. Domnisoru 2011). The protests were targeted against the government's attempts to severely cut down public expenses. The measures involved, among others, the decision to close down small hospitals and to reduce the pensions and the wages paid by the state. Diverse socio-professional categories of the population, ranging from retired people to the police force and teachers, participated in the protests. During the first semester of 2011, members of labour unions in different Romanian cities also expressed their disagreement with the new Labor Code.

The dissolution of the Boc cabinet was triggered by a series of country-wide protests that marked the beginning of 2012. The Under Secretary of State in the Ministry of Health, Dr. Raed Arafat, opposed the health care bill projected by the government that allowed the commodification of the medical emergency services. After President Băsescu criticized Arafat's stance, considering it "leftist", the Under Secretary resigned from office (*Business Magazin,* 15 February 2012). The protests, which began on January 12, were initially meant as a support for Raed Arafat, the founder of a well-organized national service for medical emergency cases. The health care bill was withdrawn and Arafat returned to his office, but the demonstrations soon spread across the country (Șomănescu 2017). Demonstrations included spontaneous protests as well as political meetings organized by the USL. The violent clashes between protesters and police forces (The Associated Press, 15 January 2012) as well as the length of the protests led to the characterization of these protests as the most serious public manifestations against a Romanian government since 1989.

Generally, the protesters disapproved of the reforms introduced by the government, which resulted in a decrease of the personal income level and in a reduction of purchasing power (The Associated Press 2012). The demands ranged from the elicited resignation of the President and the government to calls for early elections and for a renewal of the entire political class (e.g. *Business Magazin*, 15 February 2012). As a consequence of the demonstrations, certain legislative projects were withdrawn and a Democratic-Liberal minister was replaced. In June 2012, a new

government was formed by the politicians from the USL and, a few months later, the USL won the parliamentary elections, obtaining 122 seats for the Senate (approximately 4.500.000 votes) and 273 seats in the Chamber of Deputies. Even after the USL split, its main political actor, the PSD, won the elections in December 2016. These results sustain the idea that, during the last decade, Romanian political parties have faced an increasing need to present “clear alternatives to the electorate” and to focus on socioeconomic issues (Freire 2015: 65) in order to attract voters. However, as argued elsewhere (see chapter 1, this volume), it would be misleading to explain a party’s success through its socioeconomic policies exclusively. In the case of the conflict between the government and the USL, attention should be given to the public discourse of both sides and to the manner in which they constructed a relation of articulation or of fracture with the ‘Romanian people’.

Data selection and methodology

This corpus does not include campaign speeches but political statements and speeches delivered in the Romanian Senate between 2011 and 2012 by members of the governing parties and of the political alliance forming the opposition. These interventions are relevant because during the period under investigation, representatives of the governing parties engaged in confrontational exchanges with the politicians in the opposition in the Senate. The latter were accused of being populist, because of the manner in which they articulated “the people” in their discourse.

Parliamentary interventions are usually a part of political debates. The speaker addresses the members of both his/her own group and of the opposing parties. In the Parliament, the politicians’ verbal behavior thus contributes to the construction of party boundaries (Chilton 2004: 100). Van Der Valk (2003: 316) also observes the lawmakers’ engagement in “adversarial and confrontational processes”, as they express alignment or disalignment with the government or with the opposition. In this confrontation, “the people” as a category becomes a resource for legitimating decisions and standpoints. However, an electoral goal cannot be completely excluded. Stenograms of parliamentary sessions are freely available to the public and the debates are sometimes broadcast in the media. Hence, a presumed mass audience is always present, which influences each speaker’s manner of positioning (White 2011: 128).

During the time span selected for analysis, three moments have been identified as particularly relevant for the understanding of each group’s perspective. The first moment is represented by the Senate session held on 7 February 2011. This date was considered important, because the agreement regarding the constitution

of the Social-Liberal Union was signed by the leaders of the opposition parties two days before. We assumed that the parliament members would comment upon this event in their interventions.

The other two sessions chosen were held with the participation of both parliamentary chambers. The second session took place on 16 March 2011, when the Parliament debated a no-confidence vote initiated by the USL against the new Labor Code promoted by the cabinet of Emil Boc. The no-confidence vote was expressed in the form of a declaration with the title "The Boc Code – small wages, high unemployment, bankrupt companies". According to Romanian law, if a parliamentary vote of no confidence against the government passes, the entire cabinet is dismissed and a new government, led by a new Prime Minister is formed. In this case, the vote did not pass, as the governing parties still enjoyed the majority in the Parliament. However, on the same day, about 8,000 people were protesting in Bucharest against the Labor Code sustained by the Boc cabinet (Domnisoru 2011). This indicates that labor reform had caused important tensions and that the demands of a part of the citizens remained unfulfilled.

The third moment is represented by the extraordinary session held on 23 January 2012, at the request of the USL, in response to the massive street protests in Bucharest and in other Romanian cities that had been going on for days. The protests had been triggered by a projected health care reform, as discussed in the previous section. They were further aggravated by the comments made by some members of the governing party PDL, who insulted the protesters. On this day, the Prime Minister was asked to present an evaluation of the situation and his cabinet's stance in regard to the protesters' demands.

The stenograms of all three sessions were publicly available on the webpage of the Romanian Senate, in Romanian language. All the interventions delivered, either verbally or in written form, by members of the parliament or of the government were selected from the texts. These interventions, which comprised both political statements and political speeches, were sorted according to the political affiliation of the speaker and to the viewpoint expressed. Two corpora were formed. One of them ("Government Corpus 2011_2012)" comprised the interventions of the politicians representing or sustaining the government, with a total of 35,316 words. The second corpus ("Opposition Corpus 2011_2012"), of 36,785 words, included the texts delivered by politicians from the USL, representing the opposition, and also by other politicians (such as the representatives of the ethnic minorities in Romania) who articulated their perspective. Two main research questions were thus formulated:

(1) How are “the people” as a collective actor constructed in the discourse of both political coalitions, taking into account the symbolic, the material and the political dimension?

(2) Is there an antagonistic relation constructed between “the people” and those in power? If so, how is this relationship expressed?

The corpora were analyzed by applying both quantitative and qualitative analyses. In the first stage, both corpora were investigated with the program Sketch Engine, available on the website http://www.sketchengine.co.uk. This system for the management of language corpora was chosen because it allows for the analysis of corpora in various languages, including Romanian (Kilgarriff et al. 2014). Four query terms were chosen and their number of occurrences and frequencies was assessed. Further, the collocation candidates for each term were individuated and listed according the logDice statistics (Rychlý 2008), which allowed for a comparison to be made between the two corpora.

In the second stage, the texts were examined from a discourse-analytical perspective, with a focus on the lexical items employed by the speakers in the construction of “the people”. The analysis concentrated on the terms associated with “the people”, especially in regard to the traits and the actions attributed to them. In the same manner, the depiction of the political actors in the government and the opposition was investigated, in order to assess what kind of relation emerged between “the people” and “the establishment”.

Discussion of the quantitative results

In the quantitative stage, the frequency of four query terms was assessed for both corpora. The first term chosen is *om*, a singular noun meaning ‘human being’, ‘person’ or ‘individual’. The analysis took into account its plural form, *oameni* (‘people’). The second term, the collective noun *popor* is usually defined as the totality of the inhabitants of a country. It can also be used for references to large collectivities of people belonging to the same nation or to the mass of the population, especially the working masses (DEX 1998: 824). Besides these query terms, the analysis also focused on the proper noun *România* (‘Romania’) and the term *român* (‘Romanian’), both as a noun and an adjective. The results are presented in Table 1.

The results show that the terms *om*, *popor* and *România* had a higher frequency in the Government corpus than in the Opposition corpus. The most significant difference of frequency is visible in the case of the noun *România*. The Opposition corpus presented higher frequencies only for the term *român*.

Table 1. Frequency of the query terms in the two corpora

	Government corpus		Opposition corpus	
Query term	Number of occurrences	Frequency	Number of occurrences	Frequency
Om (person, human being)	109	2,636.93 per million	111	2,562.74 per million
Popor (people, folk)	23	556.42 per million	18	415.58 per million
România (Romania)	214	5,177.09 per million	189	4,363.59 per million
Român (Romanian)	81	1,959.55 per million	117	2,701.27 per million

Differences emerged in regard to the collocation candidates produced for each query term. For the term *om*, in the "Government Corpus", the collocation candidate ranked on the first place was the adjective *politici* ('political', plural form), which also appeared in the ninth position, in the form *politic* ('political') for singular, suggesting that the discourse of the governing parties was more focused on the activity of politicians. In contrast, the first collocation identified for the "Opposition Corpus" was *acești* ('these'), which, in connection with other terms such as the nouns *stradă* ('street'), *alegeri* ('elections') and the adverbial *afară* ('outside'), indicates that the politicians in the opposition brought into discussion the existent social tensions.

For the term *popor*, the first two collocation candidates in the "Government Corpus" are *votat* ('voted') and *vot* ('vote'), while the first candidate in the "Opposition Corpus" was *român* ('Romanian'), followed by the verb *trebuie* ('must'). This difference suggests that the governing parties tended to represent the people as voters, whereas the opposition parties tended to emphasize the national aspect in the construction of the people.

A difference also emerges in regard to the collocation candidates identified for the term *România*. In the "Government Corpus", the collocations with higher frequency are *astăzi* ('today'), ranked third, *economică* ('economical'), ranked sixth, and *Uniunea* ('the Union'), ranked on the the eleventh position. This result indicates that the govermental discourse focused on the economic aspects and on the relation between Romania and the European Union. The term *Uniunea* appears as a collocation candidate in the "Opposition Corpus" as well, but it is preceded by the terms *Guvernul* ('the government') and *istoria* ('the history'). This suggests that the USL politicians paid more attention to the activities of the government and also to the history of the country than to the relation with the EU in the speeches analyzed.

In regard to the term *român* (‘Romanian’), the two corpora present a similarity. In the “Government Corpus”, the first nouns identified as collocation candidates are *cetățenii* (‘the citizens’), on the first position, and *statului* (‘to/of the state’), on the sixth position. In the “Opposition Corpus”, the first candidate is *statul* (‘the state’), whereas the second candidate is *cetățenilor* (‘to/of the citizens’). The politicians in the government seem to prefer the use of the noun “citizens” in the nominative and the accusative, while the noun “state” appears in dative and genitive. The reversed situation characterizes the discourse of the opposition. These findings indicate that the governing parties either attempted to “empower” the citizens in their discourse, presenting them as subjects, or deprived them of any power, allocating them the object position. In contrast, “the state” appeared as a possessor or as a beneficiary. The politicians in the opposition tended to view the state as the main agent, whereas the people were the beneficiaries of the measures adopted by the government.

In the “Opposition Corpus”, other collocation candidates for the term “Romanian” are: *milioane* (‘millions’), ranked third, *nemulțumiți* (‘unsatisfied’), ranked sixth, *poporului* (‘to/of the people’), ranked seventh, and *salariatului* (‚to/of the employee’), ranked ninth. None of these terms appears among the first ten collocation candidates in the “Government Corpus”. This difference suggests that the USL members tended to present the Romanians not only from an institutional perspective, but also through a personal angle. They emphasized the feelings of the people, and attempted to shift the focus of discussion from the neutral concept of labour to the employee as a person.

Defining ‘the people’

The collocation candidates identified for the four query terms refer to three main areas of social life: economy, politics, and culture, whose relevance for the discursive construction of a ‘people’ has also been noted by Filc (2015, 2010). All these three aspects have been considered key dimensions in the construction of ‘the people’ in the political discourse of both government and opposition.

The cultural dimension of ‘the people’

During the period analyzed, the governing parties constructed ‘the people’ as a signifier in opposition to an “other” represented by the opposition parties. In turn, ‘the people’ represented for the USL an actor in complete opposition with the political elites in the governing parties and, especially, with President Băsescu. Still, a predominantly negative characterization of the Romanian people was employed by both the government and the opposition, although with different aims.

The perspective of the government coalition was manifest in a political statement made by Senator Sorin-Serioja Chivu in February 2011. Romanians are constructed here as a passive people, with a preference for gossip and lacking the courage to act and to improve upon their situation. Limited strictly to the context of the political statement, the Romanians' defining characteristic, "nihilism", may refer to their alleged tendency to inactivity. This negative judgment is sustained by the repetition of the negative pronoun *nimic* ('nothing'), the neological adjective *nefast* ('ill-fated'), and terms formed with the Romanian negative prefix *ne*': *nefericit* ('sad', literally 'unhappy'), *nemulțumiri* ('dissatisfactions').

(1) In the last years, Romanians have acquired an ill-fated fame, which may be characterized in a brief, sad and detrimental manner – nihilism. Nothing seems possible anymore, nothing can be done anymore and we wait. Our profile as a people has been distorted, and the Romanians have grown used to wait that others solve their problems, that solutions appear in a miraculous way, while we manifest our dissatisfactions in the corners, lacking the courage to take responsibility. As if nihilism were born in Romania, nothing can be done anymore, we are excessively critical, being unaware that this entire attitude brings us huge harm. Is it so hard to understand that only we can create change and only we have the power to generate the good? (Sorin-Serioja Chivu, The Parliamentary Group of the Independent Senators, 07.02.2011)

The politician uses here the first person plural "we", with an apparent inclusive meaning. However, he distances himself from this allegedly typical Romanian worldview, as he proposes a new solution, thus implying that he knows more than the rest of his fellow nationals. In this case, the pronoun "we" is used with a "paternalistic" meaning, constructing "an asymmetrical power relation between the interactants" (Wodak et al. 2009: 46). Being based on a stereotype, the attribution of specific features to an entire "people" is misleading. At the same time, the proposed solution of improving "the profile" of the Romanian people, is equally utopian.

The nihilism of a specific group may also signal the tendency of that group to act against the official institutions of the state. In this context, the description of the Romanians acquires a different meaning. This statement was issued a few days after the constitution of the Social-Liberal Union, an event that represented the unification of the opposition parties against the government. The construction of a problematic cultural identity of the Romanians was meant to de-legitimate the critique of the opposition. Through a strategy of generalization, the critical attitude of the USL was seen as symptomatic for the "profile" of the Romanian people.

At a general level, this culturalist definition of the Romanians indicates that the governing parties could not provide an answer to the unsatisfied demands of

the masses. Instead, the politicians sustaining the government and the parliamentarian majority tried to shift the responsibility to the people themselves, claiming that the Romanians have to be the artisans of their own fate. According to Senator Chivu’s statement, the act of criticizing the government was seen as a destructive act that may ultimately lead to the destruction of the “Romanian people” itself. Instead, expressing support for the government was presented as the only possible way to “generate the good” and save the country and its people from disaster.

The members of the opposition acknowledged the existence of a pessimistic attitude of the Romanian people, but attributed it to the increase in poverty and therefore to the measures taken by the government and the President. They highlighted the people’s lack of support for the government and the growing social tensions. For example, on 24 January 2011, President Băsescu participated in the celebration of a historical event in Iași, the former capital city of Moldova. The event marked the union of the Romanian provinces Moldova and Wallachia that took place in 1859. In contrast to previous years, the president did not enjoy a warm welcome from the participants at the event. Consequently, a Social Democrat senator highlighted the alienation between the people and the president, deeming the latter responsible for the unpopular measures taken by the government:

(2) There are fewer and fewer occasions when we can cheer up and celebrate the events that have created our history as a people. Such days, which are given due importance by any civilized state, have turned for us into the putrid and black autumn of the patriarch – dictator, into sad moments when the Romanians spill their misery and howl their powerlessness.
(Sorin-Constantin Lazăr, The Social Democrat Party/The USL, 07.02.2011)

In this statement, the pronoun *noi* (‘we’) has an inclusive meaning, encompassing the speaker, the audience and the mass of the Romanian people. A comparison is formed between the Romanians and “any civilized state”, revealing that the speaker considers the situation of the Romanian people as deviating from normality. This comparison serves as a background for a further differentiation between the people and their president who is presented metaphorically as the “patriarch – dictator”. The reference to the novel *The Autumn of the Patriarch* by Gabriel García Márquez implies that the president is increasingly isolated from the people he is supposed to lead. The negative judgment of the president’s actions is sustained through the metaphor of the autumn, suggesting ideas like fall and destruction. This interpretation is enforced by the adjectival pre-modifiers selected for the term “autumn”. The adjective *putred* (‘putrid’) suggests the idea of decay, either physical or psychological, whereas the adjective *negru* (‘black’) also carries negative connotations, as black is the color of mourning in the Romanian culture. A strong contrast emerges between the terms with positive meaning used at the beginning

of the statement ('cheer up', 'celebrate') and the following lexical items aiming to depict the psychological state of the people: "sad", "misery", "powerlessness". Still, the negative characterization of the Romanian people does not represent a critique addressed to them, but rather a critique aimed at the president. Through generalization, the speaker presents a particular attitude of disapproval for the president as being representative for the entire people. He thereby constructs a relation of antagonism between "the people" and the governing structures, represented here by the president.

The characterizations of the Romanian people outlined by the two politicians discussed so far differ from the common flattering constructions of national identity. Such constructions take national history as a solid common ground, as a source of pride and encouragement for the citizens and the future generations. Wodak et al. (2009: 26) identify the three temporal axes representing the past, the present and the future as central in the discursive construction of national identities. Furthermore, they note the tendency to assign "entirely positive attributes" in the construction of a "national uniqueness" (Wodak et al. 2009: 27). By contrast, in the statements discussed above, the recent past and the present are constructed as obstacles for future progress and national uniqueness is constructed in a negative key, in order to emphasize the alienation of the people from the government or from the entire political class.

The material dimension

In order to justify the austerity policies, the Democratic-Liberal government insisted on Romania's difficult economic situation, comparing it to other EU states. References to the international economic crisis formed a topos in the discourse of the governing parties. As the state faced the challenge of the international crisis, the idea sustained by the Democratic-Liberals was that people should take on the responsibility for their own lives and act – or, more precisely work – in order to have a better future. Their discourse thus cultivated a sense of "shame", suggesting that resources should be distributed to those who "deserve" them through hard work. In particular, the allocation of social assistance to vulnerable categories like unemployed persons, students, women on maternal leave and newborn babies was questioned.

The discourse of the government revealed a marked orientation towards the general goals of overcoming the economic crisis and complying with EU standards. However, such goals refer to Romania as a country, and not to the Romanian people specifically. A differentiation between 'the country' and 'the people' thus emerges in the government members' speeches. This distinction is manifest, in a speech held by Prime Minister Boc on 16 March 2011, as a response to the no-confidence

vote proposed by the USL. In order to defend the actions undertaken, Emil Boc presented his cabinet as the benefactor of the country and blamed the opposition for the current situation:

(3) You have delayed the state reforms when you had the power and you have led Romania to the edge of the rift. We were forced, when we came to governance, to take painful measures together with these admirable colleagues in order to save Romania from economic breakdown, assuming for ourselves a temporary loss of popularity, but we have managed to stabilize the economy of the country, to save the country from breakdown and to direct it towards economic growth. (Emil Boc, The PDL, 16.03.2011)

During the debate on the Labor Code, Emil Boc presented an idea of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ governance based on the notion of sacrifice: the most prominent example of sacrifice was given by the cabinet led by him. The refusal of the previous government to adopt policies of austerity was presented as a demonstration of ‘cowardice’. The idea that the former social-democratic governments were pursuing different political programs was thus dismissed. The political arena appears here as a confrontation between government and opposition parties, while citizens seem to be excluded from politics. In the excerpt quoted above, the salvation of Romania is realized exclusively by the Boc cabinet. The representation of the country as an entity to be saved from breakdown forms an ontological metaphor which while apparently simplifying, also obscures the audience’s knowledge about the issue (Lakoff and Johnson 2003). In the two speeches delivered by Emil Boc, on March 16, 2011 and January 23, 2012, he presents the actions of the government as useful by constructing the country as a tangible entity, as a common ‘body’ or a common ‘house’. The Labor Code was presented as a vitamin administered to a sick organism in order to facilitate the recovery, which made the austerity measures appear as necessary and even salutary for the salvation of the country’s ‘body’.

Interestingly, the salvation invoked by Emil Boc encompasses the country as a whole, but does not refer to citizens as persons. The Prime Minister rejected the text of the no-confidence vote prepared by the opposition and presented the people as lacking political knowledge and as being easily manipulated by malevolent parties. In this manner, he denied the existence of unfulfilled demands and the constitution of a popular subject:

(4) You oppose the flexible market of the labor force, you oppose, in fact the notion that the people can more easily have a second job, that employers can employ more easily, hoping that the people will continue to remain a mass manipulated by the electoral *pomeni* that you are going to give as you have done every time you were in the government and you got Romania there where we all know in 2008. […] Through this Labor Code, fewer and fewer

> people in this country will stand with their hands stretched out for electoral charities and social aids and they will have a guaranteed workplace, they will have a workplace with which they can protect their family and benefit from health and unemployment insurance and a pension in their old age.
>
> (Emil Boc, The PDL, 16.03.2011)

Depicting the current situation of the Romanian citizens, Emil Boc repeated the term *pomană* (in the plural form, *pomeni*) three times in this speech. Coming from the Slavic *pomĕnŭ*, the Romanian word has a religious meaning connected to the Christian Orthodox ritual of the burial. When the deceased is taken to the graveyard, money is given to children and poor people at crossroads and on bridges (Marian 2000: 104). Special feasts are organized periodically in the memory of the deceased. On these occasions, food and even clothes or other personal objects, either new or belonging to the deceased, are given for free to the participants and/or to the poor people of the community. The ritual of the *pomeni* – the offerings in the memory of the deceased – thus has a primary religious aim: it is believed that all items offered will benefit the soul of the deceased. The ritual also fulfills social goals by strengthening the bonds between the members of the community. Most importantly, it is a form of help for the poorest members of the community, especially. A secondary interpretation of the term *pomeni* is also possible, referring to the charitable acts or donations for charity (DEX 1998: 822). Although the rejection of such offerings is wrong, for Orthodox believers, the term acquires negative meanings in specific contexts. For instance, the verbal structure *a cere de pomană* (literally, 'to ask for offerings') signifies 'to beg' (DEX 1998: 822).

From the governmental perspective, the main benefit of the new Labor Code lay in the facilitation of employment and in the gradual integration of unemployed citizens into the workforce. Acknowledging the high unemployment rate at that moment, the Prime Minister calls forth a depreciative image of the Romanian people, as being dependent on the public aid granted by the state. At the same time, Romanians are presented as willing to accept this aid and therefore behaving like 'beggars'. The repetition of the adverbial *în continuare* ('further') and the gradual construction *tot mai puţini oameni în această ţară vor sta cu mâna întinsă* ('fewer and fewer people will stay with their hands stretched out') imply that the number of people acting in this way is at present very high.

In his intervention, Emil Boc outlined a distinction between the "good" Romanians who are willing to work and the "bad" Romanians, who prefer to receive charitable offerings instead of working legally. During the same debate, another Democratic-Liberal minister, Sulfina Barbu, expressed similar views:

(5) This is a Labor Code that brings to light Romania's best asset, namely the active segment of the population, who need only a little support in order

to enter the competition, to work, to look all the time for something better, those Romanians who are not afraid to work, those Romanians who are not afraid to change one workplace for another, better workplace and those Romanians who want to use their competences, those Romanians who do not want to receive *pomană* from the state, but want to evolve themselves, through their own forces.

(Sulfina Barbu, The Democratic-Liberal Party, 16.03.2011)

This is a fragmented and exclusionary view of the people, foregrounding only those able to work, while backgrounding the reality of various other groups of people such as senior citizens enjoying their pensions, children and adolescents, sick or differently able persons. By saying that the working people are ‘Romania’s best asset’ (*ce are mai bun România, și anume segmentul activ al populației*), the speaker introduces a hierarchy, implying that the other categories are not good or not good enough. Here, the working people are presented as a resource at the disposal of the country. This distinction is further sustained by the repetition of the term *români* (‘Romanians’) preceded by the modifier *acei* (‘those’), distantiating the referent from all the other categories of “the people”.

Like Emil Boc, Sulfina Barbu preferred to use the expression *pomană de la stat* (‘charity from the state’), in order to refer to social aids and public pensions. The responsibility for the employees’ future was shifted from the state to private employers and to employees themselves.

The poverty of the people is a main topic also in USL discourse, although the explanation provided by the Social-Liberal politicians is a completely different one: the poverty and the misery are the results of the alienation of the government from its citizens. While responding to Prime Minister Boc during the debate on the Labor Code, the PNL senator Crin Antonescu raised the issue of the evaluation of ‘the people’. He questioned whether a government has the right to morally evaluate ‘the people’ and to draw distinctions among socio-professional categories:

(6) They announce all these things to us, with a smile on their faces, the boxers are well-fed, they are merry and really do not not even have a trace of solidarity, of preoccupation or, shall I say in a Christian-like way, of mercy for very, very many of their compatriots who are sadder and sadder?! Of course it is their fault! Of course Mr Botiș says: They don’t stand up and don’t work! Of course, in your opinion, they are all some drunkards, some lazy people, some socialists! Of course, but even so, a little mercy, because they are your compatriots, whom you represent!

(Crin Antonescu, The National Liberal Party/The USL,16.03.2011)

While apparently aligning himself to the government’s stance, through the extensive repetition of the adverbial *sigur* (‘of course’), the Liberal politician actually

re-contextualizes and questions this viewpoint, indicated here with reference to the Labor Minister Ioan Botiş. For Antonescu, the very attempt to introduce a hierarchy among the groups forming “the people” indicates a crisis of representation, as the government no longer acts in an objective manner, defending the interests of “all” citizens. In fact, the representatives of the government are named *boxeri* (‘boxers’), suggesting their readiness to physically attack “the people”, whereas the people are presented as the “compatriots” of the politicians in the government. In this manner, the speaker emphasizes the political relation that should exist between voters and government in a democratic regime. At the same time, Antonescu constructs an antagonistic relation between the PDL and the Romanians.

Unlike the governing coalition, the USL representatives advocated “soft values”, like compassion, consensus and harmony in their discourse. They brought into discussion the varied categories of populations that had been affected by the austerity policies:

(7) This is what you actually assume, Mr Prime Minister, beginning with the measures taken against the babies, the mothers, the children at school, the students, the young employees, the employees in general, the old people, the sick people – has someone escaped from this? – and ending with the robbery and the general corruption in Romania, everything, but everything will lead to the destruction of the gene of the Romanian nation.
(Mariana Câmpeanu, The National Liberal Party/The USL, 16.03.2011).

The above enumeration of socio-professional categories articulates the popular demands of these groups according to an equivalential logic in opposition to the Prime Minister and his government. Here, the USL senator constructs ‘the people’ as an extended subject that encompasses various categories. She further extends ‘the people’ as a signifier in order to encompass the entire nation. The establishment of an antagonistic relation two social sides is first expressed through the use of the Romanian preposition *împotriva* (‘against’) and of the term *distrugerea* (‘the destruction’). The Social Liberal Union acknowledged the demands of isolated categories and articulated these demands into a nexus of popular dissatisfaction that opposed “the people” as victims of the governing elites, and of the President himself.

The political dimension

The interventions of the politicians from the governing parties during the first two parliamentary sessions under investigation showed that the government tended to exclude the electorate of the USL from the mass of the citizens. The people expressing their dissent with the government measures were defined as a “mass”

manipulated by the USL, which denied any responsibility of the people and their capacity to act by themselves. Furthermore, such definition of 'the people' did not acknowledge the existence of social dissent and public contestations of the government's legitimacy. Such a stance was expressed, for example, on 7 February 2011 by Senator Chivu, who accused the USL of leading a social war using citizens as a "cannon fodder" or an "army ready to be sacrificed" for the interests of the opposition.

This perspective changed significantly in the beginning of 2012 when the government faced massive street protests in various Romanian cities. The speech delivered by Emil Boc in January 2012 in front of the Parliament allocates a different role to the Romanian people that contrasts with the view expressed nine months earlier. The change is visible first at the lexical level: this speech features significantly more occurrences of the terms "people" and "Romanians" than the speech of 2011 (see Table 2).

Table 2. Occurrences of the terms "people" and "Romanians" in Prime Minister Boc's speeches

	Speech held by Emil Boc on 16 March 2011	**Speech held by Emil Boc on 23 January 2012**
Total number of words	3,183	2,889
Number of occurrences for the term *oameni ("the people")*	4	25
Number of occurrences for the term *români ("Romanians")*	5	15

In an attempt to appease the masses, the Prime Minister expressed gratitude to the Romanians who have been the "saviors of the country". In contrast to the stance taken nine months earlier, the Boc cabinet was no longer presented as the author of salvation, but the merit was given to the people themselves:

(8) Because we have reached this economic stability first and foremost with the Romanians' sacrifice and pain. And them we have to thank every time and first of all. I have done it every time I had the opportunity, I am doing it today as well, in front of you, the act of sincerely thanking the Romanians for the fact that they have saved Romania, during these years, from economic collapse. Without their effort, it would not have been possible. This is the reason why I understand the Romanian citizens' dissatisfaction. I understand it as a Prime Minister, I also understand it as a man.
(Emil Boc, The Democratic-Liberal Party, 23 January 2012)

The Prime Minister realized in this manner a retroactive empowerment of "the people", giving them the credit for the country's alleged economic progress during the last years of crisis. This inclusion remains symbolic, however, as it is based on a presumed consensus between the citizens and the government which glosses over the fact that the citizens had not been consulted before the introduction of the austerity measures. The people still remained excluded from the distribution of resources, since the government made no promise about improving the income level. Their participation in the political scene was also excluded as no extra elections were held. The government maintained its decision not to organize new elections until December 2012 and attempted to reach an agreement with the opposition instead.

During 2011, the USL legitimated and encouraged popular manifestations of dissatisfaction with the austerity measures. As the protests in 2012 became more intense, the USL pleaded for the organization of anticipated elections as a means to stop the political "chaos" by forming a new cabinet that would express the will of 'the people'. Such a stance was taken by the Social Democrat leader Victor Ponta in response to Emil Boc's proposal of an agreement between all political parties:

(9) And we can all go back to the decision of those who vote. Not to replace Boc with Ponta, not to replace PDL with USL now, but to replace the actual government and the actual leadership with the people who vote. […] If you have the same courage and the same responsibility we can do it, if you want, even tomorrow, on the Day of the Union, the union of these M.P.s who sit on these seats with the people who stand outside and ask us to be like them.
(Victor Ponta, The Social-Democrat Party, 23 January 2012)

In this case, Ponta advances an "empowering" view of the people that focuses on its role as a political subject. 'The people' are defined as voters and as democratic judges of the political sphere. The USL politician reverses the values of "courage" and "responsibility" previously articulated by the government parties with respect to the Romanian citizenry by applying these categories to the political actors themselves. The term *unire* ('union') is used with an ironical meaning. The speech was held the day before the celebration of the historical union between Wallachia and Moldova. By mentioning this historical event, Ponta created a contrast between the ideals that inspired the Romanian politicians of the past and the decisions of contemporary politicians. The term also serves in order to construct a relationship of alienation, contrast and antagonism between 'the elites' and 'the masses', two camps that are separated both physically and morally.

Defining political actors

In their discourse of 2011, PDL members rejected any form of cooperation with the USL, justifying this choice through the assertion of an enormous ideological cleavage between the Romanian Left and the Right. The left was vilified, being associated with resistance to change and to progress. In this Manichaean logic, “change” was seen as inherently good, while any form of opposition to the government projects was equated with stagnation or regression. The USL and especially the Social Democrat Party were objectified, presented as having an unchanged identity during the last decades. In this manner, the left-wing positioning is presented as a permanent mode of identification employed by the governing parties in order to de-legitimate their stance (White 2011: 133).

For example, in a speech held during the debate on the Labor Code, Emil Boc refused to distinguish between the parties forming the USL, by avoiding any reference to the parties involved and to the official name of the USL. The USL was merely named as “the socialist alliance”, an expression that was repeated 16 times during his speech. In this manner, the government leader expressed his refusal to acknowledge any connection of the opposing political alliance with liberalism. He attempted to downplay the censorship motion in particular and the alleged socio-economic objectives of the USL in general by associating the Union with the adjectives “socialist” and “populist”, both with a pejorative meaning:

(10) […] over two thirds of the motion text are only political attacks and represent populist, outdated and demagogic slogans. This shows the fact that the socialist alliance does not care for the Romanians’ workplaces, because if you had been interested in the Romanians’ workplaces, if you had been really interested in the Labor Code, you would have proposed a no-confidence vote that analyzed the Labor Code. In fact, this vote is a simple demagogic and populist statement. (Emil Boc, The PDL, 16.03.2011)

The adjective “socialist” is loaded with negative connotations for many contemporary Romanian speakers because of Romania’s historical background. During the communist dictatorship, the official name of Romania was that of “The Popular Republic of Romania”, which was later changed to “The Socialist Republic of Romania”. In this manner, the contemporary USL is associated with the totalitarian recent past. Moreover, populism is relegated to the left side of the political spectrum, thus denying the possibility for populism to be employed by right-wing political formations as well.

After the formation of the USL, PDL politicians claimed that only their political actions were right, as being sustained by the true liberal democratic ideology. The Social-Democrat Party, which represented the centre-left, was often linked

to far-left ideologies like communism. The alliance formed between the National Liberals and the Social-Democrats was interpreted by the PDL as a shift of the National Liberals to the left side of the ideological median. By labeling the opposition as pro-communist, the PDL claimed to remain the only truly pro-European political group in Romania. The "populism" of the opposition was associated with the rejection of the European values and Europeanization.

(11) As I have said before, and I see that it hurts, you wish that the citizens of this country go on being dependent on the populist politics and the electoral charity that you are going to give in the campaign. This is no longer possible! Romania is in the European Union and it must reduce the gaps separating it from it. With such populisms we cannot be competitive.
(Emil Boc, The PDL, 16.03.2011).

The dichotomy established in PDL rhetoric proved to be grounded in a dangerous fallacy. While dividing the political forces between good and evil, associating the former with the EU and the latter with "the people", it led eventually to a popular perception of a gap between the EU structures and the nation as formed by "common people". The PDL insistence on this dichotomy was connected to rhetoric of salvation: the party positioned itself as the only actor who could save Romania from a return to the communist past and to guide it on the journey towards a prosperous Europe.

The representatives of the USL were fully aware of the particularity of their alliance, from a strictly ideological perspective. In their speeches, they asserted the need to overcome the former ideological differentiations between Left and Right and the need to find a common objective for all the parties forming the Union: to stop the Democratic-Liberal governance. This was expressed in the official statement announcing the constitution of the USL presented to the Parliament:

(12) The alliances against Islam through the crusades, the alliances against Napoleon Bonaparte, the alliances against Nazi Germany, the alliances against communism, the alliances against terrorism are maybe the most relevant examples. All were based on two principles – the deletion of the hegemony of a dictatorial force and the consolidation of a statu-quo afterwards. […] The newly built alliance, […] also comes in the contemporary history of Romania with two goals – the ending of the mental and institutional dictatorship imposed by Traian Băsescu and by the Democratic-Liberals and the rescue of Romania from the tragic position where the economy and hopelessness have placed it.
(Emilian-Valentin Frâncu, The National Liberal Party/The USL, 07.02.2011)

The perspective adopted by the USL is also clearly dichotomic as it constructs a positive self-presentation of the alliance in opposition to a negative presentation of the governing party. The USL attempts to reject the PDL's vision of liberal democracy as opposed to socialism and proposes instead a dichotomy of "democracy versus dictatorship" instead. In the excerpt quoted above, the USL representative associates the political opponents with communism, naziism and terrorism. All of these involve a crisis of representation, due to a regime of oppression. The reference to the current governance as a dictatorship alludes to the many situations when the Boc cabinet attempted to bypass the Parliament, thus responsibilizing the government for certain unpopular laws. For the USL, the Parliament represents the ultimate instance of democracy, with its members being elected by "the people" directly. This representative character of the Parliament and the government was synthetized by the leader of the National Liberal Party:

(13) Whether you have right-wing means, or you have left-wing means, in the end you make this politics in the name of the people and for the people.
(Crin Antonescu, The National Liberal Party/The USL, 16.03.2011)

'The people' was also employed as an empty signifier in the USL discourse, as the politicians equated all the unsatisfied demands into the overwhelming demand for a change of government. The USL criticized the Democratic-Liberal government for their incapacity to estimate the effects of the austerity measures correctly and to establish a connection with the "real people" (i.e. with the various social and professional categories affected by these measures). As the austerity measures affected more and more citizens, politicians of the opposition constructed an extended a chain of equivalences, progressively integrating the demands of the affected categories involved.

Conclusions

Between 2011 and 2012, the parliamentary debates in Romania and the relationship between the government and the Parliament were marked by intense conflict. As each side advanced a positive presentation of self and a strongly negative presentation of the other, a real dialogue was not possible. The findings of this analysis indicate that the recurrence of terms such as 'people' or 'citizens' in political speeches cannot represent an indicator of populism by itself. Current research needs to focus on the articulatory practices involving specific nodal points such as 'the people' and 'the elite' and the construction of antagonistic relations (see chapter 1, this volume; Stavrakakis and Katsambekis 2014). It is important to investigate how these categories are discursively constructed, by asking, for example,

what characteristics are associated with them, what semantic roles are assigned to them, even what lexical items are preferred or avoided by the speakers in order to construct 'the people' and 'the ruling class' as collective actors.

According to the view of the governing parties and the PDL in particular, not only the political stage, but Romanian society in general was characterized by conflict and by a competition for resources. Using the international economic crisis as an argument, they discursively constructed and legitimated a symbolic "state of emergency" that required exceptional interventions from the leaders.

The citizens were put into two contrasting camps by the government. Economically, the government tended to sustain the representation of citizens as "agents", as individuals that should work in order to have a better life and not rely on handouts from the State. Politically, voters were considered as a mass that lacked the capacity to decide for itself and that could consequently be manipulated easily by other political parties. From this perspective, courage and readiness to sacrifice oneself for the country were key values. The relation between the citizens and the state was seen as a bottom-up one, with the citizens defending the country's economic position and sacrificing themselves for a future common good. However, it is interesting to note that Prime Minister Boc equated two very different types of sacrifice. In the speech held on 23 January 2012, under the pressure of the street protests, he mentioned that the politicians in government had sacrificed their popularity. This symbolic sacrifice was then equated with the more concrete sacrifice of the people who had lost money and had experienced a decrease of their income in consequence.

As the government's discourse contributed to the creation of a crisis of representation, the coalition in the opposition constructed a political alternative. The material dimension was of particular relevance, as the USL rejected the austerity measures and the lack of state intervention. They constructed a chain of equivalences and advocated the need for the state to provide social care for all categories of the population, for the upper and the lower classes alike. However, the USL glossed over the fact that a part of the population sustained the government's measures and presented, instead, the street protests of specific groups as a general and reliable indicator of "the Romanians'" will for a new government. Their discourse emphasized "soft" values of consensus and social harmony by avoiding the establishment of a hierarchy between different social and professional categories. Moreover, they employed affective terms in order to refer to the relation between the government and "the people" and shifted the responsibility for the general wellbeing from the people themselves to the ruling elites.

The USL discourse during 2011 can be considered "populist" as it presented "the people" as opposed to the political elite and accused the main governing party of corruption and of neglecting the popular will. The USL politicians constructed

an ‘elite’ which included the governing party, the M.P.s sustaining the actions of the government and the President himself. The distinction between a small and rich group of rulers and the poor, hungry, discontent masses evoked the communist dictatorship. The connection with the totalitarian regime was enforced by the use of derogatory terms such as “dictator” in order to refer to President Băsescu.

In this manner, the USL adopted a hybrid position as a political actor: the parties forming the USL were represented in the Parliament but at the same time it was excluded from political participation, as the government bypassed the rule about debating law projects in the Parliament. This situation allowed the USL to construct a special relation of articulation with ‘the people’, claiming to voice the general demands of the masses and to share their fate.

Another particularity of this case regards the fact that the USL did not appear as a representative of the poorest social groups, but also of the middle class, of professional categories such as the teachers, the police or the employees, that were overlooked by the government. From this perspective, their populism can be described as inclusive in a broad sense. The way the USL was dealt with by government actors illustrated the idea advanced by Stavrakakis and Katsambekis (2014:133), that parties resisting austerity measures, especially those representing the Left, tend to be criticized for being “populist”. However, their discourse indicates an attenuation of the populist drive and an – at least apparent – opening to pluralism (Ochoa Espejo 2015), because they requested anticipated elections in the context of the mass protests. The conflict between the government and the USL opposition could be interpreted at a more general level as a form of resistance that made use of rather populist logic in the face of an increasingly authoritarian discourse. The USL as a hybrid political coalition can add to the cases when left-wing populism is employed as a participatory way of doing politics (Zienkowski and Breeze, this volume). This case thus shows the fragility of the frontier demarcating populist discourse from more traditional democratic discourses, a line that is even more contested in a state like Romania, so strongly marked by its communist past.

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CHAPTER 11

The *Volk* ('people') and its modes of representation by *Alternative für Deutschland-AfD* ('Alternative for Germany')

Miguel Ayerbe Linares

The concept of the German 'people' is central in the discourses of the new political party Alternative für Deutschland (AfD), which emerged on the political scene in 2013. Characterised as a right-wing populist Eurosceptic party, AfD presents itself as giving voice to the German 'people', its concerns and fears, in counterposition to other political groupings which it describes as etabliert (established) or Altparteien (old parties). These parties, it asserts, have betrayed the German people both economically and culturally, and this has been exacerbated by their responses to recent migratory movements. In this context, it is pertinent to ask what the term '(German) people' actually means for this political movement: what are its representatives referring to when they speak of the '(German) people'? Who are the 'people' whose legitimate representative AfD claims to be? What words are used to describe them, and how are they represented in their relationships to other players, such as the government, the established parties, the EU, or migrants and refugees? The present study will focus on the following sources: the bulletin AfD-Kompakt, the election manifestos, and the Twitter accounts of the party and its leader Frauke Petry. First, I analyse the lexemes used to refer to the people, taking into account their connotations in the historical context of German nationalism. Secondly, I conduct a qualitative analysis of key excerpts from these sources in which the 'people' are represented in their relationship with their various adversaries. Finally, I bring these ideas together to consider the AfD's characteristic mode of representation, that is, the way in which it legitimises its claims to speak for the German people.

Keywords: *Volk*, people, AfD (Alternative für Deutschland)

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Introduction[1]

There is little doubt that the term 'people' is currently in vogue: politicians on both right and left are making an increasingly direct appeal to the electorate, claiming to represent their interests and speak in their voice. Against this background, it is essential that we should ask ourselves what notion of 'people' is being conveyed (see Chapters 1, 7 and 8, this volume). What kind of 'people' do the words of the different parties construct and project? How is the answer to this question interwoven with what has come to be known as 'populist discourse' (see introduction, in this volume), which forms the subject of this present volume? In this chapter, I aim to address these questions in the context of the appeal to the 'people' in the discourses of the German right-wing political party *Alternative für Deutschland*. The rise of right-wing populist parties in Europe has sparked the need to investigate the semantic-referential content of the term 'people', which is currently often a focal point of political controversy. Let us start from the following example: 'Das *Volk* ist jeder, der in diesem Land lebt' ('The people is everyone who lives in this country'). When German Chancellor Angela Merkel (CDU) made this declaration, which provided the headline for an article in the online newspaper *Berliner Zeitung* on 26 February 2017,[2] she aimed to counteract or defuse the slogan associated with right-wing extremist group Pegida:[3] 'Wir sind das *Volk*' ('We are the people'). Both Angela Merkel's statement and Pegida's slogan might perhaps have gone unnoticed were it not for the use of the noun *Volk* (people) (see Chapters 7 and 8, this volume). In Germany, the historical associations of the term *Volk* make it an ideologically loaded term, and its use still sparks controversy. For example, if we compare the two phrases above, it is obvious that *Volk* does not mean the same for Chancellor Merkel as for the Pegida movement, and this divergence is symptomatic of wider issues. Publications on terms and concepts such as *Volk* and *Nation* in German from both a diachronic (Wildt 2017; Retterath 2016; Hermanns 2003; Gardt 2000; Busse 1994) and synchronic (Lötzsch 1999; Hoffmann 1991) perspective bear witness to the complexity of this issue. As Hermanns (2003) has shown, in his analysis of the signifiers *Volk* and *Nation* from a semantic and historical perspective, both words have figured prominently in the political and social

1. This research was carried out within the framework of the project (Ref. FFI2015–65252-R) 'Imagining the people in the new politics: debates on the will of the people in public discourse across Europe' funded by MINECO.

2. Web link: http://www.berliner-zeitung.de/politik/merkel-zu-pegida-rufen--das-volk-ist-jeder--der-in-diesem-land-lebt-25820352 (retrieved on: 15.05.2017).

3. Web link: http://www.pegida.de (retrieved on: 15.05.2017). Chapter 7 analyses the notion of 'people' in the discourse of PEGIDA in more detail.

history of Germany, particularly since the 19th century. Among other things, this means that the terms *Volk* and *Nation*, and related words such as *völkisch* ('ethnic' or 'national) or even *Mensch* ('human being'), have acquired a high profile in German culture, with very strong communicative and discursive potency. The recent use of these terms by politicians of the right-wing party *Alternative für Deutschland* is therefore striking, and has given rise to social and political concern.[4]

Of course, in the world of politics, words become powerful because of the pragmatic use that is made of them. Why do politicians use a particular word in a particular speech? The choice of one word rather than another matters for anyone analysing the type of social and political reality to which politicians aspire (Hermanns 2003).[5] As we all know, in politics, language is used to influence listeners in many ways, through the choice of particular metaphors, activation of prejudices, manipulation of meanings, and so on. The choice of terms for labelling reality is one of the most important affordances at the politician's disposal (Kara/Wüstenhagen 2012). In the context of contemporary discussions on populism, the historical resonances of the word *Volk* in the German context of the last 150 years must be taken into account if we are to understand this specifically German

4. In this respect, it may be useful to consult the following newspaper articles concerning the use of the adjective *völkisch* by Frauke Petry (*Alternative für Deutschland*): *Zeit online* 11.09.2016: http://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2016-09/afd-frauke-petry-volk-buergerkrieg; *Welt* 11.09.2016: https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article158049092/Petry-will-den-Begriff-voelkisch-positiv-besetzen.html; *Süddeutsche Zeitung* 11.09.2016: http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/alternative-fuer-deutschland-petry-will-begriff-voelkisch-positiv-besetzen-1.3156403; *Stern* 23.09.2016: http://www.stern.de/politik/deutschland/afd-co-parteichef-meuthen-haelt--voelkisch--fuer-nicht-rehabilitierbar-7072314.html; *Der Tagesspiegel* 28.04.2016: http://www.tagesspiegel.de/politik/vor-afd-parteitag-am-samstag-frauke-petry-will-voelkisch-entspannt-benutzen/13518422.html; *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 11.09.2016: http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/inland/afd-petry-sieht-voelkisch-als-positiven-begriff-14430103.html; *Spiegel online* 11.09.2016: http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/frauke-petry-und-das-wort-voelkisch-warum-die-afd-chefin-falsch-liegt-a-1111833.html. *Die Presse* 14.09.2016: http://diepresse.com/home/zeitgeschichte/5084823/Voelkisch-will-nicht-missverstanden-werden; the Danish *Kristeligt Dagblad* 28.09.2016: https://www.kristeligt-dagblad.dk/kronik/volkisch-folkeloes-eller-folkelig; the French *Le Monde* 13.09.2016: http://www.lemonde.fr/europe/article/2016/09/13/en-allemagne-l-afd-veut-dediaboliser-le-mot-volkisch_4996857_3214.html; or the Spanish *El País* 01.10.2016: http://internacional.elpais.com/internacional/2016/09/30/actualidad/1475242914_767714.html, among others. Even the *Gesellschaft für deutsche Sprache* (GfdS) actually made a public statement on this point: http://gfds.de/gfds-voelkisch-ist-rassistisch (17.05.2017).

5. A good example of this could be the use of the terms *España* and *Estado* in Spanish political discourse to refer to the same entity ('Spain'), where *Estado* is the term of choice used by regional nationalists in the Basque Country, while *España* is the main term used in other parts of the country.

understanding of *the people*.[6] Today, the word *Volk* occurs frequently in the discourse of *Alternative für Deutschland*. We need to analyse what is meant by *Volk* and its partial synonyms: who is included, and who is excluded under this label? (see Chapters 1 and 8, this volume) What notion of the 'people' is being proposed here? Is *Alternative für Deutschland* talking about the people as the other parties do? Does it model 'the people' after actual people populating the streets of Germany? Or is this party playing with language in order to introduce an alternative model of 'the people' based on an ideological ideal that differs from the current sociological reality? Does the use of the term *Volk* – with its complex resonances – represent a discursive strategy intended to provoke the listeners, sparking controversy and causing confusion on the political scene, rather in the way that previous authors (Wodak 2015; Van Dijk 1992) have found far-right parties to use racist discourses? These issues need to be analysed with reference to other features of *AfD*'s populist political discourse in order to explore the underlying motivations and rationality for this party's particular use of the terms *Volk* and *völkisch,* and other options for referring to the people. In French, German and British parliamentary discourse, "people" is a semantically underspecified noun that can take on a radically different set of connotations and associations. Close analysis is necessary to disentangle the different strands of meaning that may be involved (see Chapter 8, this volume).

The party *Alternative für Deutschland,*[7] which has been present on the social and political scene in Germany since 2013, is generally considered to be right-wing and 'populist' in its approach. The same goes for its best known representatives – Frauke Petry,[8] Alexander Gauland and Jörg Meuthen. As previous authors have shown, the communicative style of populist leaders is often materialized in popular, even demotic language (van Leeuwen 2014), with constant appeals to a unified notion of the 'people' (Wodak 2015), an antagonism towards a political élite who leaves the door open to negative outside influences and fails to defend the people's 'real' interests (Pelinka 2013), and an insistence on an irreparable cleft between the 'people' and the 'élite', evoked as the source of crisis, breakdown and dysfunctionality (Moffitt 2016; Moffitt & Tormey 2014). Populism often involves a call for the right to self-determination for the 'people' (Elliker 2015). Moreover, right wing populism usually includes a negative focus on immigrants (Schellenberg 2013). The actual terms used to refer to 'the people', the combinations in which they occur, and the discursive contrasts set up vis-á-vis the people's 'adversaries' are therefore a key element in current political discourse. In this chapter, I centre

6. Chapter 7 (this volume) provides more historical context on this movement.

7. Web link: https://www.alternativefuer.de (acceso: 06.12.2016). Hereafter 'AfD'.

8. Frauke Petry left the party immediately after the 2017 German general elections.

on the representation of the 'people' through use of specific lexical items, showing the extent to which these terms are interchangeable, and the particular discourses and contexts with which these words are associated.

Aim and methodology

It is a key element in the AfD's self-representation that it holds itself up as the 'only legitimate' representative of the 'people' (*Volk*). To open this enquiry, I will explore what lexical items are used to refer to the people: are we dealing with a single term or are there several interchangeable synonyms at play? If so, which is used more frequently? Going beyond the purely lexical level, I will then also ask how the people are represented in AfD's discourse, what essential characteristics are being attributed to them, and what forces are threatening them.

In order to answer these questions, I created a corpus of texts published online since 2015, consisting of three sections:

– the *AfD Grundsatzprogramm* (the national AfD party manifesto of 2016)[9]
– the bulletin *AfD-Kompakt*, from 2015 to the present day[10]
– declarations of key party representatives on the AfD's Twitter account[11] and of party leader Frauke Petry on her personal Twitter account[12]

The analysis of this corpus proceeded in two phases. First, all German lexemes referring to the 'people' were identified, including the terms 'people' '*Volk*', 'human being' ('*Mensch*'), 'population' (*Bevölkerung*) and 'citizen(s)' (*Bürger*). In order to obtain a picture of the distribution of each term across each section of the corpus, frequency counts were applied. The frequencies were normalized to frequencies per 1000 words to facilitate comparisons between the uses of lexemes across text sections. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the present study is mostly qualitative, and that the statistics generated are descriptive and orientative.

In order to obtain a wider perspective, the main dictionaries of the German language were consulted to find definitions of each of the lexemes used by the AfD to refer to the 'people'. When I introduce each lexeme, I will include the definitions from the main dictionaries, so that readers can judge for themselves to what extent the meanings attributed to these words by AfD politicians deviate from the

9. Web link: https://www.alternativefuer.de/programm (10.01.2017). Publication date 2016.

10. Web link: https://afd-kompakt.de (10.01.2017).

11. Web link: https://twitter.com/afd_bund (10.01.2017).

12. Web link: https://twitter.com/fraukepetry?lang=es (10.01.2017).

base meaning of each lexeme as reflected in the dictionary. Although this is not the usual practice in discourse analytical studies, it seems to me to be useful in this case, since not all readers are familiar with German vocabulary and culture. The comparison with the dictionary definitions allows us to establish whether mainstream understandings of these lexemes are being manipulated by the AfD. We should bear in mind that lexemes like *Volk* and *Bürger*, and even *Mensch*, have had a chequered history in German political culture, and the use of particular terms can, even today, spark considerable controversy. In addition to analysing whether there were any differences in the use of these lexemes in the sources consulted, I also established whether the AfD used different notions of 'the people' interchangeably in comparable contexts. These explorations were intended to shed light on whether the AfD uses different registers for different media.

The second phase of the analysis was more complex since it had different stages depending on the particular aim. First, since the 'people' has been (supposedly) 'abandoned' by the present governing classes and the parties that collaborate with them, how does the AfD refer to these groups? What lexemes does it use to refer to those in power? Secondly, focusing on lexical categories such as nouns, adjectives and verbs, I proceeded to focus on the characteristics attributed to the 'people' in AfD discourse. Thirdly, as it can be clearly demonstrated that the German government is presented as being guilty of 'neglecting' the 'people', I went on to analyse the verbs used by the AfD in order to characterize the relationship between the governing classes and the 'people' on the one hand, and to build its arguments for political change, on the other. The AfD claims to give voice to the people and to restore the power they supposedly lost, I therefore also analysed what verbs the AfD used to describe the people's actions and its relationship to the current government and to the AfD itself. In this phase, it is important to pay special attention to the aspects that do not form part of the concept of 'people', that is, the governing party, and the other political formations that support them, since the idea of the 'people' seems to be constructed in opposition to these elements. This antagonism between the 'people' and the 'élite' is constructed on a vertical axis, with the people at the bottom as a vast, disempowered mass, oppressed by a small élite who monopolise power (see Chapter 1, this volume). This 'antagonism' between 'people' and 'élite' is thus essential to understand the way the 'people' is discursively constructed.

Lastly, as I have explained above, the AfD tends to present itself as the 'only' and 'genuine' representative of the German people. From this point of view, it is useful to analyse the linguistic resources that are deployed by the party to operationalize this mode of representation (Deschouwer/Depauw 2014, O'Neill 2001): this will form the subject of section 5. To this end, I decided to look at all the lexical categories from pronouns to adverbs, including nouns, verbs and adjectives, in

order to obtain more detailed information about their mode of self-legitimation as representatives of the 'people'.

Data overview

Lexemes for referring to the 'people'

The examples and data presented here are from three written sources: the *Grundsatzprogramm* (corresponding to the political manifesto) of AfD, its periodical bulletin *AfD-Kompakt* and the messages sent from the Twitter accounts of AfD and Frauke Petry (FP), who led the party from August 2015 to April 2017. Below, I will show the overall number of occurrences for the signifiers *Volk*, *Bevölkerung*, *Bürger* and *Mensch*. I will also show the number of occurrences according to source in order to identify differences in frequency depending on the medium in which these signifiers have been articulated. Moreover, I will offer the relative frequency of each term in each medium normalized to frequencies per 1000 words.

Volk *(people)*

Total number of occurrences: 46 / Total number of words in the corpus: 51,618

Table 1. Per source, number of mentions of 'Volk' / normalized frequency per 1,000 words

Grundsatzprogramm	**AfD - Kompakt**	**Twitter (party + FP)**
16/0.61	15/0.78	15/2.29

> DUDEN definition (2011): *1) durch gemeinsame Kultur u. Geschichte [u. Sprache] verbundene große Gemeinschaft von Menschen. 2) <o. Pl.> Masse der Angehörigen einer Gesellschaft, der Bevölkerung eines Landes, eines Staatsgebiets.* 1) Large community of people bonded by common culture and history [and language]. 2) Mass of the people belonging to a society, of the population of a country or a state territory.)

> DWDS[13] definition: *1) Gemeinschaft, Großgruppe von Menschen gleicher Abstammung, Sprache und Kultur. Synonym zu Ethnie. 2) Gesamtheit der Staatsbürger eines Landes.* 1) Society, large group of people of the same ancestry, language and culture. Synonym of ethnic group. 2) Entirety of the citizens of a country.)

13. *Digitales Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache* (DWDS). Link: https://www.dwds.de/wb/Volk (18.01.2017).

As we can see, the definitions of *Volk* provided above are different: both assume a shared 'culture' and 'language' as well as the set of citizens of a state. Only the DWDS presents *Volk* as a synonym of 'ethnic group'. If we compare these two definitions with that provided by Angela Merkel, cited at the beginning of this chapter, we will find an even greater difference, which brings out the controversial nature of the word *Volk* in German. To be more precise, the current Chancellor's definition might, to some extent, concur with the concept of 'the population or citizens of a state', which would include people who have migrated to Germany in recent years regardless of their origin, and who have obtained German nationality. However, the elements of a 'shared culture, language and history', and 'ethnic group', mentioned by DUDEN and the DWDS, do not fall within Angela Merkel's (ambiguous) definition, for obvious reasons, since immigrants do not have the same origin as the autochthonous inhabitants, nor do they belong to the same ethnic group, or have the same traditions and customs, even though they are usually competent in German.

Regarding the way AfD uses this noun, it is noticeable how this party plays with the differences between the definitions that we have observed. In the first and last instance, *Volk* is understood to mean a group of people, but not just any group. In German politics, the notion of *Volk* is tied up closely with the history of National Socialism, and AfD's use of the adjective *völkisch* triggered a fierce controversy in German media because of its association with Nazi discourse.[14] For this reason, the use of these words has often been assumed to be part of a provocation strategy on the part of AfD, who use them despite their strong connotative load, while at the same time denying the obvious xenophobic undertones (Wodak 2015; Van Dijk 1992).

The following examples illustrate the way '*Volk*' is typically used by AfD spokepersons:

(1) *Das deutsche Volk ist ebenso mündig wie das der Schweizer, um ohne Einschränkung über jegliche Themen direkt abzustimmen*. (The German people is just as mature as that of the Swiss, so as to vote directly about any issues without restrictions.) (Grundsatzprogramm, p. 9)

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14. For further details on this, see the following articles from the German press: "Völkisch ist nicht irgendein Adjektiv', which appeared in *Zeit Online* 11.09.2016 (http://www.zeit.de/kultur/2016-09/frauke-petry-afd-voelkisch-volk-begriff-geschichte); 'Petry verteidigt den Begriff ‚völkisch"', *Taz* 11.09.2016 (http://www.taz.de/!5338469/); 'Petry sieht ‚völkisch'als positiven Begriff', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 11.09.2016 (http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/inland/afd-petry-sieht-voelkisch-als-positiven-begriff-14430103.html); 'Warum Frauke Petry falschliegt', *Spiegel Online* 11.09.2016 (http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/frauke-petry-und-das-wort-voelkisch-warum-die-afd-chefin-falsch-liegt-a-1111833.html).

(2) *Albert Glaser warf der Bundesregierung vor, das Volk zu täuschen. Das Volk aber lasse sich nicht länger täuschen.* (Albert Glaser reproached the government for deceiving the people. But the people won't allow itself to be deceived any more.) (AfD-Kompakt 17/15, p. 1)

(3) *Der Bundestag missachtet morgen den Willen des Volkes.* (Tomorrow the parliament is going to disregard the will of the people.) (Twitter, AfD, 25.02.2015)

Declarations such as these emphasise the division between 'the people' and its governing clases, strongly suggesting that the government does not form part of, or even represent, the people.

Bevölkerung *(population)*

Total number of occurrences: 12 / Total number of words in *corpus*: 51,618

Table 2. Per source, number of mentions of 'Bevölkerung' / normalized frequency per 1,000 words

Grundsatzprogram	AfD Kompakt	Twitter (Party + FP)
11/0.42	1/0.05	0

DUDEN definition 2011: *Gesamtheit der Bewohner u. Bewohnerinnen eines bestimmten Gebiets; Einwohnerschaft.* (Totality of the inhabitants of a particular area; population.)

DWDS definition: *Gesamtheit der Bewohner eines bestimmten geographischen oder politischen Gebietes.*[15] (Totality of the inhabitants of a particular geographical or political area.)

As we can see, the collective noun *Bevölkerung* normally refers to a 'group of inhabitants' (especially 'population'), without confining its meaning to the ambit of a nation or state, unlike *Volk*. The following instances are typical of the way *Bevölkerung* is used by the AfD:

(4) *Vielmehr muss mittels einer aktivierenden Familienpolitik eine höhere Geburtenrate der einheimischen Bevölkerung als mittel- und langfristig einzig tragfähige Lösung erreicht werden.* (Rather, a higher birth rate of the local (literally, 'homeland') population must be achieved by means of an activating

15. Web link: https://www.dwds.de/wb/Bevölkerung (24.02.2017).

family policy as the only sustainable middle- and long-term solution.)
(Grundsatzprogramm für Deutschland[16] 2016, 41)

(5) *Deutschland ist aufgrund seiner geografischen Lage, seiner Geschichte, Bevölkerung und dichten Besiedelung kein klassisches Einwanderungsland.* (Germany's geographical situation, its history, population and dense population mean that it is not a classic destination for immigrants.)
(Grundsatzprogramm, p. 58)

(6) *Dabei zeigen die Ergebnisse dieser Umfrage, dass es allein die AfD ist, die den Willen der Bevölkerung vertritt und ihre Sorgen ernst nimmt.* (The results of this survey thus show that it is the AfD alone that represents the will of the population and takes its anxieties seriously.) (AfD-Kompakt, 22.11.2016)

Bürger *(citizen)*

Total number of occurrences: 112 / Total number of words in the *corpus*: 51,618

Table 3. Occurrences of 'Bürger' in each source: Raw numbers and normalized per 1,000 words

Grundsatzprogramm	AfD-Kompakt	Twitter (party + FP)
63/2.42	32/1.67	27/4.13

DUDEN definition 2011: *1) Angehöriger eines Staates. 2) Einwohner einer Gemeinde.* (1) Member of a state. 2) Inhabitant of a municipality.)

DWDS definition: *1) Bewohner eines Staates, Staatsangehöriger. 2) Angehöriger der mittleren (besitzenden) Gesellschaftsschicht mit entsprechender sozialer Stellung*[17] (1) Inhabitant of a state, citizen. 2) Member of the middle (property-owning) social class with corresponding social position.)

Like *Volk*, *Bürger* can appear with the adjective *deutsch*:

(7) *Dies ist nichts anderes, als politischer Schabernack, den nun die deutschen Bürger mit Integrationskursen umsetzen sollen.* (This is nothing other than a political prank, which the German citizens are now supposed to perform with integration courses.) (AfD-Kompakt, 07.12.2016)

Unlike *Volk*, which is a collective noun, *Bürger* designates individual 'citizens' of the German state, who are, of course, also members of the *Volk*.

16. From now on, 'Grundsatzprogramm'.

17. Web link: https://www.dwds.de/wb/Bürger (24.02.2017).

(der/die) Deutsche – (die) Deutschen ('German(s)')
Total number of occurrences: 17 / Total number of words in the *corpus*: 51.618

Table 4. Occurrences of '(der/die) Deutsche-(die) Deutschen' in each source: Raw numbers and normalized per 1,000 words

Grundsatzprogramm	AfD-Kompakt	Twitter (party + FP)
2/0.07	1/0.05	14/2.14

DUDEN definition 2011: *Angehörige des deutschen Volkes, aus Deutschland stammende Person.* (Member of the German people, a person from Germany.)

DWDS definition: *1) Person, die die deutsche Staatsbürgerschaft besitzt. 2) Nach Abstammung und Muttersprache dem deutschen Volke Zugehörige, Zugehöriger.*[18] (Person who has German citizenship. 2) Member of the German people through descent and mother tongue.)

This is a proper noun used to refer to a person from the Federal Republic of Germany. The definitions presented above require an explanation: both seem to refer to people with German nationality, but DWDS is more open, while DUDEN is more restrictive, since 'stammend' makes reference to a person who is 'originally from' Germany, which raises the question as to whether both definitions really include people who have come from other countries. When we observe the distribution of the occurrences of 'Deutsche', it seems that this word does not belong to the register proper to official or administrative language, as its presence in the *Grundsatzprogramm* and *AfD-Kompakt* is very low. Here are some examples in which various aspects of AfD's ideology come to light:

(8) *Die Lücke zwischen Kinderwunsch, den nach wie vor 90 Prozent der jungen Deutschen hegen, und der Zahl der geborenen Kinder soweit wie möglich zu schließen, sehen wir als zentrale politische Aufgabe.* (We regard closing as far as possible the gap between the desire for children, which 90 percent of young Germans still feel, and the number of children born, as a central political task.) (Grundsatzprogramm, p. 42)

(9) *Schäuble streut den Deutschen bewusst Sand in die Augen!* (Schäuble is consciously throwing sand in the Germans' eyes.) (Twitter AfD, 06.02.2015)

(10) *2/3 der Deutschen sind gegen Merkels Flüchtlingspolitik.* (2 out of 3 Germans are against Merkel's refugee policy.) (Twitter Frauke Petry, 05.08.2016)

18. Web link: https://www.dwds.de/wb/Deutsche#2 (24.02.2017).

Mensch *(human being)*

Total number of occurrences: 47 / Total number of words in *corpus*: 51,618

Table 5. Occurrences of 'Mensch' in each source: Raw numbers and normalized per 1,000 words

Grundsatzprogramm	AfD-Kompakt	Twitter (party + FP)
37/1.42	9/0.46	1/0.15

DUDEN definition 2011: *a) mit der Fähigkeit zu logischem Denken u. zur Sprache, zur sittlichen Entscheidung u. Erkenntnis von Gut u. Böse ausgestattetes höchstentwickeltes Lebewesen; b) menschliches Lebewesen, Individuum.* (a) The most highly developed living being equipped with the capacity for logical thought and language, moral decisions and knowledge of good and evil. b) Human being, individual.)

DWDS definition: *Das höchstentwickelte Lebewesen, das gesellschaftlich lebt und arbeitet, die Fähigkeit zu denken und zu sprechen hat, die Welt in ihrer Gesamtheit erkennen und nach dem Maß seiner Erkenntnis planmäßig verändern und gestalten kann.*[19](The most highly developed living being, who lives and works in society, is capable of thinking and speaking, who knows the world in its entirety and can change and form it according to the degree of knowledge that he/she possesses.)

The AfD refers to 'the human beings' or *Menschen* of Germany in order to oppose this supposedly homogeneous group to the governing classes. The notion *Menschen* can be translated as people or as human beings. Note that the elites are not considered to be part of *die Menschen*.

(11) *Zum Abschluss der Veranstaltung sangen 7000 Menschen gemeinsam die deutsche Nationalhymne.* (At the close of the event, 7,000 people sang the German national anthem together.) (AfD-Kompakt 17.11.2015)

(12) *Die Selbstbedienungsmentalität der SPD-Funktionäre beweist wie sehr die Altparteien sich an die Macht und das Geld gewöhnt und wie sehr sie sich von den Menschen entfernt haben.* (The self-service mentality of the SPD civil servants proves how much the old parties have got used to power and money, and how far they have distanced themselves from people.) (AfD-Kompakt 23.11.2016)

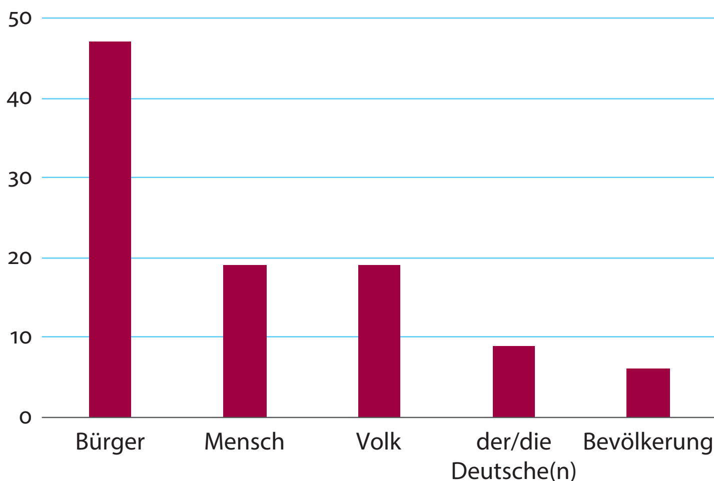
(13) *Sich unverfroren die Taschen zu füllen, während es in Deutschland an allen Ecken und Enden brennt, Altersarmut und drückende Abgabenlast die Menschen besorgt, ist ekelhaft.* (Filling your pockets shamelessly while

19. Web link: https://www.dwds.de/wb/Mensch (24.02.2017).

Germany is on fire everywhere, poverty in old age and the pressure of taxes are weighing people down, is revolting.) (AfD-Kompakt 23.11.2016)

(14) *Einmal abgesehen davon, dass der Minister sich mit einem dreisten AfD-Plagiat schmückt, müssten wir uns eigentlich für die Menschen in Deutschland freuen, würden diese Maßnahmen ja ihre Sicherheit erhöhen.* (Apart from the fact that the minister is daringly plagiarizing AfD, we really ought to be happy for people in Germany if these measures really made them more secure.) (AfD-Kompakt 03.01.2017)

In what follows I provide an overview of the lexemes used by AfD to refer to the 'people' in this corpus. To this end, I first present the overall view of the use of each term. I then show the number of occurrences of each term in the different textual sources consulted, and finally the relative frequency of the appearance of the lexeme *Volk* in each of the sources analysed. Graph 1 shows the frequency of each lexeme in absolute terms:

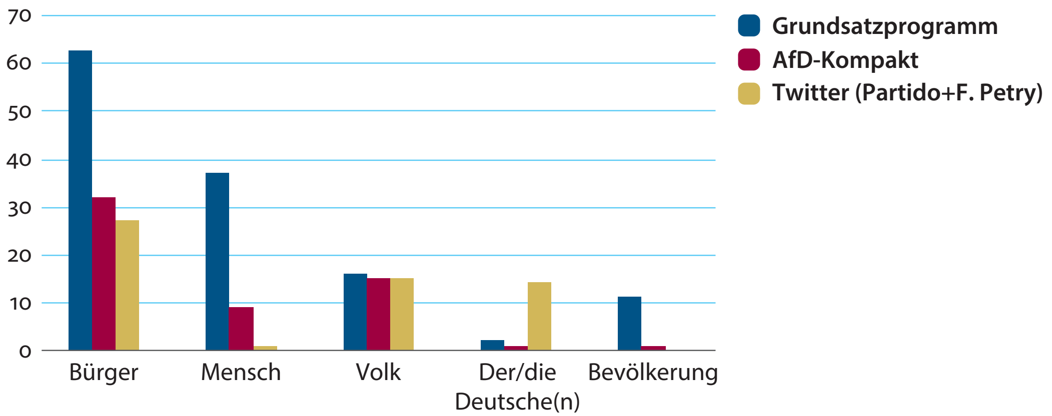


Graph 1. Overview of the frequency of each lexeme in absolute terms

On the other hand, a panoramic view with the frequency in each source also affords insights, as provided in Graph 2.

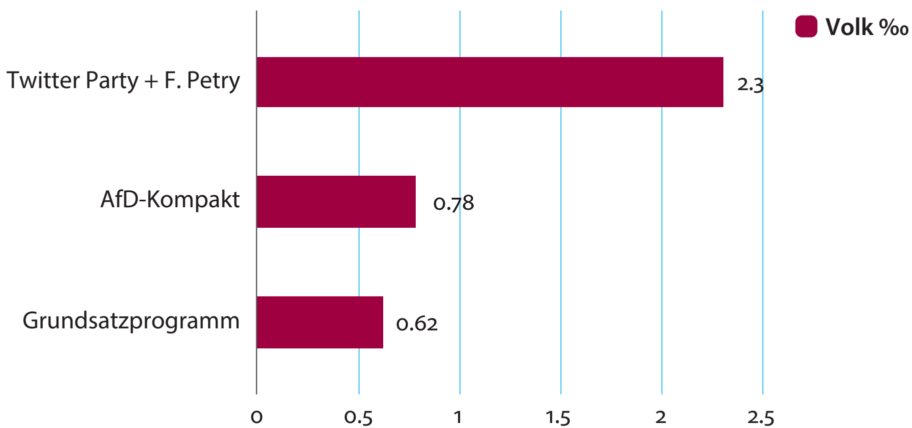
As can be seen from Graph 2, all the lexemes except *Der/die Deutsche(n)* ('German' or 'the Germans') are more frequent in the party's *Grundsatzprogramm*. Only in the case of *Volk* is the difference between sources minimal. In Twitter the use of *Der/die Deutsche(n)* is much more frequent. This might be explained by the fact that both the *Grundsatzprogramm* and the bulletin *AfD-Kompakt* are official channels of communication and vehicles of the party image, while Twitter does not share this formal or official character.

Nonetheless, since the present study focuses on the lexeme *Volk*, it is relevant to consider the results from the point of view of the relative frequency of the



Graph 2. Total number of occurrences of each lexeme in each source consulted

lexeme *Volk* in each of the textual sources, in comparison with the total number of words in each; it is also important to compare the relative frequency of the appearance of *Volk* with that of the other terms in the same textual sources. This information is shown in Graph 3.



Graph 3. Relative frequency of *Volk* in each source (normalized per 1,000 words)

Graph 3 is particularly revealing, as it shows how the word *Volk* appears nearly as often in Twitter as in the *Grundsatzprogramm*, even though the Twitter corpus has only one quarter of the number of words (15 compared to 16 occurrences). A similar pattern can be observed with *AfD-Kompakt*, although the contrast is less pronounced: here there are 15 occurrences in half as many words as the general manifesto.

Are the contexts of use the same?

In what follows I shall address the question as to whether the terms presented above are interchangeable synonyms in the language of AfD, or whether they have different uses. AfD's explanatory and argumentative discourses often centre on

the theme of the ‘people’ abandoned by those in power and on the idea that the German people is a homogeneous entity that is ‘mature’ enough to articulate its will and decide on its political future without the help of politicians, except for those of the AfD itself. Because of the variety of signifiers used to designate ‘the people’ in German political discourse, it is useful to examine in more detail how the AfD articulates the abovementioned categories for imagining the ‘people’ grammatically. Various syntactic structures are used in which explicit reference to the ‘people’ is performed through different lexemes. We will compare how different people-related signifiers appear with similar or identical verbs or within similar sentence structures in order assess whether the AfD uses different people-related signifiers interchangeably or not. I therefore compared pairs of sentences where the category for designating the ‘people’ varied but where the rest of the sentence structure is similar. A selection of these pairs is presented and discussed below:[20]

(15) *Die Forderungen des CDU-Ministers sind also nicht nur kopiert, sondern Placebos, die unter die* Bürger *gestreut werden, jedoch nichts bewirken*. (The demands made by the CDU minister are not only copied, they are placebos which will be distributed among the citizens but will have no effect.) (AfD-Kompakt 04.01.2017)

(15′) *Schäuble streut den* Deutschen *bewusst Sand in die Augen!* (Schäuble is consciously throwing sand in the Germans’ eyes.) (Twitter AfD, 06.02.2016)

(16) *Unter dem Motto „Asyl braucht Grenzen – Rote Karte für Merkel” sind am 7. November 2015 mehr als 7000* Bürger *in Berlin auf die Straße gegangen.* (Under the slogan “Asylum needs Borders – Red Card for Merkel”, more than 7,000 citizens took to the Berlin streets on 7 November 2015.) (AfD-Kompakt 17.11.2015)

(16′) *Zum Abschluss der Veranstaltung sangen 7000* Menschen[21] *gemeinsam die deutsche Nationalhymne.* (At the close of the event, 7,000 people sang the German national anthem together.) (AfD-Kompakt 17.11.2015)

(17) *Das* Volk *aber lasse sich nicht länger täuschen.* (But the people won’t allow itself to be deceived any more.) (AfD-Kompakt 17.11.2015)

(17′) *Der* Bürger *lässt sich nicht mehr vorführen.* (The citizen does not let himself be led a merry dance any more.) (Twitter Frauke Petry, 01.10.2016)

(18) *Dieses Umfrageergebnis belegt, wie weit sich Ministerpräsidentin Dreyer (SPD) mit der von ihr geführten Landesregierung aus Altparteien vom deutschen*

20. Italics are used for the quotation, but not for the word under investigation.

21. In this case, the two quotations compared are from the account of the same event.

Volk *entfernt hat.* (This survey result shows how far Minister President Dreyer (SPD) with the regional government she leads made up of old parties has distanced herself from the German people.) (AfD-Kompakt 22.11.2016)

(18′) *Die Selbstbedienungsmentalität der SPD-Funktionäre beweist wie sehr die Altparteien sich an die Macht und das Geld gewöhnt und wie sehr sie sich von den* Menschen *entfernt haben.* (The self-service mentality of the SPD civil servants proves how much the old parties have got used to power and money, and how far they have distanced themselves from people.) (AfD-Kompakt 23.11.2016)

As can be seen from the examples quoted above, the question we set can be answered in the affirmative, since the different lexemes are used interchangeably in similar contexts: In (15) and (15′) the lexemes 'Bürger' and 'Deutschen' alternate in the role of the victims of 'sand strewing' and 'placebo strewing' on the part of similar actors (the governing 'CDU-Ministers' / 'Schäuble'; in (16) and (16′) the lexemes 'Bürger' and 'Menschen' take to the streets in equal numbers (7000) to demonstrate; in (17) and (17′) 'Volk' and 'Bürger' alternate in the syntactic role of subject with similar predicates: 'not letting themselves be taken in'; and in (18) and (18′) 'Volk' and 'Menschen' are the people who the subjects (SPD members) have alienated with their attitude.

Characteristics of the 'people', according to the AfD

In this section I shall examine what characteristics are being attributed to the 'people' in AfD discourse. The question is how the noun 'people' is qualified or described, as either subject or object of the sentence. The examples are organized in terms of concrete features, focusing on nouns, adjectives and verbs. In the case of the verbs, I distinguish examples with 'people' as active subject (how it should act, what it does well, what it should be able to do) from those with 'people' as subject of the passive (what is done to it, how it is treated, how it is considered). A representative sample is presented below: the 'people' is characteristically envisaged as wholly German, with a common national interest and shared sense of well being, as can be seen by the frequent juxtaposition of '*deutsch*' with *Volk*.

(19) *Dabei müssen die nationalen Interessen und das Wohl des deutschen Volkes im Mittelpunkt stehen.* (In this, the national interests and the wellbeing of the German people must be placed in the centre.) (AfD-Grundsatzprogramm, 2016, 29)

Moreover, the 'people' are generous, but are entitled to something in return for their generosity:

(20) *Außerdem regte sie einen sozialen Pflichtdienst für Asylbewerber an, um ihre Integration in die deutsche Gesellschaft zu fördern und die Solidarität des deutschen Volkes nicht zur Einbahnstraße verkommen zu lassen.* (Apart from that, she encouraged the establishment of obligatory social service for asylum seekers to further their integration into German society and to ensure that the solidarity of the German people does not degenerate into a one-way street.) (AfD-Kompakt 26.08.2015)

Moreover, the 'people' is often presented as mature ('*mündig*' means literally 'of age'), articulate and capable of taking its own decisions. The suggestion here is clearly that contrary to AfD politicians who voice the will of the people, other politicians treat the German people as children. There is a clear suggestion that representative democracy has somehow become a hindrance to putting the people's will into practice. In this context, it is interesting to note that the categories of citizenry (*Bürger*) and people (*Volk*) are used interchangeably to the general effect of equating the citizenry with the German people and to position both reifications as entities marked by a homogeneous will devoid of the conflicts that mark a healthy democracy. In fact, by presenting the governing parties as an obstacle that stands in the way of the people's interests, the AfD seems (consciously or unconsciously) to ignore the fact that these parties have actually been democratically elected. In other words, the reality that the people have actually elected these parties is relegated to the sidelines.

(21) *Das deutsche Volk ist ebenso mündig wie das der Schweizer, um ohne Einschränkung über jegliche Themen abstimmen zu können.* (The German people is just as mature as that of the Swiss, so as to vote directly about any issues without restrictions.) (AfD-Grundsatzprogramm, 2016, 9)

(22) *Die Entmündigung der Bürger hat begonnen.* (The incapacitation of the citizens has begun.) (Press release, 04.05.2016)

(23) *Die Bürger sind keine unmündigen Kinder*. (Citizens are not underage children.) (Twitter AfD, 22.06.2016)

(24) *Wer die Bürger in diesem Land derart für dumm verkaufen will, darf sich nicht darüber wundern, wenn diese das durchsichtige Spiel nicht mehr mitmachen wollen.* (People who write the citizens in this country off as stupid should not be surprised when they don't want to join in this transparent game any longer.) (Press release, 12.09.2016)[22]

22. Web link: https://www.alternativefuer.de/pazderski-koalition-handlungsunfaehig-csu-eine-luftnummer(24.01.2017).

(25) *Der Bürger lässt sich nicht mehr vorführen.* (The citizen will not let himself be led a merry dance any more.) (Twitter Frauke Petry, 01.10.2016)

The AfD systematically portrays itself as respecting the citizenry, the population and/or the German people whose agenda it claims to share. However, it puts at least as much energy in depicting other politicians and media as actors who deliberately insult, despise and ignore this 'people'. In the same move it claims the label of democracy for itself, adopting the language of liberal democracy for its inherently illiberal agenda (Furko, in this volume). This makes it easy for the party to reject the label of far-right party on the explicit level, and to decry such labelling practices by political opponents as acts of stigmatization.

(26) *Die Aussagen von Kubicki*[23] *und Gaus*[24] *zeigen das mangelhafte demokratische Verständnis und die Verachtung der politischen Klasse und vieler Medien für die Bürger*. (The statements by Kubicki and Gaus show the deficient democratic understanding and the scorn that the political class and many media have for citizens.) (AfD-Kompakt 06.11.2016)

(27) *Die AfD-Fraktion thematisierte heute im Sächsischen Landtag die seit Jahren grassierenden Beschimpfungen von Regierungsmitgliedern, Politikern und Medien gegenüber den eigenen Bürgern mit dem damit verbundenen Vorwurf, Sachsen als besonders rechtextremistisch verseuchten Schandfleck Deutschlands zu stigmatisieren.* (Today in the regional parliament of Saxony the AfD parliamentary group spoke about how government members, politicians and the media have indulged in rampant abuse against their own citizens by stigmatizing Saxony as a blemish on Germany contaminated with right wing extremism.) (AfD-Kompakt 10.11.2016)

(28) *Vielleicht weil die SPD konsequent den Willen des Volkes ignoriert?* (Perhaps because the SPD consistently ignores the will of the people?) (Twitter Frauke Petry, 12.05.2016)

The AfD systematically describes the political landscape as marked by a distance between the people and the ruling powers. The categories of *Volk* and *Menschen* are used interchangeably here.

(29) *Dieses Umfrageergebnis belegt, wie weit sich Ministerpräsidentin Dreyer (SPD) mit der von ihr geführten Landesregierung aus Altparteien vom deutschen*

23. Wolfgang Kubicki, member of the *Freie Demokraten* (FDP): https://www.fdp.de (24.01.2017), who made a declaration against the use of Swiss-style direct referendums on specific issues.

24. Bettina Gaus, a journalist on *Tageszeitung* (TAZ): http://www.taz.de (24.01.2017), who also spoke against direct referendums.

Volk entfernt hat. (This survey result shows how far Minister President Dreyer (SPD) with the regional government she leads made up of old parties has distanced herself from the German people.) (AfD-Kompakt, 22.11.2016)

(30) *Die Selbstbedienungsmentalität der SPD-Funktionäre beweist wie sehr die Altparteien sich an die Macht und das Geld gewöhnt und wie sehr sie sich von den Menschen entfernt haben.* (The self-service mentality of the SPD civil servants proves how much the old parties have got used to power and money, and how far they have distanced themselves from people.) (AfD-Kompakt, 23.11.2016)

It is interesting to see how, in the above examples, AfD seems to insist on the existence of a significant and (almost) insuperable division between the governing parties and Establishment, on the one hand, and the population, on the other. This breach consists, in essence, of governing elites who distance themselves further and further from the people, with all that this implies in terms of democratic representation. Moreover, after being abandoned by its leaders, the 'people' feels, or is, exposed to danger. AfD even suggests that the government acts against the interests of its people: metaphors of abandonment and distance are omnipresent in descriptions of the relationship with *Bürger*, *das Volk*, *der Wähler* and so on.

(31) *Die Bürger sind verunsichert und fühlen sich nicht mehr ausreichend geschützt.* (The citizens are insecure and no longer feel that they are being protected enough.) (AfD-Kompakt, 27.11.2016)

(32) *Es ist traurig zu sehen, wie defensiv unser Staat mittlerweile auf Kriminelle und insbesondere kriminelle Migranten zum Schaden unserer Bürger reagiert.* (It is sad to see how defensively our state has come to react to criminals, particularly criminal migrants, to the detriment of our citizens.) (AfD-Kompakt, 14.12.2016)

(33) *Denkzettel für CDU und CSU: Den Wähler im Stich gelassen*. (Warning for CDU and CSU: Voter left in the lurch.) (Twitter AfD, 27.05.2014)

It is important to note that the distance between the people and its leaders is not presented as the result of some unavoidable gap but as the result of acts of betrayal on the part of the governing classes:[25]

(34) *Der Betrug am Volk geht weiter!* (The deception of the people continues!) (Twitter Frauke Petry, 02.12.2016)

25. Discourse on 'the people's' 'resistance' to 'elites' should be understood in the light of historical discourses of resistance to the totalitarian system of the former German Democratic Republic (see Chapter 7, this volume).

The AfD's line of argumentation leads to the inevitable conclusion that the trust between the electorate and its politicians has been breached. This systemic crisis of representative democracy therefore calls for a new actor that takes the concerns of a mythically unified German people to heart. As such, the AfD carves out a place for itself in the German political landscape.

(35) *Die etablierten Parteien verlieren das Vertrauen der Bürger.* (The established parties have lost the citizens' trust.) (Twitter Frauke Petry, 31.08.2016)

(36) *Die Bürger haben das Vertrauen in den etablierten Parteien verloren*. (The citizens have lost their trust in the established parties.)
(Twitter Frauke Petry, 02.09.2016)

(37) *Das politische Establishment hat das Vetrauen verspielt, auch wenn man sich das schönzureden versucht.* (The political establishment has gambled away our trust, even though they try to persuade us that this is not the case.)
(Twitter Frauke Petry, 04.12.2016)

The 'people' is presented as having serious difficulties when it comes to feeling in control of itself in its own country. This depiction is articulated through an almost emancipatory discourse urging for action against the people's supposed subjugation by a migrant-loving political elite. Here too, the language of liberalism is being deployed in an open attack against liberal values and policies.

(38) *Wir sind nicht mehr Herr im eigenen Land!* (We are no longer masters in our own country!) (Twitter Frauke Petry, 20.01.2016)

(39) *Wir sind freie Bürger, keine Untertanen*. (We are free citizens, not subjects.)
(Twitter Frauke Petry, 30.05.2016)

In a bid to boost its self-legitimation, AfD claims that the majority of the population is now opposed to Angela Merkel:

(40) *2/3 der Deutschen sind gegen Merkels Flüchtlingspolitik.* (2 out of 3 Germans are against Merkel's refugee policy.) (Twitter Frauke Petry, 05.08.2016)

(41) *60% der Deutschen halten Merkels Asylpolitik für gescheitert.* (60% of Germans think that Merkel's asylum policy has failed.)
(Twitter Frauke Petry, 29.07.2016)

In the midst of AfD's discourses, it is noticeable that in the informal genre of Twitter, Ms. Petry backs up her arguments with numbers instead of generalising. Of course, these comments also show that Frauke Petry acknowledges that not everyone is against Merkel, and it is tacitly assumed that 40% of people do not

support AfD. But the recourse to the rhetoric of quantification is interesting, particularly when we consider the possible electoral context.

In short, AfD projects an image of the government as a 'traitor' which 'abandons the people', suggesting that the government is neither genuinely German (*deutsch*), nor does it defend national interests (*nationale Interessen*), so that 'the people' is in open disagreement with its government.[26] The AfD thus sets up its own model of 'the German people' and 'national interests' against the government and other established parties which, it suggests, have betrayed the people's interests.

4. Delegitimation of those who govern

The present section focuses on the AfD's linguistic strategies for delegitimizing the present government. To legitimise a particular actor, speakers often assign it the syntactic role of subject of a positive action, while to delegitimise this actor, the opposite strategy is often used. Importantly, in its representation of the people, AfD often places the relevant noun as direct or indirect object of a (negative) action that 'the Establishment' has carried out. In line with populist discourses adopted elsewhere (van Leeuwen 2014), AfD attributes all the blame for negative events to the government, to international entities and to migrants, thus exempting the people from any responsibility. We shall focus here specifically on transitive verbs whose subject makes reference to the government itself or to individual members of it, on the one hand, and on the status of 'people' as the direct or indirect object of these (positively or negatively connotated) verbs, on the other hand. The verbs in question are underlined in the examples below:

(42) *Bundestag begeht Untreue durch erneute Insolvenzverschleppung Griechenlands.* (Parliament commits unfaithfulness by further postponing Greece's insolvency.) (Press Release, 19.08.2015)

(43) *Albrecht Glaser warf der Bundesregierung vor, das Volk zu täuschen.* Albert Glaser reproached the government for deceiving the people. (AfD-Kompakt, 17.11.2015, p. 1)

(44) *Wer so denkt, verachtet den Souverän, dem er zu dienen vorgibt, und ist mit Sicherheit kein Demokrat.* (Someone who thinks that way despises the

26. See citations 40 and 41.

sovereign he is pretending to serve, and is certainly no democrat.)
(Press Release, 04.11.2016)[27]

(45) *Wenn politische Repräsentanten den Bürgerwillen beharrlich ignorieren, wird Demokratie zur Farce.* (When political representatives obstinately ignore the citizens' will, democracy becomes a farce.) (Press Release, 04.11.2016)[28]

(46) *Die AfD-Fraktion thematisierte heute im Sächsischen Landtag die seit Jahren grassierenden Beschimpfungen von Regierungsmitgliedern, Politikern und Medien gegenüber den eigenen Bürgern mit dem damit verbundenen Vorwurf, Sachsen als besonders rechtextremistisch verseuchten Schandfleck Deutschlands zu stigmatisieren.* (Today in the regional parliament of Saxony the AfD parliamentary group spoke about how government members, politicians and the media have indulged in rampant abuse against their own citizens by stigmatizing Saxony as a blemish on Germany contaminated with right wing extremism.) (AfD-Kompakt, 10.11.2016)

(47) *Dieses Umfrageergebnis belegt, wie weit sich Ministerpräsidentin Dreyer (SPD) mit der von ihr geführten Landesregierung aus Altparteien vom deutschen Volk entfernt hat.* (This survey result shows how far Minister President Dreyer (SPD) with the regional government she leads made up of old parties has distanced herself from the German people.) (AfD-Kompakt, 22.11.2016)

(48) *Altparteien lehnen mehr direkte Demokratie ab* . (Old parties reject more direct democracy.) (AfD-Kompakt, 13.12.2016)

As these quotations show, verbs with *Altparteien* or the government as subject have a markedly negative semantic prosody: *Untreue begehen* ('to commit infidelity'), *täuschen* ('to deceive'), *verachten* ('to despise'), *ignorieren* ('to ignore'), *stigmatisieren* ('to stigmatize'), *sich entfernen* ('to distance oneself'), *ablehnen* ('to reject'). The government and the *Altparteien* are thus associated with clearly negative attitudes towards a rather sensitive subject: the 'people'. To paraphrase the excerpts cited above, the Altparteien are not faithful to the people, they deceive it instead of acting responsibly, they despise it when then should give it priority, they ignore it when they should be listening to it, they insult and stigmatise it instead of working for it, and they distance themselves from it when they ought to be getting to know it better and learning more about its everyday circumstances. In short, taken together, the verbs we see here convey the idea that the present government and the political Establishment not only fail to act in good faith, but they actually

27. Cfr. http://www.alternative-rlp.de/dr-bollinger-afd-fuer-bundesweite-volksentscheide-volkssouveraenitaet-wiederherstellen (01.02.2017).

28. Ibid.

act decidedly and consciously against the people's interests (see Chapter 1, this volume; Moffitt and Tormey 2014; Moffitt 2015, 2016).

Modes of representation: AfD and 'the people'

The AfD thus presents itself publicly as the only authentic alternative political project for 'the people' and for Germany. It opposes itself to an establishment that it presents as delusional, disoriented and without a credible solution to the problems faced by the German *Volk*, *Bevölkerung*, *citizenry* and/or *people*. In this way, the AfD carves out a discursive position for itself as the only viable alternative for *politics as usual* and as the only true representative of the 'German people'. Here I will argue that this has become the AfD's characteristic 'mode of representation' (Saward 2008), a term used in research such as the studies by Deschouwer/Depauw (2014) and O'Neill (2001), to mention just two. In Saward's words (2008: 273), a party's mode of representation involves a process whereby "someone makes the claim (a maker), and they make the claim about someone or something (a subject) standing for something (an object) to a group (an audience)", and this strategy becomes routinized or regularised over time.

To study AfD's self-representation strategy in this respect, I carried out a morphosyntactic analysis of their statements paying special attention to those in which the AfD was the subject of the sentence, and to the transitive verbs used. In the case of sentences with the copula *sein* ('to be'), the semantic content of the predicate is analysed, since these constructions verbalize directly the image of the party that its representatives want to project, either through nouns or adjectives. Adjectives and other modifying elements were also taken into account, with a particular focus on the choice of absolute or gradable options, using the procedure followed by van Leeuwen (2014). The different strategies found in the corpus are presented below:

Identification of AfD with the 'people' by use of the first person subject pronoun 'wir' ('we') and the direct/indirect object 'uns' ('us').

Through the use of this resource, this political group creates, or tries to create, a single voice for 'the people' and the party itself, as though they were essentially the same, fully identified with each other:

(49) *Mit ihrem handstreichartigen Vorgehen, das uns, die Bürger, von heute auf morgen vor vollendete Tatsachen stellt, haben sie unser Vertrauen missbraucht und gründlich verspielt.* (With their surprise tactics that present us, the citizens, with a fait accompli from one day to the next, they have abused and totally forfeited our trust.' (AfD-Kompakt, 20.10.2015, p. 3)

(50) *Wir, die Bürger, kennen das Grundgesetz, das den Anspruch auf Asyl politisch Verfolgten vorbehält.* (We, the citizens, know the Constitution that limits claims to asylum to victims of political persecution.)
(AfD-Kompakt, 20.10.2015, p. 3)

(51) *Tun sie das nicht, sollten wir uns aufs Grundgesetz besinnen, das uns, die Bürger, zum Widerstand gegen jeden berechtigt, der es unternimmt, die freiheitlich-demokratische Grundordnung zu beseitigen*. (If they don't do that, we should remember the Constitution which gives us the right to resist anyone who tries to set aside the underlying free democratic order.)
(AfD-Kompakt, 20.10.2015, p. 3)

Identification with the 'people' by using the first person plural possessive'unser' ('our')

Here we should focus our attention on the fact that the noun with which the possessive appears can refer to any social or professional group, without any specific age or values. The net effect of this can be to give the impression that the majority of people within society have a single voice:

(52) *Unser Land steht vor der größten Herausforderung seit Gründung der Bundesrepublik.* (Our country is facing the greatest challenge since the Federal Republic was founded.) (AfD-Kompakt, 22.12.2015, p. 2)

(53) *Es ist traurig zu sehen, wie defensiv unser Staat mittlerweile auf Kriminelle und insbesondere kriminelle Migranten zum Schaden unserer Bürger reagiert.* (It is sad to see how defensively our state has come to react to criminals, particularly criminal migrants, to the detriment of our citizens.)
(AfD-Kompakt, 14.12.2016)

(54) *Unsere Soldaten haben so etwas nicht verdient.* (Our soldiers do not deserve that.) (AfD-Kompakt, 13.01.2017)

(55) *Die Bundesregierung geizt bei unseren Kindern und wirft Griechenland das Geld hinterher*. (The government is economizing with our children and throwing money at Greece.) (Twitter AfD, 05.03.2015)

(56) *Wir sind ein Volk und keine beliebige Bevölkerung. Zu uns gehört, wer unsere Sprache spricht, unsere Werte anerkennt*. (We are a people, not just any arbitrary population. The people who belong to us speak our language and acknowledge our values.) (Twitter Frauke Petry, 03.10.2015)

(57) *Die AfD steht für eine konsequente Anwendung unseres Rechts*![29] (The AfD stands for a consistent application of our law.)
(Twitter Frauke Petry, 06.07.2016)

Use of absolute rather than gradable adjectives to present AfD as a political alternative to the government

It is striking that on most occasions AfD does not present itself as 'a good possible alternative' or 'a better option', but as 'the only/real/true alternative' or 'the last chance'. The AfD thus makes use of modifiers (adjectives and adverbs) that denote what van Leeuwen (2014) calls an endpoint on the semantic scale. The following examples are quite representative (for maximum clarity, the modifiers have been presented in normal font):

(58) *Weil die AfD meine* letzte *politische Hoffnung ist, ganz besonders Prof. Lucke* (Because the AfD is my last political hope, and particularly Prof. Lucke.)
(Twitter AfD, 12.05.2014)

(59) *Wir sind die* einzige echte *Opposition, die dieses Land noch hat.* (We are the only true opposition left in this country.) (AfD-Kompakt, 30.09.2015, p. 1)

(60) *So sehr, dass Ächten und Verleumden nicht mehr reicht und sie zu physischer Gewalt gegen die Vertreter der* einzigen echten *Opposition im Lande greifen.* (So much that outlawing and defaming us is not enough, and they resort to using physical force against the only true opposition in this country.)
(AfD-Kompakt, 29.10.2015, p. 1)

(61) *Sie stellen fest, dass die AfD derzeit die* einzige echte *demokratische Opposition in Deutschland zu den Altparteien darstellt.* (They find out that the AfD are now the only real democratic opposition to the old parties in Germany.)
(AfD-Kompakt, 17.11.2015, p. 1)

In these quotations as well as in others, it is particularly important to notice the characteristic combination of the element *einzig* ('only') and *echt* ('true, genuine, real'). By using this strategy, AfD intends to leave no room for doubt: outside the AfD there is no other political group capable of putting up effective opposition to the current government. They thus attempt to monopolise the political alternative to Angela Merkel.

29. For reasons of space it is not possible to present examples with all the nouns qualified by *unser* referring to the different institutions and public realities within Germany. However, to give a brief overview, they are listed here: *Grenzen* ('borders'), *Sozialsystem* ('social system'), *Souveranität* ('sovereignty'), *Renten* ('pensions'), *Demokratie* ('democracy'), *Politiker* ('politicians'), *Abgordneten* ('members of parliament'), *Freiheit* ('freedom'), *Leben* ('life'), *Steuergelder* ('tax revenue').

Categorical statements in which AfD is identified with nouns such as 'democracy, vanguard, basis and realism'

In definition, the use of the verb 'to be' with the copula is frequent to establish the link with the subject and predicate. This type of construction is very frequent in AfD's discourse, which identifies the party itself as 'Rückgrat' (backbone), 'Avantgarde' (vanguard), 'Realisten' (realists), 'Ausdruck (der) Demokratie' (expression of democracy), 'Original' (original), etc.

(62) *Die Alternative für Deutschland ist das demokratische Rückgrat dieses Landes.* (AfD is the democratic backbone of this country.)
(AfD-Kompakt, 17.11.2015, p. 1)

(63) *Die Zeit der politischen Realisten bricht an, die Zeit der Utopisten nähert sich dem Ende.* (The age of the political realists is beginning, the age of the utopians is coming to an end.) (AfD-Kompakt, 17.11.2015, p. 1)

(64) *Wir sind die rechtsstaatliche Avantgarde Deutschlands.* (We are the vanguard of the rule of law in Germany.) (AfD-Kompakt, 17.11.2015, p. 1)

(65) *Wir sind Realisten.* (We are realists.) (Twitter Frauke Petry, 9.01.2016)

(66) *AfD ist Ausdruck unserer Demokratie: Zeit für Veränderung*! (AfD is the expression of our democracy: time for change!)
(Twitter Frauke Petry, 23.08.2016)

AfD is thus presented as the proper model for democracy, the party that is in contact with reality, the party that offers true progress. AfD contrasts this with the opposite extreme of 'utopians' who not only have lost contact with reality, but who are completely out of touch.

Conclusions

This study has shown that the AfD characteristically verbalizes the concept of 'people' using the term *Volk*. But as we have seen, this is not the only term used, since there are others that are sometimes used interchangeably, depending on the context and the medium.[30] In fact, *Volk* is not the most widely used lexeme, as we might expect, but in purely numerical terms is overtaken by *Bürger* ('citizen'). This terminological preference is, of course, not random. AfD knows that it has to speak to many different kinds of people, including many who would not naturally belong

30. I refer here to the *Grundsatzprogramm*, the regional election manifestos, the bulletin *AfD-Kompakt*, Twitter, etc.

among its supporters. By co-opting the vocabulary of liberalism ('citizens'), AfD achieves a more neutral style of address that is more in line with the discourses of mainstream parties. Interestingly, the way AfD refers to the people varies across the three genres that we have considered, so that a more official, bureaucratic tone prevails in the Grundsatzprogramm (manifesto), while AfD-Kompakt, which addresses supporters, and particularly Twitter, which exploits the potential of colloquial language, are more likely to make use of terms such as '*Volk*' and '*völkisch*'. It is unsurprising that '*Volk*' is less frequent in the *Grundsatzprogramm* than in the other genres (see Table 1), since many people might perceive it to be too radical for formal institutional use. Conversely, the use of '*Volk*' in Twitter, a medium known for its emotive and provocative potential, may respond to a careful type of borderline provocation, of the kind documented by Wodak (2015: 60–62) in the case of Jörg Haider's references to the Nazi era.

Regarding the characteristics of the 'people', the use of the adjective *deutsch* ('German') provides the most striking combination: this brings out the patriotic or nationalistic nature of the AfD's understanding of the people, and endows the people with an identity which, in the context of immigration, has exclusionary force, summoning up an implicit notion of German-ness as a necessary qualification for belonging to the people. Although this adjective is not particularly frequent, the examples found confirm that its combination with *Volk* forms a semantic nexus that proves particularly important to understand AfD's discourse. This expression draws on its historical resonances, analysed by Hermanns (2003, see above), to contribute powerfully to the discourses about politics and identity in Germany, placing an idealized *Volk* (consisting of ethnically, culturally and linguistically homogeneous Germans) in opposition to a society characterised by large-scale migration.

On a different level, the linguistic analysis of the word 'people' in relation to its governing classes has shown how the AfD manages to personalize and dramatize the relationship between ordinary people and political leaders by using nouns like 'abandonment, disloyalty, scorn, indifference', attributed to the government and the *Altparteien* in their relations with the people. These attitudes contrast with those used to characterize the 'people' itself, who are shown as 'mature, capable of taking their own decisions, patriotic, refusing to be deceived, growing mistrustful', and so on. Along these lines, section 4, which examines the verbs associated with the governing party and the other so-called *Altparteien*, illustrates the linguistic strategy used by the AfD to delegitimize the government and other mainstream parties. The transitive verbs used in this context have markedly negative connotations whenever the direct or indirect object is 'the people'.

In open contrast to its presentation of the people's relationship with the government and the *Altparteien,* the AfD presents itself not just as 'a better option' or as

'an alternative', but as 'the only possible alternative'. From a linguistic point of view, this feat is realized by frequently using first person pronouns and possessives. On the other hand, we should take into account the fact that in AfD discourse there are categorical statements that identify this political party implicitly and explicitly with nouns that designate positive social and political values, such as being the true 'vanguard' of democracy, and offering 'realism' in place of utopianism.

As far as the AfD's bid to present itself as the only true political 'alternative' for the German people opposing a governing class that is out of touch with the people's interests, concerns, and reality, these results can be compared with research results on *Podemos* (Spain) and *Movimento Cinque Stelle* (Italy) (see Chapter 3, this volume). Obviously, though, we should not ignore the major differences present in the representation of 'the people' itself, or the way of articulating the confrontation between 'the people' and the *Establishment* in AfD, on the one hand, and *Podemos* or *Movimento Cinque Stelle*, on the other.

To conclude, it would be interesting to complement these results with a further study using comparative methodology, as exemplified by Leech/Short (2007), to facilitate study of the stylistic differences between the discourses of AfD and those of the *Altparteien* (particularly CDU and SPD). However, the application of analytical approaches such as that developed by van Leeuwen (2014) in the Dutch context to the German scenario requires the availability of speeches from similar contexts by members of AfD and CDU or SPD, and AfD is currently not represented in the *Bundestag*.[31] Should the AfD have a parliamentary group in the *Bundestag* after the next general elections, it would be useful to carry out a comparative study of speeches and debates along these lines.

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31. At the time of writing, the general election of September 2017 is some months away.

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CHAPTER 12

Measuring people-centrism in populist political discourse

A linguistic approach

Maarten van Leeuwen

In recent years, a growing body of political-scientific literature has focused on the empirical measurement of populism. In such studies, "people-centrism" is one of the most frequently analysed discourse characteristics, i.e. to what extent "the people" are put in the focus of attention in a politician's discourse. In order to measure people-centrism empirically, it is common practice to use the number of references to the electorate as the only indicator. In this contribution, however, I argue that *the way in which* politicians refer to "the people" should be taken into account as well. By presenting a case study from Dutch politics, in which the populist Geert Wilders plays an important role, I substantiate that analysing the *syntactic position* in which "the people" are presented and the strategic use of *perspective* or *attributed viewpoint* deepens our understanding of how (populist) politicians put "the people" in the centre of attention in their discourse. As such this contribution also aims to demonstrate how a linguistic approach to populism can contribute to the empirical measurement of populism.

Keywords: people-centrism, measuring populism, linguistic choices, Geert Wilders, Alexander Pechtold

Introduction

A relatively new development in the vast field of studies on populism is the increasing interest of political scientists in the question how populism can be measured empirically (cf. Akkerman et al. 2014: 5; Rooduijn and Pauwels 2011: 1272).[1] In the

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last fifteen years, political scientists have started using systematic textual analysis to address this question (e.g. Bonikowski and Gidron 2016; Rooduijn et al. 2014; Vossen 2010; Deegan-Krause and Haughton 2009; Hawkins 2009). Starting point for this type of populism research is the assumption that a systematic analysis of discourse characteristics can reveal empirically to what extent politicians or political parties can be characterized as "populist".[2]

One of the discourse characteristics most frequently used for measuring populism empirically, is the characteristic of "people-centrism" (Rooduijn and Akkerman 2017: 194; Elchardus and Spruyt 2016: 114), i.e. to what extent "the people" are put in the focus of attention in a politician's discourse. This focus on "people-centrism" is a logical one: although there is an ongoing debate in political science on how "populism" should be defined exactly, it is generally acknowledged that people-centrism is a key characteristic of populism (Rooduijn and Akkerman 2017: 194).[3] By systematically putting "the people" in the centre of attention, populists suggest that they, more than other politicians, stand up for the interests and will of "the common man" (e.g. Moffit 2016; Pauwels 2014; Canovan 1981).

In order to measure "people-centrism" in political discourse, it is common practice to use the number of references to the electorate as the only indicator (e.g. Stockemer and Barisione 2017; Rooduijn and Akkerman 2017; Oliver and Rahn 2016; Pauwels 2014; Jagers and Walgrave 2007). In other words, the frequency with which such references occur, is used by political scientists to measure the centrality of "the people" in the discourse of a certain politician.[4] However, in

anonymous reviewers of *Tijdschrift voor Taalbeheersing* and the editors of the current volume for their valuable comments on draft versions.

2. In political science, it is still a matter of debate whether "populism" should be conceptualized as a binary category or as a gradational concept (Moffitt 2016: 46; Rooduijn and Akkerman 2017: 194–195; see introduction and Chapter 1, this volume). In the former approach it is assumed that politicians or parties can be characterized as either "populist" or "not populist"; in the latter, populism is seen as a gradual phenomenon (i.e. politicians or parties can be characterized as more or less populist). Most studies focusing on the empirical measurement of populism, adopt this "matter of degree" approach.

3. See Chapter 1, this volume, Pauwels (2014) and Moffitt (2016) for an overview of various definitions of populism. I will not further address the question how "populism" should be defined precisely – that question is beyond the scope of this contribution. However, there is general consensus that "anti-elitism" and "people-centrism" are at the heart of populism (see introduction and Chapter 1, this volume; see also Rooduijn and Akkerman 2017: 194; Moffitt 2016: 43). This contribution focuses on one of these key characteristics, and more specifically on its linguistic realization.

4. Jagers and Walgrave (2007), whose study has been called "a breakthrough in measuring populism" (Rooduijn and Pauwels 2011: 1273), formulate the idea that there is a link between

this contribution I will argue that the frequency in which politicians refer to "the people" is not the only relevant measure for assessing people-centrism in (populist) political discourse. By presenting a case study from Dutch politics, I will show that *the way in which* politicians refer to "the people" is of crucial importance as well, by highlighting two linguistic phenomena that in the analysis of populist political discourse have received scant attention so far. On the one hand, I will substantiate that the *syntactic position* in which "the people" are presented should be taken into account when measuring people-centrism: I will argue that politicians can put "the people" more or less in the centre of attention by syntactically referring to them in subject, complement or adjunct position. On the other hand, I will substantiate that for measuring people-centrism in political discourse the strategic use of *perspective* or *viewpoint* is of relevance too, by highlighting how this linguistic technique can be used by (populist) politicians in order to create the impression that "the people" play a central role in their discourse.

This chapter aims to contribute to the study of populism in two ways. First, this contribution aims to deepen our understanding of how (populist) politicians can put "the people" in the centre of attention in their discourse. By highlighting two fine-grained linguistic techniques that have infrequently been studied in the analysis of (populist) political discourse, I aim to show how taking these linguistic phenomena into account can enrich the study of "people-centrism". Second, on a more programmatic level, this contribution also aims to demonstrate how a linguistic approach to populist discourse can contribute to the empirical measurement of populism. Focusing on how the empirical measurement of "people-centrism" can be enriched by linguistic insights is a means to this end.[5]

To make my points, I will present a comparative linguistic analysis of four speeches that were delivered in Dutch parliament by the radical populist Geert Wilders, and by one of his main political critics, named Alexander Pechtold. After

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people-centrism and the frequency of references to the electorate as follows: Political actors (…) frequently use words such as '(the) people', '(the) public', '(the) citizen(s)', '(the) voter(s)', '(the) taxpayer(s)', '(the) resident(s)', '(the) consumer(s)' and '(the) population'. By referring to the people, a political actor claims that he or she cares about the people's concerns, that he or she primarily wants to defend the interests of the people, that he or she is not alienated from the public but knows what the people really want. The implicit (…) motto is: 'I listen to you because I talk about you.' (Jagers and Walgrave 2007: 323).

5. De Cleen argues among other things for stronger empirical analyses of how "the people" are constructed in (populist) political discourse (see Chapter 1, this volume). Firstly, this contribution highlights two infrequently studied linguistic tools for doing this. Secondly, this contribution sketches directions for how a linguistic approach can be of help for studying other key characteristics of populist discourse in an empirical way as well (see also the concluding section).

introducing the case study in more detail in the next section, I will investigate the centrality of "the people" in Wilders' and Pechtold's speeches, not only by looking at the frequency with which both politicians referred to "the people", but also by investigating to what extent "the people" are placed syntactically in subject, complement or adjunct position and by looking at the way "the people" are attributed their own "perspective". I will demonstrate that important differences in people-centrism between Wilders and Pechtold would be overlooked if the analysis were to focus on the number of references to "the people" alone. In the conclusion, the main findings will be summarized and their implications for the study of populism will be discussed.

Geert Wilders and Alexander Pechtold and the general debates of 2008 and 2009

According to political scientists, the Dutch politician Geert Wilders, leader of the Party for Freedom (PVV), can be seen as "textbook example" of populism (Pauwels 2014: 118; Vossen 2016). In the last decade, Wilders has, for instance, systematically pointed at a dichotomic division between "the people" and "the elite" in his parliamentary contributions, thereby attacking his fellow politicians fiercely for ignoring major problems that "the people" are facing, and suggesting time and again that he, as no other politician in the Netherlands, voices "the people's" concerns. In his discourse, Wilders suggests that the neglected problems that "the people" are facing are to an important extent causally linked to what he calls the "Islamification of the Netherlands". Wilders has fiercely been criticized for this, as well as for the "folksy" and "vulgar" way (Vossen 2011: 185) in which he often presents his political ideas.

The politician who has opposed Wilders most systematically and fiercely in Dutch parliament in the last ten years, is Alexander Pechtold. Between 2006 and 2018, Pechtold was the leader of D66 (a progressive liberal party). During this period, he has frequently declared himself openly against populism, stressing that it is important that the Dutch political system is an *indirect* democracy, in which politicians get a mandate from the electorate to make decisions autonomously. Pechtold has argued various times that there should be a certain distance between members of parliament and the electorate: according to him, politicians should not act as a mouthpiece of "the people" but should try to convince "the people" of the rightness of autonomously made political decisions (Van Leeuwen 2015: 97–98).

The case study that I will be analysing, consists of the speeches that Wilders and Pechtold delivered during the so called "General Debates" of 2008 and 2009. The General Debate is a debate that is held annually at the start of the

parliamentary year. It receives a lot of media attention; as such it is pre-eminently a debate that is used by the leaders of the various political parties to present their political position(s) – they try to present their political profile for a broad public. A systematic analysis of media judgments that appeared after the General Debates of 2008 and 2009 indicates that Wilders' and Pechtold's positioning in these debates was in line with their overall political image sketched above: Wilders came across as a "populist" who positioned himself emphatically as an anti-elitist and as a "spokesman of the people", while Pechtold came across as a more elitist politician, who kept a certain distance to "the man in the street" (Van Leeuwen 2015: 93–99).

Based on this different positioning, it can be expected that in Wilders' and Pechtold's speeches a difference in people-centrism can be observed: one would expect "the people" to be put more in the centre of attention in Wilders' speeches than in Pechtold's addresses.

In order to measure empirically whether this is the case, I will investigate in the next section *the frequency* in which both politicians refer to "the people". However, unlike previous studies, this frequency analysis will not be used as the only indicator for people-centrism: I will also investigate *the way in which* Wilders and Pechtold refer to "the people" by looking at two linguistic phenomena that have thus far received scant attention in the analysis of (populist) political discourse. I will argue that studying these linguistic phenomena quantitatively and qualitatively enriches the measurement of people-centrism in (populist) political discourse in important ways.

Referring to "the people" or not

Starting from the intersubjective impressions indicating that Wilders, more than Pechtold, presented himself as a "spokesman of the people", and from the idea that a politician can put "the people" in the centre of attention by frequently referring to the electorate, one would expect that in Wilders' speeches more references to the electorate can be found than in Pechtold's speeches. In order to investigate whether this is the case, all references to "the people" in the four speeches were counted. These references included: references to people or groups of people in society (see examples (1) to (3)),[6] references to *the Netherlands* when used metonymically to

6. An exception was made for negative references to the electorate, i.e. references in which it is clear from the context that Wilders and Pechtold talk about (parts of) the electorate in a negative way: such instances are not part of the type of references to the electorate as meant by Jagers and Walgrave (2007) (cf. footnote 4). Thus, an example as (i) has not been taken into account:

stand in for Dutch citizens (cf. (4)), and impersonal pronouns like *everyone* or *nobody* when the context indicates that these words refer to citizens (cf. (5)).

(1) You are misleading *people*, prime minister. (P08.92)[7]

(2) (…) when TomTom had 60 vacancies for engineers, *no Dutchman* put in an application. (P08.126)

(3) We would have been able to arrange a private room for *all elderly people in nursing homes* (…). (W08.140)

(4) *All of the Netherlands* is very welcome to contribute their ideas. (W09.120)

(5) (…) It will be possible for *everyone* to participate via the new website that we will launch in the near future: www.whatdoesmassimmigrationcost.nl. (W09.121)

The results of the quantitative analysis can be found in Table 1.

Table 1. Number of references to "the people" in Wilders' and Pechtold's speeches: Absolute numbers and per 100 words (in brackets)

Speaker	2008	2009
Geert Wilders	72 (2.5)	48 (1.5)
Alexander Pechtold	32 (1.6)	34 (1.8)

Statistical analysis[8] reveals that Wilders in his 2008 speech refers significantly more often to "the people" than Pechtold – which is in line with what was expected.[9] However, during the General Debate of 2009, there is no significant difference be-

(i) Madam Chairman, *the scum* who is grabbed by the scruff of the neck also has to receive real penalties, (…). (W09.171).

7. The abbreviations in brackets indicate the speaker and the year the excerpt is taken from, followed by the specific line in the speech. In other words, "P08.92" indicates that excerpt (1) is sentence 92 from Pechtold's speech during the General Debate of 2008. All examples are translated from Dutch by the author; the Dutch equivalents can be found in Van Leeuwen (2015).

8. The statistical analyses have been carried out by using the "Log-likelihood and effect size calculator" (http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/llwizard.html, last accessed on March 14, 2017) – unless mentioned differently (cf. footnote 14). A log-likelihood test enables a comparison between frequencies in corpora, even if the investigated phenomena are relatively rare (Vis et al. 2012: 98). Abbreviations in the quantified data (see following footnotes) must be read as follows: GD = General Debate; 08 = 2008; 09 = 2009; W = Wilders; P = Pechtold; w = number of words.

9. GD08: W: 72/2909w vs. P: 32/2000w; LL = 4.43; $p < 0.05$.

tween the two politicians.[10] These results suggest that Wilders during the General Debate of 2008 put voters more in the centre of attention than Pechtold; for the General Debate of 2009, such a conclusion cannot be drawn.

However, if the measurement of people-centrism in Wilders' and Pechtold's speeches stopped here, important differences between the speeches of both politicians would be overlooked. In the next sections, I will show that the differences in people-centrism between Wilders and Pechtold are actually bigger than the frequencies in Table 1 suggest. On the one hand, I will focus on the question how Wilders and Pechtold refer syntactically to "the people" in subject, complement or adjunct position; on the other hand, Wilders' and Pechtold's use of "perspective" or "attributed viewpoint" will be highlighted. The analyses of these infrequently studied linguistic choices will show that Wilders and Pechtold put "the people" in the centre of attention to a different extent – not only in the General Debate of 2008, but in the General Debate of 2009 *as well*.

Presenting "the people" in subject, complement or adjunct position

Syntactic position and prominence of information

Viewed from a functional-syntactic perspective, a Dutch (or English) "sentence" consists of at least of a predicate (i.e. the main verb and any auxiliaries that accompany it) and a subject (cf. "John was laughing"). In addition to this, dependent on the meaning of the main verb, often one or more *complements* are evoked, i.e. constituents whose presence is required by the meaning of the main verb (Hasereyn et al. 2002: section 19.1.2). Usually, these complements are objects. For instance, transitive verbs require the presence of a direct object (cf. (6)); ditransitive verbs presuppose the presence of a direct and indirect object (cf. (7)).[11]

(6) Carl beat Thomas.

(7) Hanna gave Trudy a photo album.

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10. GD09: W: 47/3163w vs. P: 34/1928w; LL = 0.44; $p > 0.05$.

11. The fact that verbs, dependent on their meaning, presuppose the presence of certain complements does not mean that these complements are necessarily *explicitly* present in the sentence (cf. Hasereyn et al. 2002: section 19.1.2). In some cases, complements are obligatory to make the sentence grammatical (cf. the direct objects "Thomas" and "photo album" in (6)/(8) and (7)/(9) respectively), but this is not always the case. For instance, the indirect object "Trudy" in (7)/(9) could be left out of the sentence. However, if a complement does not appear in a sentence explicitly, its presence is still implied: the sentence "Hanna gave a photo album" implies that there was a receiver.

The predicate, the subject and any complements arising from the main verb constitute the core of a sentence: the state or event that is represented in a sentence is described primarily with reference to these constituents. In addition to this "core", a sentence often has one or more *adjuncts*: constituents whose presence is *not* evoked by the meaning of the main verb (Hasereyn et al. 2002: section 19.1.2) – cf. examples (8)–(9):

(8) Carl *finally* beat Thomas *during the cycling championship*.

(9) Hanna gave Trudy a photo album *on behalf of everyone*.

The information given in adjuncts is of an additional or specifying nature: adjuncts give additional information about what is expressed in the core of the sentence. Viewed this way, adjuncts have a relatively peripheral status compared to complements – which is also shown by the fact that adjuncts normally can be removed from a sentence without making the sentence ungrammatical (Hasereyn et al. 2002: section 19.1.2). It must be stressed that this distinction between complements and adjuncts does not say anything about the *newsworthiness* of the information presented in complements or adjuncts. It is well possible that it is primarily the information presented in adjuncts that is new to a reader or listener, while the information presented in the core of the sentence was already known. Adjuncts are "peripheral" in the sense that the state or event which is being talked about is primarily expressed in the core of the sentence.

In the light of the idea that politicians can put "the people" more or less in the centre of attention by referring more or less to "the people", it is not only interesting to count the absolute number of references to the electorate, but also to look at the *syntactic* position in which references to "the people" are presented. Given the functional-syntactic distinction between complements and adjuncts, a politician who refers to "the people" in complement position, presents "the people" more as "that what he is talking about", i.e. more "in focus" than when "the people" are presented in adjunct position. This idea can be illustrated with examples (10) to (12), taken from Alexander Pechtold's speeches.[12]

(10) There will be tax reductions for *citizens and companies*. (P08.38)

(11) What is needed now, is an optimistic view, a reform agenda with as its starting point equal chances *for insiders and outsiders, for singles and couples, for young and old people, and for present and future generations*. (P09.89)

(12) That is my prospect: a country with equal chances *for each individual* (…). (P09.131)

12. More examples illustrating the phenomenon can be found in the next subsection.

The references to "the people" in examples (10) to (12) are put in a relatively peripheral syntactic position: Pechtold places the references in adjunct position. As such, these references are presented as additional information to "tax reductions" (10), "a reform agenda" (11), and "a country with equal chances" (12) respectively, and could have been left out of the sentences without making them ungrammatical. In other words, Pechtold's primary focus in (10) to (12) is not so much on "the people" he represents, but on abstract matters of policy. This is a linguistic choice, as is indicated by the possible alternative formulations in (13)–(15). Pechtold could have composed sentences (10) to (12) in such a way that the references to "the people" appear in the core of the sentence, namely in from the verb ensuing complement position of indirect object:

(13) The cabinet will give *citizens and companies* tax reductions.

(14) What is needed now, is that we give *insiders and outsiders, singles and couples, young and old people, and present and future generations* equal chances through an optimistic view, a reform agenda taking this as its starting point.

(15) That is my prospect: a country in which we give *each individual* equal chances.

In (13)–(15), the references to "the people" are placed in the core of the sentence. As a result, "the people" are not presented as additional information to abstract matters of policy (cf. (10)–(12)), but as a part of Pechtold's central focus of attention.

However, it is possible to put "the people" even more in the centre of attention than is the case in examples (13) to (15). Cognitive and functional linguists have argued that there is also variation *within* the core of a sentence with regard to prominence of information. More precisely, it has been argued that information presented in the subject position of a clause is placed in the centre of attention most – more than when that same information would be presented in the complement position of direct or indirect object.[13] This is the case for examples (13)–(15) indeed: when they are reformulated in such a way that the references to "the people" are put in subject position, "the people" are brought even closer to the centre of attention – cf. (16) to (18):

(16) *Citizens and companies* will get tax reductions.

13. See the literature overview in Van Krieken et al. (2015: 222) and Cornelis (2003: 172–176). The idea that information in subject position is presented as the most prominent information in a sentence is also supported by experimental evidence (Tomlin 1997).

(17) What is needed now, is that *insiders and outsiders, singles and couples, young and old people, and present and future generations* get equal chances, through an optimistic view, a reform agenda taking this as its starting point.

(18) That is my prospect: a country in which *each individual* gets equal chances.

Examples like (16)–(18) raise the question whether Geert Wilders and Alexander Pechtold differ in the way in which they, syntactically speaking, referred to "the people". Did Wilders and Pechtold differ in the frequencies in which they presented "the people" syntactically as subject, complement and adjunct in their speeches during the General Debates of 2008 and 2009? This question will be answered next.

Syntactic position of "the people" in Wilders' and Pechtold's speeches

In order to investigate whether Wilders and Pechtold referred syntactically speaking in different ways to "the people", all references to "the people" (cf. Table 1) were analysed for syntactic position. In other words, for all references to the electorate it was analysed whether these references were in subject, complement or adjunct position. Table 2 (General Debate 2008) and Table 3 (General Debate 2009) show the results of this analysis.

Table 2. References to "the people" broken down to syntactic position in the general debate of 2008: Absolute numbers and in percentages (in brackets)

Syntactic position of "the people"	Geert Wilders	Alexander Pechtold
Subject	38 (52.8%)	12 (37.5%)
Complement	26 (36.1%)	13 (40.6%)
Adjunct	8 (11.1%)	7 (21.9%)

Table 3. References to "the people" broken down to syntactic position in the general debate of 2009: Absolute numbers and in percentages (in brackets)

Syntactic position of "the people"	Geert Wilders	Alexander Pechtold
Subject	26 (54.2%)	10 (29.4%)
Complement	14 (29.1%)	6 (17.6%)
Adjunct	8 (16.7%)	18 (47.1%)

From Table 2 it can be deduced that during the General Debate of 2008, Wilders put references to "the people" more often in subject position than in complement or adjunct position. A similar pattern can be observed in the General Debate of 2009 (cf. Table 3): in Wilders' speech, most references to "the people" have the status of subject; Wilders refers to "the people" in adjunct position least frequently.

This also becomes clear from Figure 1, in which Wilders' way of referring to "the people" is visualized (cf. Tables 1 and 2):

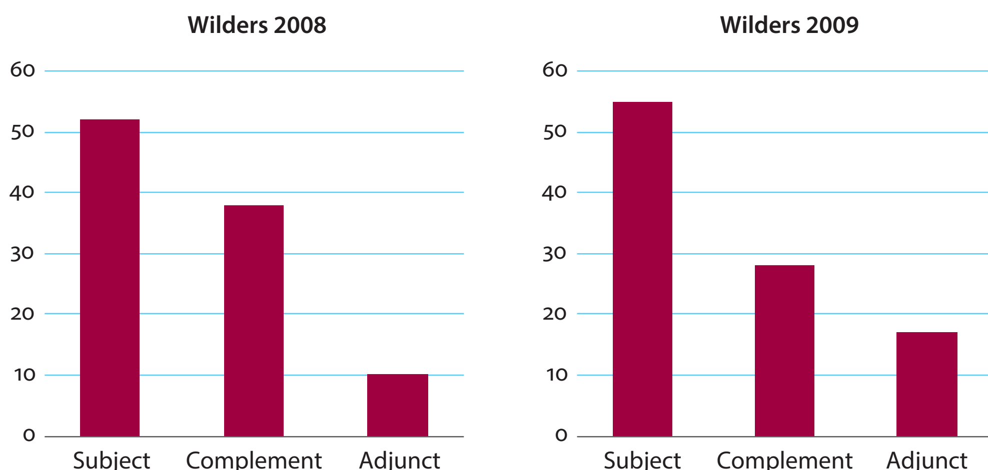

Figure 1. Visualization of the proportions in which Wilders referred to "the people" in subject, complement and adjunct position in his speeches during the general debates of 2008 and 2009

Figure 1 indicates that in both of Wilders' speeches, the references to "the people" are asymmetrically distributed among the three syntactic positions. Statistical analysis reveals that this asymmetry deviates significantly from what can be expected by chance.[14] In other words, both of Wilders' speeches show a clear *pattern* in the way references to "the people" are distributed among the three syntactic categories. Further statistical analysis shows that Wilders refers significantly more often to "the people" in subject position than in adjunct position in both years; in 2008, the number of references in complement position significantly outnumber the number of references in adjunct position as well.[15]

14. GD 2008: χ^2 (2) = 19.000, $p < 0.01$; GD 2009: χ^2 (2) = 10.500, $p < 0.01$. For the statistical analyses discussed in relation to Figures 1 and 2, chi-square tests have been used instead of log-likelihood (cf. footnote 8). The log-likelihood calculator can be used for matrixes that consist of two rows and two columns, while the matrixes that were used here, consist of *three* rows (cf. Tables 2 and 3). Therefore, the statistical analyses for syntactic position have been carried out with SPSS; in this program, log-likelihood is not a standard option, while this is the case for chi square. A chi-square test is not fundamentally different from log-likelihood: both can be used for nominal data.

15. For this follow-up analysis various chi-square tests were carried out, in which two syntactic positions were compared each time. Results GD 2008: subject vs. adjunct position: χ^2 (1) = 19.565, $p < 0.01$; complement vs. adjunct position: χ^2 (1) = 9.529, $p < 0.01$; subject vs. complement position: χ^2 (1) = 2.250, $p > 0.05$. Results GD 2009: subject vs. adjunct position: χ^2 (2) = 9.529, $p < 0.01$, complement vs. adjunct position: χ^2 (1) = 1.636, $p > 0.05$; subject vs. complement position: χ^2 (1) = 3.600, $p > 0,05$. Carrying out multiple chi-square tests increases

A similar analysis for Alexander Pechtold reveals interesting differences with Wilders' speeches. Figure 2 visualizes the frequencies in which Pechtold refers to "the people" in subject, complement and adjunct position.

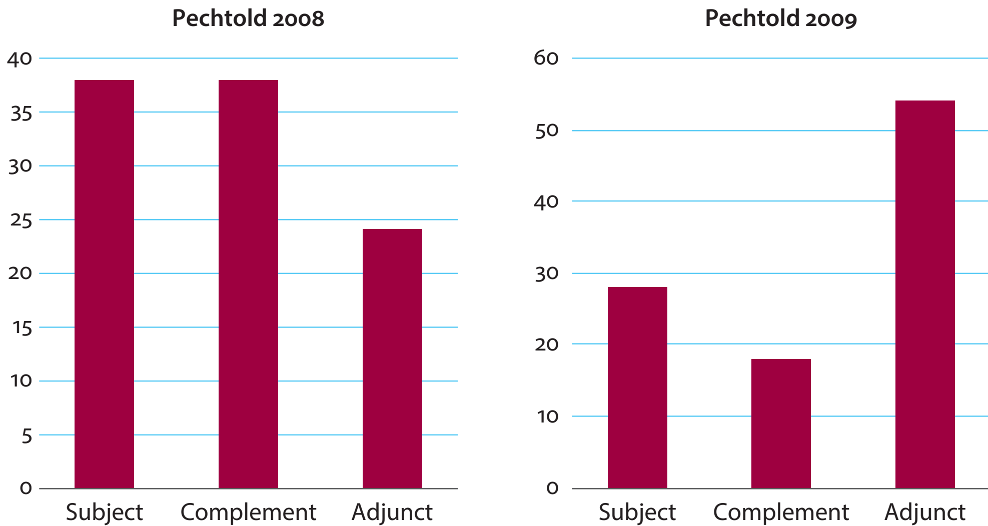

Figure 2. Visualization of the proportions in which Pechtold referred to "the people" in subject, complement and adjunct position in his speeches during the general debates of 2008 and 2009

For Pechtold's 2008 speech, it turns out that the proportions in which "the people" are presented in the three syntactic positions, do not deviate significantly from what can be expected by chance.[16] In other words, whereas Wilders in his 2008 speech refers to "the people" systematically in the most prominent syntactic position (i.e. in subject position), such a clear pattern is lacking in Pechtold's speech. This difference is relevant: it is an indication that Wilders in his 2008 speech puts "the people" more in the centre of attention than Pechtold.

A comparison between Wilders' and Pechtold's 2009 speeches brings to light relevant differences as well. Similar to Wilders, in Pechtold's 2009 speech, the distribution of references to "the people" does significantly deviate from what can be expected by chance.[17] In other words, the way in which Pechtold refers to "the people" in 2009, exhibits a clear pattern – just like in Wilders' case. However, *the nature* of this pattern is different: the number of references to "the people" in adjunct position are significantly higher than the number of references in

the chance of getting significant differences. To compensate for this, the Bonferroni correction was applied, i.e. to determine the significance level, a p-value of.05 was divided by the number of chi-square tests carried out (in each case n = 3; p = 0.017) and was subsequently set at $p < 0.05$.

16. χ^2 (2) = 1.938, $p > 0.05$.

17. χ^2 (2) = 6.588, $p < 0,05$.

complement position, with the number of references to "the people" in subject position in between.[18] In other words, whereas Wilders puts references to "the people" mostly in subject position in 2009, Pechtold seems to have a preference for the least prominent syntactic position. This, again, can be seen as an indication that Wilders puts "the people" more in the centre of attention than Pechtold.

An example that illustrates how Wilders puts "the people" in the centre of attention by making syntactic choices can be found in sentences (19)–(21). The formulations in (19) and (20) are possible alternative formulations for (21), which is taken from Wilders' speech during the General Debate of 2009:

(19) In 2010 already there will be more money in the wallets of *many people*, as a result of the fact that we will decrease the tariffs in the second tax bracket.

(20) In 2010 already we will give *many people* more money in their wallets, as a result of the fact that we will decrease the tariffs in the second tax bracket.

(21) In 2010 already *many people* will get more money in their pockets, as a result of the fact that we will decrease the tariffs in the second tax bracket. (W09.145)

The formulation in (19) is comparable to examples (10) to (12). The reference to "the people" is presented in adjunct position, as additional information for "wallets"; a financial issue ("money") is the primary focus. In the alternative formulation in (20), "the people" are presented as indirect object, i.e. in complement position, as part of the core of the sentence – but not as the subject. As a result "the people" are put more in focus than in sentence (19). In (21), i.e. the sentence that Wilders actually used, "the people" are placed in subject position, the result being that "the people" are put relatively most in the centre of attention.

A further illustration can be found in sentences (22) to (24) below. When discussing his tax cuts plans, Wilders could have chosen for the following text (for the sake of convenience, internal numbering has been added):

(22) [We spend billions on tax cuts.] [1] Our plans mean 3 billion euros of tax reduction in one year *for the people at home*. [2] Our plans will yield hundreds of millions of euros for *postmen, police officers, schoolteachers and many others*. [3] The purchasing power of *people with a small pension*, which does not get better in the cabinet's plans, improves in our plans with hundreds of euros too.

18. Complement vs. adjunct position: χ^2 (2) = 6.00, $p < 0.05$; complement vs. subject position: χ^2 (1) = 1.00, $p > 0.05$; subject vs. adjunct position: χ^2 (1) = 2.286, $p > 0.05$. To compensate for an increased chance of significant results, the Bonferroni correction was applied (cf. footnote 15).

In (22), "the people" are put in adjunct position. They are not presented in constituents that make up the core of the sentence; the text's primary focus is on policy issues ("tax reduction", "hundreds of millions of euros", "purchasing power"). The alternative formulation in (23) illustrates that it would be possible to refer to "the people" in the more central position of complement as well: in [1] the reference to "the people" appears as a modifier that has the status of a complement; in [2] and [3], "the people" are presented in the position of indirect object.

(23) [We spend billions on tax cuts.] [1] More than 3 billion euros of tax reduction in one year goes to *the people at home*. [2] Our plans will give *postmen, police officers, schoolteachers and many others* hundreds of millions of euros in tax cuts. [3] They give *people with a small pension* an improvement in purchasing power (which does not improve in the cabinet's plans) of hundreds of euros too.

As a result of the different sentence structure in (23), "the people" are placed more in the centre of attention. However, this is even more the case in the excerpt that Wilders actually used – see (24). Here, "the people" are not only presented as part of the core of the sentences, but in [2] and [3] even in subject position:

(24) [We spend billions on tax cuts.] More than 3 billion euros in one year goes to *the people at home*. [2] *Postmen, police officers, schoolteachers and many others* will receive hundreds of millions of euros in tax cuts. [3] *People with a small pension,* who didn't get any improvement in purchasing power from the cabinet (…) profit financially with hundreds of euros too. (W08.163–165)

Moreover, in (24) it is striking that in sentence [3] "the people" are not only presented as the subject of the main clause, but also as the subject of the non-restrictive relative clause ("who didn't … the cabinet"). Wilders could have presented "the people" in the position of indirect object as well ("to whom the cabinet didn't give any improvement in purchasing power"). In other words, in (24) Wilders does not only put "the people" in focus on the level of the main clause, but also on the level of the subordinate clause.

Examples that are characteristic for the way in which Alexander Pechtold's refers to "the people", can be found in (25) to (27).[19]

(25) [Modernization] also means a modern law governing dismissal which liberates *elderly people* from their golden cages and offers *young people* perspective. (P09.101)

19. See for other examples the discussion of excerpts (10)–(12).

(26) [In addition,] we opt for (…) a higher short-term unemployment benefit which helps *people* from job to job. (P09.102)

(27) My society opts for (…) an Old Age Pensions Act that helps *people* to keep their work (…). (P09.97)

On the level of the main clause, the pattern that can be observed in (25) to (27) is the same as in (10) to (12). The references to "the people" are presented in constituents that have the status of adjuncts; they give additional information about policy issues that are presented in the core of the sentence. The non-restrictive relative clauses "which liberates … perspective" (25) and "which helps … job to job" (26) function as adjuncts for "a modern law governing dismissal" and "a higher short term unemployment benefit" respectively. As such, the primary focus is on policy issues here, and not on "the people".

Excerpt (27) is a bit of a special case. The reference to "the people" is part of a restrictive relative clause here. This restrictive relative clause is a necessary part of the complement ("an Old Age Pensions Act that … work"); in other words, strictly speaking this reference does not have the status of adjunct. Nevertheless, in Table 3 this instance has been included in the category of adjuncts, since restrictive relative clauses in a way serve a similar function as adjuncts: one characteristic of restrictive relative clauses is that they give additional information for the identification of a phenomenon mentioned previously in the sentence (cf. Verhagen 2001). In (27), this phenomenon is "an Old Age Pensions Act". Pechtold refers to "the people" when specifying this policy issue; it is this policy issue that gets centre stage.

On a side note, it should be observed that in (25) to (27) the references to "the people" are not only put in a relatively peripheral sentence position on the level of the main clause. Looking at the subordinate clauses, it is striking that "the people" are presented in object position, while it would have been possible to put them in subject position as well. This becomes clear when these clauses are presented without context:

(28) … which liberates *elderly people* from their golden cages and offers *young people* perspective.

(29) … which helps *people* from job to job.

(30) … that helps *people* to keep their work (…).

In (28) to (30) Pechtold could have presented "the people" in subject position. Particularly for (28), in which "young people" are in indirect object position, this would put these "young people" more in the centre of attention:

(31) … which makes that *elderly people* get liberated from their golden cages and *young people* get perspective.

(32) … which makes that *people* get helped from job to job.

(33) … that makes that *people* keep their work (…).

The alternative formulations (31) to (33) indicate that Pechtold in excerpts (25) to (27) could have placed references to "the people" more in the centre of attention in his subordinate clauses as well.

All in all, the data presented in this section indicate that Wilders more than Pechtold puts "the people" in the centre of attention, by systematically making different syntactic choices. The way in which Wilders refers syntactically to "the people", shows a clear pattern: Wilders refers to "the people" relatively often in subject position, and relatively little in adjunct position. Such a pattern is absent in Pechtold's speeches. In his 2008 address, no clear pattern can be detected; in 2009, "the people" are primarily placed in the relatively peripheral syntactic position of adjunct. Although the absolute number of references to "the people" in Wilders' and Pechtold's 2009 speeches does not differ significantly, the syntactic analysis presented above indicates that there *are* differences between Wilders and Pechtold that indicate that Wilders puts "the people" more in the centre of attention in his 2009 speech as well. As such, the findings illustrate that it is important to use not only the absolute *number* of references to "the people" as a measure for "people-centrism" in political discourse, as is standard practice in studies on populism, but to take the syntactic position of these references into account as well.

The use of perspective

Texts often do not only contain the viewpoint of the speaker or writer: often, the viewpoints of other people come to the fore as well. There exists a lot of (cognitive) linguistic research on Speech and Thought Representation (STR), showing that the viewpoints of other people in a text can be presented with a variety of linguistic techniques.[20] One of these techniques is the use of verbs of cognition ("to know", "to hope", "to be of the opinion that …", etc.) verbs of perception ("to see", "to discover", etc.) or verbs of emotion ("to fear", "to be pleased", etc.). Such

20. See for instance Dancygier and Sweetser (2012); Sanders and Redeker (1996) and Simpson (1993). In the analysis of political discourse, relatively little attention has been paid to the question how politicians employ viewpoint techniques strategically in their speeches (cf. Van Leeuwen 2015: 121–122). See for recent exceptions, however, Van Leeuwen and Van Vliet (2019), Fetzer and Weisman (2018), and Guilbealt (2017).

verbs indicate the consciousness of the person who is presented in subject position (cf. Sanders 2009: 3).

In Wilders' and Pechtold's speeches, "the people" are presented as the subject of a verb of cognition, perception or emotion several times (cf. Table 4).

Table 4. Number of times that Wilders and Pechtold refer to "the people" as the subject of a verb of cognition, perception or emotion: Absolute numbers and per 100 words (in brackets)

Speaker	2008	2009
Geert Wilders	8 (0.8)	9 (0.3)
Alexander Pechtold	9 (0.5)	1 (0.05)

In 2009, there is a significant difference between both politicians:[21] Wilders significantly more often than Pechtold presents "the people" as a so called "subject of consciousness" (Verhagen 2005), i.e. as an agency with its own will, its own views and opinions. This difference is relevant: it is an indication that Wilders puts "the people" more than Pechtold in the centre of attention by creating the suggestion that "the people" are involved in the discussion.[22]

In Wilders' and Pechtold's speeches in the General Debate of 2008, no significant difference can be observed in the *number* of references to "the people" in combination with a perspectivising verb (cf. Table 4).[23] However, a qualitative analysis of the *moments* in which Wilders and Pechtold give "the people" their own viewpoint, reveals that these moments are strikingly different. Wilders presents the voters' perspective systematically at moments that he is presenting his *own* political ideas – cf. examples (34) to (36):

(34) The differences between what *the Dutch people* <u>think</u> and what the elite thinks, are nowhere more clear than with regard to the mass-immigration. *Almost 60% of the population* <u>sees</u> Islam as the biggest threat to our identity. In addition, *almost 60%* <u>believes</u> mass immigration is the biggest mistake since World War II. (W08.44–45)

(35) Greying is called "silvering" by this cabinet. (…) But *many elderly* <u>know</u> that reality is different. *They* <u>know</u> that "silvering" is incorrect. *They* <u>know</u>

21. W: 9/3163w vs. P: 1/1928w; LL = 4,01; p = 0.05.

22. Formulated in Clark's (1996) framework of participant roles: Wilders creates, more than Pechtold, the impression that "the people" are not "overhearers" who are standing on the sideline, but actual "participants" in the debate (cf. Van Leeuwen 2011).

23. W: 8/2909w vs. P: 9/2000w; LL = 1,96; p > 0,05.

that it is about withering, becoming lonely, becoming filthy, dehumiliation. (W08.144–148)

(36) *They* [i.e. the common people] are yearning for nothing else than the preservation of their own land and their freedom, their safety, a reasonable salary and a better future for their children. (W08.188)

The standpoints presented in (34) to (36) are Geert Wilders' political views. The idea that a massive arrival of immigrants will cause the Netherlands harm (34) is one of Wilders' spearheads. Likewise, the Party for Freedom has systematically argued in parliament that the care for the elderly is inferior (35), and it leads a campaign in favour of "the preservation of the Netherlands" (i.e. free of the assumed dangers of Islam) in which "the common people" can live safely, with a reasonable salary and a better future for their children (36). However, Wilders presents these political standpoints as if they are the standpoints of "the common man", by presenting citizens in subject position combined with a perspectivising verb. This is a linguistic choice: Wilders could also have presented himself in subject position (by using "I"), or the Party for Freedom. By presenting his own political views as standpoints of "the people", Wilders suggests that he and "the people" subscribe to the *same* viewpoints. This reinforces the impression that Wilders is "a man of the people"; he positions himself as a mouthpiece of the people's desires, needs, etc.[24]

In Pechtold's speeches, such a clear (suggested) overlap in viewpoints is largely absent. The only excerpt in which overlap exists, can be found in (37). A point of criticism that Pechtold has often put forward in parliament is that a clear vision is lacking in the cabinet's policy. In (37), this criticism is formulated as Pechtold's standpoint, but as something that is in the mind of "the people":

(37) Don't you see that *people* want a vision? To curry favour with the people is not what *they* want. (P08.58–59).

All other moments in which Pechtold is attributing viewpoints to "the people", are moments in which these viewpoints do not necessarily overlap with Pechtold's own opinions, as in (38)–(39):

(38) Society is democratized. *People* are more critical towards authorities who have to earn their legitimacy. However, the democracy is not maintained. Democracy is not: you ask, we deliver. This promise of malleability cannot be fulfilled and I don't want to fulfil this. (P08.141–145)

24. At the same time, this way of presenting his political standpoints serves for Wilders as a justification for these standpoints: Wilders suggests that the standpoints of the PVV should be adopted because these are the ideas of "the people in the country".

(39) *People* are more cynical about The Hague – not always unjust. We sometimes cause it: hysteria about spending power, McCarthy like debates about the Eighties and a witch hunt against foreign aid organisations. (P08.135–136)

In (38), Pechtold claims that people have become more critical towards "The Hague", which metonymically stands for the Dutch parliament here.[25] However, the context does not indicate that Pechtold is agreeing with this more critical stance. On the contrary: Pechtold makes a contrast between "society"/"people" on the one hand, and "authorities"/"politics" on the other;[26] the choice for the personal pronoun "I" in the final sentence of the excerpt makes that Pechtold positions himself not on the side of "the people", but on the side of the authorities. In (39) there is a discrepancy between the people's views and Pechtold's opinion as well: Pechtold indicates that he has a more nuanced view on the matter than the viewpoint that is attributed to "the people". The elliptical clause "not always unjust" makes clear that Pechtold is agreeing partly with the people's cynism, but not completely: Pechtold keeps a certain distance. This distance is further strengthened by Pechtold's use of "we" in the next sentence: in this "we", Pechtold is including himself and his fellow politicians, and excluding "the people" in the country.[27]

The fact that in Pechtold's speeches, apart from (37), the viewpoints of "the people" do not coincide with Pechtold's views, means that Pechtold presents standpoints of D66 as his *own* standpoints. In the General Debate of 2009 this is extra emphasized by Pechtold's use of the personal pronoun "I", which makes that large parts of Pechtold's speech are formulated *explicitly* from Pechtold's point of view, e.g.:

(40) Prime Minister, *I* am gradually having three problems with you. You are putting issues on the agenda without executing them. *I* mention the Knowledge Agenda. (…) *I* even mention the norms and values. (…) *My* second problem is that you pick up responsibilities without being able to cope with them. *I* mention the war in Iraq (…). *My* third problem is that you have a ministerial and fraternal responsibility that is not given shape. *I* mention the monarchy, (…). *I* mention ministers, (…). *I* mention officials, (…). (P09.36–49)

25. Dutch parliament is situated in the city of The Hague.

26. "Politics" is not mentioned explicitly, but is implied via the metonymical use of "The Hague" (cf. footnote 25).

27. In Wilders' speeches instead, an opposite use of "we" can be found, in which "the people" are included and fellow politicians are excluded (see Van Leeuwen 2015: 146–148).

Whereas Wilders suggests that "the people" know what the problems are (cf. (34) to (36)), Pechtold emphasizes by using "I" that *he* is the person who has certain problems with the prime minister. In other words, different from Wilders, who positions himself primarily as a mouthpiece of "the people", Pechtold is presenting emphatically his *own* agenda, instead of suggesting that this is the agenda of "the people" in the country. This is also evidenced at the end of the speech where he explicitly indicates that the vision sketched is *his* vision:[28]

(41) That is *my* prospect: a country with equal chances for each individual, for people who see their own interests linked up with the interests of others. (P09.131)

Conclusions

In this contribution, I have argued that the frequency in which politicians refer to "the people" is not the only relevant measure for assessing people-centrism in (populist) political discourse – as is suggested in much of the political-scientific literature. For measuring people-centrism it is also important to look at the way *in which* politicians give shape to these references.

More specifically, I have highlighted two linguistic phenomena that in the analysis of (populist) political discourse have received scant attention so far. By presenting a case study from Dutch politics, I have argued that politicians can put "the people" more or less in the spotlight by making certain *linguistic choices*. Firstly, it makes a difference whether "the people" are presented grammatically in subject, complement or adjunct position. Secondly, I have argued that it is valuable to investigate whether "the people" get attributed their own perspective, and on what moments this happens. By giving "the people" in the country their own viewpoint, politicians can suggest that "the people" are actually involved in the discussion. The suggestion of "closeness to the people", which is a key characteristic of populist discourse, is especially strong when a politician presents his *own* political ideas linguistically as the people's perspective on political issues.

Paying attention to the question how politicians make use of these subtle, more or less hidden techniques can yield interesting results – as I have illustrated with my quantitative and qualitative analysis of Wilders' and Pechtold's speeches. If only *the number* of references to the electorate in Wilders' and Pechtold's speeches had been analysed to measure to what extent both politicians put "the people"

28. In addition, in (41) it is striking that Pechtold in the first part of the sentence refers to the electorate in a relatively peripheral syntactic position (cf. the discussion of example (12)).

in the centre of attention, important differences between both speakers would have been overlooked. In the case of Wilders' and Pechtold's speeches during the General Debate of 2009, the conclusion would have even been that there *is* no difference in people-centrism between both politicians, while the syntactic analysis of references to "the people" in subject, complement or adjunct position and the analysis of viewpoint indicate otherwise: an in-depth, quantitative and qualitative analysis of these phenomena suggests that Wilders' and Pechtold's speeches actually *did* differ in the extent in which "the people" were given prominence in their discourse. As such, this paper is a plea to pay more systematic attention to these fine-grained linguistic choices when measuring people-centrism in political discourse: the empirical measurement of people-centrism could be enriched by taking into account these linguistic phenomena, which have scarcely been studied in the analysis of (populist) political discourse so far.

It should be stressed that the two linguistic phenomena highlighted in this contribution are not the only ones that deserve more attention when measuring people-centrism in political discourse. I have claimed that the linguistic differences between Wilders and Pechtold "*indicate*" that "the people" are put more or less in the centre of attention by both politicians respectively. The choice of the word "indicate" was a deliberate one: to draw firmer conclusions, other linguistic choices should be taken into account as well. For instance, it should be noted that placing information in subject, complement or adjunct position is not the only grammatical factor influencing the centrality of information. Another factor is *word order* (cf. Hasereyn et al. 2002: section 21.1.2; Halliday and Matthiessen 2014: 88–133). The way in which Dutch word order affects the presentation of information as more or less prominent is complex (cf. Jansen and Wijnands 2004); this phenomenon, and its interaction with the grammatical position of information is an interesting point for further research. Similarly, it would be interesting to investigate what kind of *semantic roles* (cf. Dixon 2005; Jackendoff 1987) (populist) politicians attribute to "the people". Are "the people" for instance mainly depicted as victims of political policies, by presenting them primarily in the semantic role of *patient* instead of other semantic roles such as *agent* or *receiver*? Further, the analysis of perspective was in the current case study limited to "perspectivising verbs" (i.e. verbs of cognition, emotion and perception); it would be interesting to take other forms of "speech and thought representation" into account as well (see Van Leeuwen and Van Vliet (2019) for a concrete illustration). Finally, it would be interesting to investigate to what extent politicians make use of *pronominal references* to refer to "the people". As cognitive linguists have argued, referring to someone by using pronouns instead of nouns is an indication that the person referred to is the focus of attention (cf. Van Krieken et al. (2015:223) and the references mentioned there). The fact that besides the two linguistic phenomena highlighted

in this contribution there are various other linguistic choices that are relevant for studying the centrality of "the people" in political discourse, further endorses the claim that the frequency of references to "the people" should not be used as the only measure for assessing the centrality of "the people" in political discourse, as is currently the standard practice. As De Cleen (this volume) rightly observes, "language is key" in how "the people" are constructed in political discourse; in the end, people-centrism is realized linguistically by the joint use of *various* linguistic phenomena, and by the *interplay* between these devices.

As mentioned in the introduction, this contribution did not only aim to show how the measurement of "people-centrism" can be enriched by taking into account some infrequently studied linguistic phenomena. On a more programmatic level, this contribution also aimed to illustrate in a broader sense how a linguistic approach to populist discourse can contribute to the empirical measurement of populism. Namely, a linguistic approach cannot only provide concrete tools for measuring "people-centrism" in an in-depth way but has the potential to offer concrete tools for measuring other characteristics of populism as well. For instance, two other discourse characteristics that in political-scientific literature are regularly mentioned as typical of populist discourse are the use of "accessible, everyday language" (e.g. Hameleers et al. 2017: 143; Vossen 2010: 25) and the appeal to a "threat" or "crisis" (cf. Moffitt 2016: 45). Obviously, before the extent to which such characteristics are present in a politician's discourse can be empirically measured, such notions need to be operationalized. A linguistic approach can offer concrete tools for this: linguistic analyses of political discourse have shown that the use of "accessible, everyday language" is associated with, among other linguistic techniques, the use of certain specific syntactic structures, concrete words, quotations, narratives, etc. (cf. Van Leeuwen (2015: 45–151) and Cienki and Giansante (2014) for details), while the appeal to a "threat" or "crisis" seems to be interrelated with, for instance, the use of hyperbolic language and the use of certain metaphors (cf. Kalkhoven 2016). Similarly, the observation by political scientists that populists often employ "bad manners" (cf. Moffitt 2016: 44) by using "adversarial, offensive language" (e.g. Albertazzi and MacDonnell 2008: 7) can also be linked to concrete linguistic choices, such as the use of verbs with pejorative connotations, diminutives, etc. (cf. Van Leeuwen 2016).

All in all, language is a key factor in constructing a populist discourse (see also Chapter 1, this volume). A linguistic approach to populism can provide valuable insights in the *concrete building blocks* that cause a politician's discourse to be more or less "people-centred", "accessible", "adversarial", etc. As such, a linguistic approach can offer concrete tools for measuring populism empirically: by counting the frequency with which politicians make use of such linguistic techniques, it becomes possible to measure populism in an empirical, in-depth and nuanced way.

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CHAPTER 13

Populist discursive strategies surrounding the immigration quota referendum in Hungary

Peter Furko

The present chapter approaches populist discourse in Hungary through a case study of parliamentary speeches surrounding the immigration quota referendum of 2 October, 2016. The analysis uses a mixed methodology of quantitative and qualitative approaches at the intersection of corpus linguistics, Critical Discourse Analysis and pragmatic marker research. The aim is to identify populist discursive strategies used by government and opposition parties in the course of parliamentary debates relating to (anti-)immigration in general and the immigration quota referendum in particular. The findings suggest that most discursive strategies (e.g. polarizing, suppression, antagonizing, selective presentation) can be observed in both pro- and anti-government campaigns, but there are differences in the degree of implicitness/explicitness used and in the linguistic realizations of the strategies.

Keywords: corpus linguistics, CDA, pragmatic markers, political discourse, populist discursive strategies

Introduction: Populism and populist discursive strategies

The aim of the present paper is to approach populism in Hungary through the empirical study of populist discursive strategies with reference to a high-profile political event: the immigration quota referendum in Hungary (2 October, 2016). As will be seen in section 2, populism is a term frequently used with reference to Hungary's present government and especially its leader, Viktor Orbán, but rarely in connection with the centrist and/or left-liberal opposition parties currently present in Hungarian Parliament. This paper will argue that parliamentary speeches given by government and opposition party members are equally characterised by populist discursive srategies and that the analysis of discursive strategies as linguistic manifestations of political goals provides a more dynamic approach to

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populist discourse than using observed (or often presupposed) ideological stances or political positions as bases for identifying populist and anti-populist stances or strategies.

In order to enhance the empirical validity and applicability of the concept of populist discursive strategy, a combination of De Cleen's (this volume) definition of populism and Wodak et al.'s (2009) definition and typology of discursive strategies will be used. As for the former, De Cleen argues for a discourse-theoretical definition of populism as a claim to represent 'the people' as well as a political logic centred around the identities of 'the people' and 'the elite', which are constructed through a down/up antagonism between 'the people' as a large powerless group and 'the elite' as a small and illegitimately powerful group" (see Chapter 1, this volume).

Discursive strategies, on the other hand, are defined as linguistic devices that underlie socio-political strategies, which are, in turn, defined as "more or less accurate plans for achieving a socio-political goal" (Wodak et al. 2009: 31). Discursive strategies are, thus, manifestations of socio-political strategies, and are "systematically practiced in order to assist or contradict a political action" (Küçükali 2015: 2). Wodak et al. (2009: 36ff) provide an exhaustive typology of strategies associated with the discursive construction of national identity, which will be partially adopted for the present analysis with a view to identifying populist discursive strategies. Naturally, we have to keep in mind that there is an important distinction between the claim to represent 'the people-as-nation' and the claim to represent 'the people' as opposed to 'the elite' (cf. De Cleen, this volume). Accordingly, linguistic manifestations of the macro-strategies of 'positive self-representation' (Wodak et al. 2009: 39) and 'negative other-representation' (ibid.: 42) will be considered as necessarily conjoined strategies in terms of opposition between 'the people' and 'the elite'. Although comparing the nature and frequency of nationalist and populist discursive strategies is beyond the scope of the paper, the application of Wodak et al.'s taxonomy of discursive strategies will highlight some of the similarities and differences between nationalist and populist discourse.

Background to Hungary's 'illiberal democracy' and the immigration quota referendum

Hungary has recently attracted a considerable amount of international media attention due to its migration policy and Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's repeated statements that he wants to abandon liberal democracy in favour of an 'illiberal state'. His major argument is that the global financial crisis in 2008 illustrated that "liberal democratic states can't remain globally competitive" (Orbán,

2014). Because of his anti-liberal, anti-elitist and nationalist rhetoric, Orbán has often been referred to as a figure emblematic of European populism in general and as a right-wing populist, in particular.

Since 2010, when Viktor Orbán's Fidesz[1] government won the elections by a landslide and managed to gain more than two-thirds of the seats in parliament, the Fidesz has kept "Hungary in a constant state of revolution" (orbanviktor.hu 23/10/2010), has modified the constitution in "the name of the people", and has described "the West as a menace" to "national traditions, sovereignties, and Christianity" (cf. Korkut 2012: 53).

Political analysts as well as academics are baffled at how an illiberal state has arisen in a country where open communism was followed by a successful consensual democratic transition in 1989, while Hungary was also a forerunner in the region in joining international organizations such as OECD (1996) and NATO (1999). Many have claimed that Orbán's charisma and political agility[2] provide only part of the answer and that other reasons need to be identified (for a detailed discussion see Korkut 2012: 23ff).

Among the many endogenic reasons for the rise of an illiberal democracy in Hungary, perhaps the most prominent one is that the two "main motors of liberalization in Hungary" – the SZDSZ (Alliance of Free Democrats) and the MSZP (Hungarian Socialist Party) – have both fallen out of favour with their voters. Korkut (2012) argues that it is was the very elitism and the alienation of the people on the part of the SZDSZ that led to its downfall (2012: 38ff), while the MSZP fell from favour largely due to a "moral crisis" (then President László Sólyom's term[3]), following an event that is referred to in Hungarian political discourse as the leaking of the "Öszöd Speech".

The "Öszöd Speech"[4] was given by socialist prime minister Ferenc Gyurcsány at an MSZP party conference in May 2006, where he admitted (in rather profane terms) that his party, the MSZP had been constantly telling lies about the state of the Hungarian economy to the public in the course of the pre-election campaign and did nothing but pretend to govern after the MSZP's electoral victory. The leaking of the speech was followed by a series of violent demonstrations, while certain linguistic features of the speech such as "*hazudtunk éjjel, hazudtunk nappal*" (*we*

1. 'Fidesz' is a generally used shorthand for Fiatal Demokraták Szövetsége – Magyar Polgári Párt (Alliance of Young Democrats – Hungarian Civic Union). For ease of reference, an overview of the abbreviations frequently used in the paper is provided in the Appendix.

2. In addition to the support of the European People's Party.

3. Népszabadság Online (2006).

4. Népszabadság Online (2007).

lied at night, we lied during the day) and "*elk*rtuk*"[5] (*we screwed up*) have become popular catch-phrases in anti-liberal and anti-elitist discourse.

In the course of the parliamentary elections[6] of 2010, the SZDSZ lost all of its seats, while the MSZP managed to obtain a meagre 15.28% of parliamentary representation, increased somewhat to 19.1% after the 2014 elections, where the MSZP formed a coalition with other left-wing parties. Some of the political space lost or left behind by the MSZP and the SZDSZ was filled by a new political force: the LMP (the 'Politics can be Different' party), a new ecological movement "with a potential to break the polarization between left-liberal and right-wing camps" (Korkut 2012: 157). This new party obtained 4.15% of mandates in 2010, but only 2.51% in 2014.

Against this background, on 2 October, 2016, a nationwide referendum was held in Hungary on whether to accept a future European Union quota system for resettling migrants, a measure interpreted by many in terms of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's fight against the EU's migration policies. The question that was put to the public in the referendum was the following: "Do you agree that the European Union should have the power to impose the compulsory settlement of non-Hungarian citizens in Hungary without the consent of the National Assembly of Hungary?".

Research questions, methodology and research material

The present paper will analyse anti- and pro-immigration (pro- and anti-government) populist discourses surrounding the quota referendum with a view to answering two research questions:

(1) What were the discursive strategies used by the government and opposition parties in the parliamentary debates relating to (anti-) immigration in general and the immigration quota referendum in particular?

(2) How effective were the different strategies in light of the outcome of the referendum?

The research questions are answered on the basis of quantitative and qualitative analyses of a 158,920-word corpus of speeches made in the Hungarian Parliament[7]

5. The asterisk is used to tone down the profanity of the original lexical item.

6. The data about the results of parliamentary elections come from www.valasztas.hu.

7. The transcripts of parliamentary speeches are available and searchable at www.parlament.hu, the search engine provides filters for date as well as party affiliation of the speaker.

in which reference was made to immigration and / or the quota referendum during a period that spans 14 months: one year leading up to and two months after the refendum. The quantitative approach involved the use of corpus analytical tools such as concordancing (Key Word in Context, KWIC), keyness analysis (based on Log-Likelihood tests), cluster analysis and collocation searches. The qualitative analysis was performed through manual annotation of the key words identified during in the quantitative stage as well as through the identification of discursive strategies based on Wodak et al.'s (2009) typology. The mixed methodology of quantitative and qualitative analysis is detailed in the following section.

Populist discursive strategies in parliamentary speeches

Combining critical discourse analytical and corpus linguistic approaches

In studying populist discursive strategies in parliamentary debates, a combination of quantitative (corpus linguistic) and qualitative (critical discourse) analytical tools was adopted. Baker et al. (2008) vindicate the utility of corpus linguistic techniques in critical analyses of political discourse. However, they point out two caveats they observe as downsides of some of the relevant research: (1) many studies take a qualitative perspective and use corpora as a mere repository of examples, (2) others use corpora that are suitable for quantitative KWIC analysis in terms of *descriptive* statistical measures, but are too small for the measurement of (*inferential*) statistical significance (Baker et al. 2008: 274ff).

Accordingly, the analysis focuses on a medium-sized corpus (a total of 158,920 words) that enables us to calculate the statistical significance of several lexical items that can be associated with populist discursive strategies. As mentioned in section 2 above, the corpus was compiled on the basis of parliamentary speeches that fulfilled the following criteria: (1) speeches containing the lexical items *referendum* and / or *immigration* (or their variant forms); (2) speeches made within a year prior to the referendum or within two months afterwards, a period in which the effects of the referendum were frequently referred to in Parliament. 51.6% of the speeches in the corpus[8] were given by MPs from the ranks of the right-wing Fidesz, while 48.4% of the data[9] are from speeches made by politicians affiliated to either the LMP or the MSZP, i.e. centrist or left-liberal opposition parties, respectively. With a view to comparing speeches given by MPs who are distant from each other on the political spectrum, discursive strategies used by MPs from the Jobbik

8. a sub-corpus of 82,051 words.

9. a sub-corpus of 76,869 words.

(often described as a far-right populist party) as well as by independent MPs are outside the focus of the present analysis.

Characteristics of parliamentary speech

Parliamentary speech as a sub-genre of political discourse has been researched from a variety of perspectives, both descriptive (cf. e.g. Săftoiu 2013) and critical (cf. e.g. Cheng 2013). Because of space limitations I will outline only two of the genre-specific characteristics that make parliamentary speeches especially amenable to the analysis of discursive strategies in general and populist discourse in particular. The first of these is the fact that, as van Dijk (1999: 29ff) argues, parliamentary debates are doubly public. On the one hand, there is pressure on speakers to serve the interests of the people who have chosen MPs as their representatives, on the other hand, not only are parliamentary debates broadcast live, the written transcripts are available and searchable by the public at any time on the internet, resulting in a complex constellation of temporal and interactional frames. Thus, it is safe to assume that there are at least three frames of interaction speakers have to keep in mind while preparing and delivering their speeches: the first interactional framework consists of MPs interacting in the debate itself, the second comprises participants and TV viewers, while the third frame of interaction combines features of the former two categories. It includes both classes of interactants and users of the parliamentary archives (in a different temporal frame). MPs frequently caution each other that their words will be on public record permanently, which, in the present day and age means that (traditional or online) TV viewers as well as publicists might comment on, post, tweet, etc. notable utterances or speeches and spread them through their social networks.

A second characteristic feature of parliamentary speeches that creates an opportunity for any discursive strategy deployed with manipulative intent is a special combination of two often conflicting discursive practices: "institutionally ritualised discourse" and "individually tailored discourse" (Ilie 2010: 202). MPs need to follow procedures and observe a highly restrictive set of formal and content rules (in terms of e.g. length of speech, topic choice, turn-sequence, type of turn, neutrality, objectivity etc.), while maximizing the subjective "personal note" added to their speeches (Săftoiu 2013: 49). As we will see in the following, propositional as well as non-propositional lexical items can both be utilised in the course of using the discursive strategies of personalization of self (animating the voice of the people), and depersonalization of the 'elite'.

Propositional lexical items used as manifestations of populist discursive strategies

The first corpus linguistic features investigated in the discourse under investigation were the keyness[10] of lexical items as well as the suffixes that can be associated with references to the identity of 'the people' (Hungarians, the Hungarian nation, the Hungarian people, etc.), 'us' (*we, our, for us*, etc.), 'the will' (*interest, benefit, good*, etc.) as well as the antagonistic identity of 'the elite', 'them' (in right-wing rhetoric it is either *Brussels*, i.e. the EU or *immigrants*) or 'you' (referring to members of the Fidesz in centrist/left-wing rhetoric). It is important to keep in mind that the presence of the 'us' / 'them' distinction is not sufficient to constitute populist discursive strategies (see Chapter 1, this volume). A presence of a down/up, people/elite distinction needs to be complemented by a claim to represent the people-as-the-underdog (ibid.), which is why the results of quantitative research were substantiated by subsequent qualitative analysis.

In the first stage of the keyness analysis the 'keyword list' feature of AntConc was used and all lexical items in the two sub-corpora (Fidesz sub-corpus / FSC and sub-corpus based on speeches given by members of the opposition parties / OPSC) were considered, the full list was then shortened with a focus on items that can be potentially associated with populist discourse.

In the course of calculating keyness, each sub-corpus was used as a reference corpus with respect to the other. In order to calculate keyness, the Log Likelihood test was used as a statistical measure. The Log Likelihood value of 3.84 was considered critical ($p < 0.05$): if a lexical item had a value higher than the critical value, it was considered to have keyness in a particular corpus. The results are summarized in Table 2.

The data suggests that lexical items that can be potentially associated with populist discursive strategies are more frequent and varied in the Fidesz sub-corpus than in the speeches of opposition MPs. Subsequent concordancing and manual annotation of the key words confirmed that these lexical items are used as polarization strategies contrasting the people's will to the will of an out-group and co-occur with claims to represent the 'will of the people'. For example, out of the 123 tokens of variant forms of the lemma 'Brussels', in the case of 118 Brussels is used metonymically to refer to the EU in contrast to 'the nation', 'Hungarians' or 'Budapest', also used metonymically with reference to the Hungarian people in general (1). Thus, a mere five tokens present EU decisions in a neutral or

10. In the course of RP3, AntConc 3.4.4w was used as a concordancing programme as well as keyness analyser. For more information on keyness cf. http://www.laurenceanthony.net/software/antconc/.

Table 2. Frequency and keyness of potentially populist uses of lexical items and suffixes in speeches given by governing and opposition parties, respectively

relevant lexical item or morphological form	sub-corpus/ reference corpus	normalised frequency (number of tokens per hundred thousand words)	keyness (log likelihood)
önök (distant form of 'you')	OPSC/FSC	480.5	169.1
nézzék (~'you should take a look at …')	OPSC/FSC	71.4	39.7
*Brüsszel**† (for/to/in etc. 'Brussels')	FSC/OPSC	150	37.64
*nemzet** ('nation' and its derivatives)	FSC/OPSC	464.6	34.83
akarat ('will')	FSC/OPSC	73.1	28.55
*magyar** (Hungarian / Hungary)	FSC/OPSC	1087.8	26.33
migráns (migrant)	FSC/OPSC	102.4	19.85
nép (~'people as a nation')	FSC/OPSC	735.3	17.2
emberek (~'people as individuals'	FSC/OPSC	484.1	12.02
nekünk/bennünket ('us', 'for us')	FSC/OPSC	64.6	11.82
ünket*/inket* (pl. first person possessive suffix, 'our')	FSC/OPSC	195.1	10.94
szeretnénk (we would like)	FSC/OPSC	26.8	7.21

† The character here is what is called a 'wildcard' in corpus linguistics, which stands for any sequence of characters including zero, see http://www.laurenceanthony.net/software/antconc/. Hungarian is a primarily agglutinative language, thus derived as well as inflected forms need to be identified by using wildcards.

favourable light. Frequent right-context collocates of 'Brussels' include 'dictates', or 'dictatorship' (2a and b) as well as 'forceful', 'forced' or 'demanded' (3a and b).

(1) Ki döntsön erről? ***Brüsszel*** vagy Budapest? *(Who should decide? Brussels or Budapest?)* (FSC)

(2a) A ***brüsszel***i diktatúra építését tehát meg kell állítani. *(Brussels' dictatorship has to be stopped.)* (FSC)

(2b) …ők maguk nemet mondanak a ***brüsszel***i diktátumokra. *(…they [i.e. 'the people'] say no to Brussels' dictates.)* (FSC)

(3a) A ***Brüsszel*** által erőltetett betelepítési kvóta már az elején halott ügy volt. *(The migration quota system forced by Brussels was a dead duck from the start.)* (FSC)

(3b) A magyar emberek a népszavazással megállíthatják ***Brüsszel***t, és nemet mondhatnak a ***Brüsszel*** által tervezett kényszerbetelepítésre. *(The referendum*

will enable Hungarian people to stop Brussels and say no to the forced resettlement quotas planned by Brussels.) (FSC)

Similarly, despite the second person grammatical form of the two key words in the left-wing subcorpus, most of the tokens are used as strategies to address the public, rather than the first-frame participants, in an effort to undermine the present government's authority and ability to represent the people's will:

(4a) Miről beszélnek ***önök***? Mit cselekszenek ***önök***? Hazudoznak összevissza, hülyítik az embereket, miközben pont róluk és pont értük nem cselekednek. *(What are* ***you*** *talking about? What are* ***you*** *doing?* ***You****'re lying left and right,* ***you****'re fooling the people who* ***you*** *do nothing for and who* ***you*** *are not concerned about.)* (OPSC)

(4b) Ha ***önöknek*** fontos ez az ügy, tegyék ezt meg, kezdeményezzenek ***önök*** is népszavazást, és ***nézzék*** meg, hogy mi a társadalmi vélemény és mi az intézkedés! *(If this issue is important for* ***you, you*** *should initiate a referendum on this as well and* ***you*** *should see what the public opinion is and what measures need to be taken!)* (OPSC)

Non-propositional lexical items used as manifestations of populist discursive strategies

In addition to propositional lexical items that add explicit content to populist messages, a set of non-propositional words and expressions were also analysed with a view to revealing implicit populist discursive strategies.

Pragmatic Markers (PrMs) comprise a functional class of linguistic items that do not typically change the propositional meaning of an utterance but are essential for the organization and structuring of discourse, for marking the speaker's attitudes to the proposition being expressed as well as for facilitating or constraining processes of pragmatic inferences. PrMs in English include *you know, I mean, well, oh*, etc., most of which are highly marked for orality and the personal domain, thus, their very presence in mediatised political discourse is a sign of conversationalization and the increasingly blurred boundary between the public and personal domains. The conversationalization of political discourse is, according to Fairclough (1995), a manifestation of manipulative intent on the part of political actors, more specifically, a type of marketization of ideologies with a hidden consensus-building effect (1995: 51). Moreover, Furkó (2017) argues that the analysis of the functional spectrum of PrMs serves as a methodology for revealing additional strategies including polarization, suppression, recontextualising and dramatisation.

Schirm (2009a) studied the Hungarian PrMs *hát* (~'well'), *ugye* (~'surely'), and *persze* (~'of course'), while Schirm (2009b) described the funtions of *vajon*

(~'I wonder') in parliamentary speeches and found the presence of these attitude-marking devices rather unexpected because of the above mentioned structural and institutional constraints on parliamentary debates. Her conclusion is that PrMs have a manipulative effect in adding subjectivity and a popularising rhetorical quality to a supposedly objective and neutral genre, which can be detected through the difference between default uses of PrMs in everyday conversations and their marked functions in political discourse. Zimányi (2008: 116ff), also analyzed manipulative discursive strategies using Hungarian parliamentary speeches as data, and pointed out that politicians do not aim at providing factual information, instead, for the most part, they try to manipulate the emotions of the audience by asking face-threatening questions and giving face-threatening replies with a view to painting an unfavourable picture of a political elite.

However, neither researcher has studied the use of PrMs as manifestations of populist discursive strategies or compared speeches given by government and opposition MPs. Therefore, in the present research all non-propositional items (PrMs as well as modal adverbs) that have keyness in either of the sub-corpora were considered, while PrMs that do not have keyness but were identified as potential manifestations of manipulative intent (cf. Schirm 2009a and 2009b; Furkó 2017) were also added to the list of resources for populist discursive strategies. Table two below summarizes the results. As in the case of propositional lexical items above, Log-Likelihood tests were used to calculate keyness in a particular sub-corpus, the Log Likelihood value of 3.84 was considered critical ($p < 0.05$), if a lexical item had a value higher than the critical value, it was considered to have keyness in a given sub-corpus. If no statistical significance was established because of the small number of tokens, the dispersion of the lexical item was calculated by using variation coefficient (CV) values. The range of CV values is between zero and one, the lower the CV value (the closer it is to zero), the more unevenly a given lexical item is dispersed across the sub-corpora.

As Table 3 shows, with the exception of *vajon* ('*I wonder*'), opposition MPs use non-propositional lexical items in a wider range of contexts, yielding statistically significant differences in the frequency of these items overall. As for individual non-propositional items, 12 out of 16 lexical types yielded statistically significant differences in terms of frequency in speeches made by members of opposition parties.

As in the case of propositional lexical items, PrMs and modal adverbs were manually annotated for their discourse features, which confirmed their contribution to manipulative and / or populist discursive strategies.[11] Because of space

11. A random selection of 200 PrMs (100 from each sub-corpora) was manually annotated for the mention of antagonistically opposed identities in the immediate left or right context. In the

Table 3. Frequency and keyness of potentially manipulative PrMs in speeches given my members of governing and opposition parties

PrM	**normalised frequency in the OPSC**	**normalised frequency in the FSC (tokens per 100,000 words)**	**keyness (log likelihood) / dispersion (variation coefficient)**
hát (~'well')	49	26	LL = 9.13
vajon (~'I wonder')	11	20	CV = 0.19
ugye (~'surely')	42	8	LL = 27.57
nyilvánvalóan (~'apparently')	55	14	LL = 39.75
persze (~'of course')	45 (meg persze)	19	LL = 12.6
na (interjection)	23	7	LL = 10.04
mondjuk (~'we have to admit', 'by the way')	50 (+16 propos. mondjuk)	18 (+15 propos.)	LL = 18.34
úgymond (~'one could say')	8	3	CV = 0.45
ja (interjection)	7	0	N.A.
conjunctive *meg* (colloquial 'and')	79	16	LL = 50.75
szinte (~'as if')	24	15	LL = 2.71
biztosan (~'for sure')	21	1	LL = 24
gyakorlatilag (~'practically')	74	32	LL = 19.9
bizony (~'for sure')	20	9	CV = 0.38
lehet (~'perhaps')	228	161	LL = 16.28
nagyjából (~'mostly')	22	4	LL = 14.89
total	**758**	**353**	**LL = 185.29**

considerations, I will discuss only the three most salient discursive strategies that can be associated with the use of these non-propositional items: (1) evidential marking and its contribution to backgrounding, selective presentation and personal insults; (2) (semi-) interjections and their contribution to dramatization and emotional appeals; and (3) types of reporting and the contribution of PrMs to voicing as disalignment and antagonizing.

case of the FSC 86%, while in the OPSC 83% of PrMs co-occurred with explicit or implicit reference to antagonistic / opposing identities such as the EU, liberals, or immigrants (in speeches made by government MPs), or the Fidesz government and its political partners (in speeches made by opposition party MPs).

Evidential markers (EMs) constitute a subclass of pragmatic markers that are alternatively defined as PrMs that "signal the degree of confidence, positive or negative, weakly or strongly, held by the speaker about the truth of the basic message" (Fraser, 1996: 167), and as PrMs that "indicate a speaker's attitude regarding the validity of certain information, e.g. whether it is certain, probable, or untrustworthy" (Nuckolls, 1993: 235). In addition to marking the source and the reliability of information and knowledge (Ifantidou, 2001: 3), they may also indicate how knowledge or information was acquired, e.g. through personal experience, inference, or report (Nuckolls, 1993: 235). EMs that were identified in Table 2 above include *ugye* (~'surely'), *nyilvánvalóan* (~'apparently'), *persze* (~'of course'), *mondjuk* (~'we have to admit', 'by the way'), *úgymond* (~'in a way'), *szinte* (~'as if'), *biztosan* / *bizony* (~'for sure'), *gyakorlatilag* (~'practically'), *lehet* (~'perhaps'), *nagyjából* (~'mostly').

The default function of some of these EMs in spontaneous conversations (e.g. *persze, biztosan, lehet*) is to express different degrees of agreement with the interlocutor's previous utterance (e.g. 'emphatic yes' function, cf. Lewis, 2006), while in other contexts they often mark topic shifts, evaluations in narratives as well as the end of a list. However, in political discourse the range of functions EMs fulfill is markedly different from their default uses. Interactional uses are rare, while most occurrences in parliamentary speeches can be grouped into two categories: (1) EMs are either used in anticipation of an alternative viewpoint, and/or the audience's objections (heteroglossic uses, cf. Bakhtin, 1987), or (2) EMs can background propositions that were previously foregrounded and / or highlight new arguments and statements by taking their truth value for granted. Both practices are used as discursive strategies by members of governing as well as opposition parties with differences in frequency (see Table 3). Heteroglossic uses are exemplified in 5a (FSC) and 5b (OPSC):

(5a) Tehát nehéz eligazodni az ellenzék álláspontján. ***Persze***, azt is mondta az MSZP, hogy nincs olyan probléma, hogy bevándorlás, és ezt a Fidesz találta ki. *(So it's hard to see what the opposition's stance is on this issue.* ***Of course [PrM^{persze}]****, the MSZP has said that there is no issue here, immigration was invented by the Fidesz)* (FSC)

(5b) ilyen típusú kérdésekkel, amely az embereket közvetlenül megérinti, azzal foglalkoznának. ***Persze*** foglalkoznak, csak éppen másképpen, mint ahogy kellene. *(You should deal with issues that concern people more directly.* ***Of course [PrM^{persze}]*** *you do handle those issues, but not they way you should.)* (OPSC)

Information structuring uses are exemplified in 6a (FSC) and 6b (OPSC):

(6a) ***Ugye***, az Európai Unió részéről folyamatosan, már a 70-es évektől kezdve létezik egy lopakodó jogalkotás, azaz európai szabályozási körbe kíván bevonni olyan szabályokat, amelyek nemzeti hatáskörben vannak. *(Ever since the 70s, there has* ***surely [PrM^{ugye}]*** *been a stealthy legislation process on the part of the EU, meaning they try to draw legislation that is under national cognizance into their field of competence.)* (FSC)

(6b) ez a retorikai hadművelet, ami itt most megy – közpénzen -, és már ***ugye*** 15 milliárd forint közpénzt elköltöttek erre az egész attrakcióra. *(What is going on at the moment is a war of rhetorics, financed on public funds, and you have* ***surely [PrM^{ugye}]*** *spent HUF 15 billion of public funds on this stunt.)* (OPSC)

Heteroglossic as well as backgrounding / foregrounding uses of EMs, relate to the manipulative strategies of suppression (cf. Van Leeuwen 1996: 39) and selective presentation (cf. Pollak et al. 2011: 652). By shifting attention away from themes that are not congruent with their own beliefs and ideological aims, political actors can continue to pursue their own agenda. As 6a and 6b illustrate, suppression can be considered a populist discursive strategy in the speeches under scrutiny in that it is the antagonistic identity's perspectives, beliefs and ideological aims that are being suppressed: in the case of the OPSC the Hungarian government's, while in the case of the FSC the EU's underlying intentions and aims are being suppressed and / or selectively represented.

From a cognitive pragmatic perspective (cf. Sperber and Wilson 1995: 217ff), this strategy can be analysed as a process whereby politicians highlight elements of the mutual cognitive environment that, if appropriately combined, will lead the audience to the conclusions that the politician wants them to arrive at. EMs are, therefore, inherently manipulative in parliamentary speeches, and the subtlety of the manipulation lies in the way politicians "construct a socially, politically and ideologically skewed reality" (i.e. mutual cognitive environment) rather than "deconstruct an existing objective reality" (Connel 1980, cited in Tranchese and Zollo 2013: 157).

In addition to the above functions, EMs often mark personal insults in the political discourse of opposition MPs, even though it is a strategy that has been mostly associated with right-wing populism (cf. Greven 2016):

(7a) Piti ügy, de azért azt érzik, ***ugye***, hogy csalással megszerzett földterületre vettek föl helyenként hektáronként 150–200 ezer forintos uniós támogatást? *(This is an insignificant issue, but do feel* ***surely [PrM^{ugye}]*** *that you took out an EU grant of about HUF 150–200,000 per hectare on fields that you had acquired illegally?)* (OPSC)

(7b) Én azt gondolom, tisztelt képviselőtársaim, hogy önmagában ebből a tényből levonható az a következtetés, hogy itt ***bizony*** önök el akarnak csalni egy érvényesen kiírandó népszavazást. (*What I think, Honorable MPs, is that, based on this fact alone, we can conclude that you **indeed [PrM^{bizony}]** wanted to manipulate a referendum that was to be initiated legally.)* (OPSC)

(7c) Úgy vonják vissza, ahogy bevezették: mindenféle egyeztetés, mindenféle átgondoltság, ***gyakorlatilag*** ész és értelem nélkül vezették be, és ész és értelem nélkül vonják vissza. (OPSC) *(Now you are revoking this measure exactly the way you introduced it: without any kind of consultation or discussion, **practically [PrM^{gyakorlatilag}]** in a brainless, nonsensical manner.)* (OPSC)

Once again, personal insults underlie the populist discursive strategy of contrasting the people's will with the actions of a political elite, while the larger textual context includes claims to represent the people's will against antagonistic identity of 'the elite' (see Chapter 1, this volume).

The second group of discursive strategies PrMs can be associated with is related to dramatization and emotional appeals. Schirm (2009a) observes that certain Hungarian PrMs are incongruent with formal style as well as with objective, neutral argumentation, yet, they frequently appear in parliamentary speeches. She mentions interjections such as *jaj, ja, na, no* and semi-interjections (PrMs that are, similarly to interjections, bleached of semantic content) such as *hát* and *izé* (Schirm 2009a: 170). Their incongruence is due to the fact that their use is taboo in formal contexts, when they do occur, they mark subjectivity, emotional content or verbal aggression (ibid.). Some of these items, *hát, na, no* and *ja* appear in both sub-corpora, especially as elements of left-wing discursive strategies:

(8a) … egy olyan kérdést, amire teljesen egyértelmű a válasz, tehát ha ezt a kérdést fölteszik, én nem tudom most szó szerint megismételni, de államtitkár úr elmondta, hogy akarja-e, hogy az EU előírhassa, hogy kötelező betelepítés legyen Magyarországra, ***hát persze***, hogy nem. *([the referendum question] is a question to which the answer is evident, so if you ask this question, which I cannot cite exactly, but the honorable Secretary of State has just mentioned it, 'do you want the EU to introduce mandatory resettlement quotas in Hungary', the answer to that question is, **well, naturally [PrM$^{hát\ persze}$]**, no.)* (OPSC)

(8b) … de a kis falvakban minimálbéres összegekben vagy annak a töredékében […] jutnak hozzá a forrásokhoz. ***No***, ezektől az emberektől sajnálják önök azt a 100 százalékos bérpótlékot? *(… in small villages people live on minimal wage or a fraction of minimal wage […] they do not have access to these funds.*

***Well then* [PrM^{no}]*, do you want to take away 100% of the wage supplement from these people?)* (OPSC)

(8c) … pedig a dolgozó és a dolgozni akaró emberek irányába pedig azokat a juttatásokat biztosítani kell, amelyek az ő megélhetésüket segítik. ***No, hát*** a Magyar Szocialista Párt másfél éven keresztül ezt tette a fókuszba, és ezt hangsúlyozta. *(you have to provide people who have a job or want to have a job with the kind of allowances that enable them to make a living.* ***Well then*** *[PrM$^{no\ hát}$] this is what the MSZP did, this is what the MSZP put in focus for a year and a half.)* (OPSC)

As these utterances are clearly intended for the second- and third-frame participants, rather than the speakers' fellow MPs, PrMs mark emotional appeals to the public, antagonizing the speakers' political opponents as 'the elite' (8a and b) or presenting the speaker's own party in a favourable light while making claims to represent 'the will of the people' (8c).

Moreover, (9) shows how evidential markers, interjections and reporting expressions co-occur and reinforce each other in creating emotional appeals against the antagonistic identity's actions and intentions:

(9) A kormány bármire rábökhet, és azt ***mondhatja***, hogy ez egy kiemelt jelentőségű olimpiai ügy, és innentől kezdve pontosan azt a folyamatot készítik elő, amit a vizes vb-n látunk, hogy majd előbb-utóbb eszükbe jut, hogy ***ja, hát*** akkor létre kéne hozni egy törvénymódosítást, hogy a közbeszerzési szabályoktól el lehessen térni, akkor gyorsan a Market Zrt.-t meg lehet bízni meghívásos pályázaton, hogy ***ugyan már*** építsen meg ezt vagy azt, vagy Mészáros Lőrinc cégét, hogy ***jaj***, kéne egy kisvasutat építeni, akkor gyorsan azt építse meg. *(The government can point at anything and say that this is significant with a view to the Olympic Games, and from then on they can start preparing the process that we are all too familiar with, that we saw in the case of the Water Polo Games, they will soon realize* ***oh well,*** *[PrM$^{ja\ hát}$] let's implement an amendment by way of derogation from the Act on Public Procurement, then let's quickly publish an invitation for bids especially designed for Market Ltd. so they can build something or another, or let's design it* ***oh*** *[PrM$^{ja\ hát}$] for Lőrinc Mészáros's company, so that he can build a trenino line quickly.)* (OPSC)

The manipulative potential of direct and indirect speech as different types of reporting has been a widely researched area in CDA (for an overview, cf. Baker et al. 2008: 295ff). However, as Furkó et al. (2018: 246) argue, a third type of reporting, referred to as *voicing* also needs to be considered when analysing spoken discourse. As example 9 illustrates, voicing is different from both direct and

indirect reports in that when using this strategy, speakers report an utterance that is probable, typical or likely to be heard or produced by a speaker other than the present one. Voicing the discourse of others lends itself to selective and / or biased representations of the antagonistic identity's actions and intentions because speakers present a hypothetical/imaginary utterance with a lower degree of pragmatic accountability through voicing (cf. Lauerbach 2006).

This explains the finding that voicing appears in mediatized political interviews more frequently than in other discourse types, despite the fact that it was previously identified as a characteristic of spontaneous, everyday, casual conversations (cf. Furkó et al. 2018). In parliamentary speeches, as (9) illustrates, PrMs, even (semi-) interjections such as *ja, jaj, hát*, often introduce imaginary propositions reported by the speaker, adding a dramatizing effect to the report and aligning or disaligning the animator with respect to the (hypothesized) source of the proposition.

The Hungarian PrM *úgymond* (~'one could say') is unique in its development as the pragmaticalization of a reporting verb used for voicing. As Table 3 shows, the number of tokens in the two sub-corpora is not high enough to yield statistical significance. However, similarly to other non-propositional items, *úgymond* appears to be more frequent in opposition MPs' speeches as a strategy of disalignment (10a and b) than in right-wing speeches (10c), where it serves as a legitimizing strategy with respect to the government's decisions:

(10) a Nincs azzal baj, ha a kormány a választópolgároknak ***úgymond*** az akaratát, a szándékát ismerni akarja. *(It is perfectly OK if the government wants to be familiar with the voters' intent, their will,* ***if you like [PrM^{úgymond}]****).* (OPSC)

(10b) … egyik oldalról ijesztgetik azokat, akik nyugdíjban vannak, hogy majd csökken a nyugdíjatok, a másik oldalról pedig megpróbálnak ezen keresztül ***úgymond*** gyűlöletet kelteni azok irányába, akiknek köszönetet kellene mondani. *(on the one hand you are creating fear in people who have already retired, telling them 'your pension will be cut', on the other hand, you are* ***in a way [PrM^{úgymond}]*** *trying to generate hate towards the very people you should be grateful to.)* (OPSC)

(10c) Ez a törvény pedig azt teszi, hogy az eddigi zug tetőtér-beépítéseket is ***úgymond*** legalizálja, mert eddig azokat is be kellett volna jelenteni. *(What this legislation does is* ***in a way [PrM^{úgymond}]*** *enable people to add a story to their houses legally, which has often been done illegaly so far in the absence of a declaration.)* (FSC)

Conclusions and possible directions for further research

In the present paper I have looked at populist discursive strategies used by (right-wing) government and (centrist/left-wing) opposition MPs in the context of the migration quota referendum of 2016. My approach has been primarily empirical.

In the course of comparing populist discursive strategies used by government and opposition MPs, we have seen that both groups use very similar strategies (antagonizing, selective presentation, patronizing, polarization, dramatization and emotional appeals). Differences can be observed in terms of linguistic manifestations, i.e. the frequencies with which particular linguistic resources are used by different political actors. MPs affiliated with the Fidesz prefer explicit means of constructing 'the will of the people' as well as the antagonistic identity of a 'political-economic elite', indicated by the finding that propositional lexical items that can be associated with these concepts have keyness in the speeches given by the government's MPs.

On the other hand, anti-government voices prefer to utilize more implicit linguistic resources to realize the same discursive strategies, as is shown by the keyness of pragmatic markers and interjections associated with subjectivity, backgrounding, antagonizing, dramatization and voicing. As was mentioned, the use of pragmatic markers is a sign of the conversationalisation of public discourse, and is especially incongruent in parliamentary speeches, i.e. primarily monologic, pre-planned speeches delivered in highly formal contexts. It is not suprising that members of left-wing and centrist political parties resort to conversationalisation (a form of equalisation between the private and public spheres) to a greater degree than members of Fidesz, a conservative and right-wing party that eschews traditional values and appears to use a more normative and conservative rhetorical style as well.

As was mentioned in the introduction, comparing the nature and frequency of nationalist and populist discursive strategies is beyond the scope of the paper. However, the application of Wodak et al.'s taxonomy of nationalist discursive strategies has highlighted an important difference between nationalist and populist discourse on the content level, and several minor differences in terms of linguistic manifestations.

The difference between populist and nationalist discourse on the content level is that while the strategy of suppression affects intra-national differences and extra-national heteronymy in the case of nationalist discourse (cf. Wodak et al. 2009: 39), populist strategies of suppression and selective presentation affect the actions and intentions of the antagonistic identity that is presented as opposite to 'the will of the people' (i.e. the government in the case of opposition speeches and the EU, liberals, or migrants in the case of speeches made by the Fidesz-affiliated MPs).

In addition to content level differences, the study has highlighted several linguistic manifestations of discursive strategies that were not identified in connection with nationalist discursive practices. We have seen that the use of pragmatic markers appears to underlie macro-strategies such as relativization and perpetuation in populist discourse, as well as the micro-strategies of (de-) personalization, suppression, antagonizing and dramatizing. Such strategic uses of pragmatic markers have not been observed as linguistic manifestations corresponding to nationalist discourse (cf. Wodak et al. 2009: 36ff). Moreover, dramatizing as a strategy of antagonizing has not been identified as a nationalist discursive (super-) strategy (ibid.).

It is unlikely that the strategic use of pragmatic markers is unique to populist discourse, further research needs to identify other contextual parameters that explain the predominance of implicit discursive strategies in general, and the salience of non-propositional items in particular.

By way of answering the question of how effective explicit and implicit strategies are in the Hungarian context, a few words about the outcome of the referendum are in order.

The overall turnout for the referendum was 44.04%, thus, the referendum was void (Nemzeti Választási Iroda, 2016). However, both sides considered the referendum campaign successful. In his speech on 3 October, 2016 (Orbán, 2016), Viktor Orbán evaluated the referendum as a success, and said it was not valid in legal terms, but valid in political terms, since 98% of the voters cast their ballot against the migration quota system proposed by the EU. In reaction to PM Orbán's speech, Ákos Hadházy, representative of the LMP, pointed out that "numbers can explain many things, even failure can be explained as success", and the referendum was void for the simple reason that it was irrelevant to the larger issue of solving the problems of migration.

The two speeches epitomize the discursive strategies and their linguistic realizations that were identified above: PM Orbán refers to the 'will' of Hungarian people 14 times and to 'illegal immigrants' or 'Brussels' as antagonistic to the 'will of the people' 20 times, while MP Hadházy uses the discursive strategies of antagonizing, voicing, labels such as 'fear-mongering' and the colloquial interjection *ja* to reinforce his message.

The opinion polls suggested that the LMP's and the MSZP's more implicit discursive strategies of dramatizing, polarizing, antagonizing and selective presentation did not result in any significant changes in their popularity, with the two parties securing the support of 4% and 10% of the Hungarian voters, respectively.

Once again, PM Viktor Orbán's Fidesz with its more conservative rhetorical style and explicit discursive strategies succeeded in claiming to represent the 'will of the people': the popularity of the Fidesz rose by 4% in the wake of the referendum, reaching 49% according to the major opinion poll agencies (ibid.).

Appendix A. List of abbreviations

EMs	evidential markers, a sub-group of pragmatic markers
Fidesz / Fidesz-MPP	Fiatal Demokraták Szövetsége – Magyar Polgári Párt (Alliance of Young Democrats – Hungarian Civic Union)
FSC	sub-corpus compiled from parliamentary speeches given by MPs from the Fidesz
Jobbik	Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom (Movement for a Better Hungary)
KWIC	Key Word in Context (a concordancing tool)
LL	Log-Likelihood
LMP	Lehet Más a Politika (Politics can be Different)
OPSC	sub-corpus compiled from parliamentary speeches given by members of the opposition parties
MP	Member of Parliament
MSZP	Magyar Szocialista Párt (Hungarian Socialist Party)
PrM	Pragmatic Marker
SZDSZ	Szabad Demokraták Szövetsége (Alliance of Free Democrats)

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Concluding remarks

Appealing to the people

Ruth Breeze and Jan Zienkowski

This volume was intended as an exploration of the new political order arising in Europe and its immediate neighbours in the wake of the crisis of 2008, with a particular focus on the way 'the people' is being represented in the discourses of parties that challenge the established order. The range of countries covered – United Kingdom, Belgium, Spain, Italy, Denmark, Romania, Hungary, Germany, Turkey – serves as evidence of the way in which 'the people' is indeed a central point in current debates, acting to anchor identities and project antagonisms in a multitude of settings, and thereby fixing a political logic that is driven by an up/down opposition between the elite and the people. These chapters examine the extent to which this focus is unique to so-called 'populist' parties, and explore the degree of commonality in people-centred discourses across (or at both ends of) the political spectrum, questions that most previous accounts equating claims to stand for 'the people' with radical politics on the right or left have failed to account for satisfactorily. This book thus represents an attempt to revisit the issue of populist discourse in the context of cases emerging across today's fraught European landscape. The range of methodologies applied, and the tensions between different analytical approaches and different understandings of populism, make this volume a stimulating contribution to current debates.

Benjamin De Cleen's opening chapter set the scene for the book in broad strokes by explaining various current approaches to understanding populism and populist discourse (see Chapter 1, this volume). The association between discourse and populism inevitably evokes Laclau's influential theory as to how discourse articulates diverse social demands with different aims and desires in a shared political project. However, this does not preclude the (often complementary) discussion of other approaches to populism, particularly those that question the different ways in which discourse and politics are interrelated (i.e. 'thin' populism as a political style versus 'thick' populism as a kind of politics that genuinely foregrounds the underprivileged), or the nature of populist 'performance' (Moffitt 2016) and its

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overlap with theories of mediated representation. Moreover, analysis of populism in discourse naturally calls to mind evocations of the heartland (Taggart 2000), leading to an exploration of the borders between populism and nationalism, and the possibility of distinguishing between up/down and in/out narratives of identity and exclusion (De Cleen and Stavrakakis 2017). In his conclusions, De Cleen located the essential core of populism in the relationship between 'the people' and others, most particularly the supposed 'elites' constructed as the people's enemy. The question thus came to centre on *who* belongs to 'the people', *how* populist parties and politicians construct the categories 'the people' and 'the elite', and *how* they build their own claim to be the representatives of 'the people'.

These questions then naturally led on in the chapters that followed to discussions about language, discourse, performance and representation. It was by addressing these questions in specific cases, using concrete evidence, that we sought to shed light on the workings of political discourses across the political spectrum, and the other chapters in this volume have gone some way to addressing these issues. In what follows, we will bring out some of the contrasts and tensions that run through this volume, highlighting some of the different ways that the authors have tackled these problems.

One of the central divisions highlighted in many current studies on populist discourse could be seen as reflecting the polarity of right and left. Much recent research in Europe has focused on right-wing populist parties, with the corresponding neglect of their left-wing counterparts. Three of the chapters in this volume have addressed a major gap in the recent literature by investigating European populist parties on the left. The first of these, by Arthur Borriello and Samuele Mazzolini (see Chapter 3, this volume), offered a fruitful cross-country comparison, focusing on the discourses of the new populist parties in Spain and Italy, and bringing out a number of strong similarities between these two rather different political formations. The propagation of a new vocabulary that reframes actors and events ('la casta', 'turnismo') is used to discredit the mainstream political parties and to draw sharp dividing lines between 'the people' and the powerful elites who constitute its 'antagonists'. The lines of division identified here are located within society (the leader of Podemos spoke of "digging trenches in civil society"), rather than between 'the people' and some external, often abstract entity (debt, unemployment, crisis). Podemos and M5S seem both to construct a populist discourse in dichotomising the social along a sharp frontier, but they differ in their attempts to constitute a new political subject: Podemos articulates a more coherent set of social demands on behalf of working class people, migrants, globalisation and its 'losers', and the people(s) of the Iberian peninsula in general, while M5S assumes a vague and all-inclusive people is 'always already there'. Taking up this theme in their more detailed study of Podemos, Nicolina Montesano-Montessori and Esperanza

Morales-López examined how Podemos sought to carve out a discursive space for itself – and for 'the people' – using spatial and temporal metaphor (see Chapter 5, this volume). By re-imagining Spain as its people, Podemos's discourses seem to offer an alternative to an abstract, centralized and constrictive state. Interestingly, as well as applying the classic up/down spatial model of 'the people' versus 'the elite', Podemos uses temporal metaphors to create a dichotomy between traditional parties locked in an outdated logic and its own imagined identity as a flexible, future-oriented alternative. However, as these authors have pointed out, Podemos seems also to face some of the pitfalls that befall hybrid entities: as a relatively new phenomenon, in terms of structure and self-presentation it still wavers between being a representative party and a social movement, and this identity crisis affects the understanding of the extent to which the party is, embodies, or merely stands for 'the people'. Also centring on left-wing populism, Óscar García Agustín has charted the populist turn of a Danish left-wing party, the Red-Green Alliance (RGA), which has changed its discourses in an attempt to create a space "to the left of" Danish social democracy and thereby wrest populism away from the radical right. This required two particular moves: first, the search for "nodal points" that could bind together populist discourses on the left around a sense of "community" using narratives to build a cohesive "us" – "ordinary wage earners" and "Danes" – as subjects of equality and freedom; and second, the articulation of antagonistic relations with identifiable "others" (here, neoliberal and European discourses) to displace the "them" of the radical right (generally associated with xenophobic or "civilizationist" discourses). His conclusions suggested that the "populist moment" is likely to generate different kinds of "populist hybrids", and that the true interest lies in exploring whether populism has space for the values of an inclusive community framed in opposition to "elites", rather than to members of out-groups defined in ethnic or nationalist terms (see Chapter 6, this volume).

Several chapters covered the more familiar territory of right-wing European populism, doing so in a way that sheds new light on this phenomenon. Taking the example of Hungary, Peter Furko built an analysis of populist discourses in parliamentary speeches on a combination of De Cleen's understanding of populism as a political logic (this volume) and Wodak's (2015) typology of discursive strategies, particularly linguistic manifestations of positive self-representation and negative other-representation (see Chapter 13, this volume). In particular, Furko mapped the way key identity terms ('Hungarians', 'the nation') are characteristically placed in counterposition to outgroups such as 'the EU' and 'Brussels', the analysis of which brings out some of the overlap between populism and nationalism. Starting from the position that populism itself is a discursive strategy rather than a "thin ideology", Samuel Bennett discussed how 'the people' is brought into being by those who claim to represent it, looking at the case of the Brexit referendum (see

Chapter 9, this volume). His theoretical background also links Laclauian understandings of populist discourse with a strategy-based focus, in this case informed by the discourse-historical approach (Krzyżanowski 2016), looking at how key concepts are defined and sharpened by contrast to counterconcepts ('Gegenbegriffe'). His analysis of UKIP's Twitter account around the EU referendum date explored the way anti-intellectualism and appeals to 'common sense' are blended with informality to simulate a 'popular' discourse designed to appeal to broad sectors of the population that might otherwise be attracted by left-wing politics. His study brought out the way UKIP exploits a highly polarised vision of class warfare, activating working class topoi in the services of the Leave campaign. By exalting the qualities of the in-group, fomenting a sense of exploitation and betrayal by elites, and activating underlying xenophobic mental models through implicature, these tweets create a heady cocktail of anti-EU and anti-migrant propaganda. For his part, Andreas Önnerfors illustrated how the German far-right PEGIDA movement used the notion of 'crisis' as a driving force to construct and represent 'the people' as a political actor, building a performative stage for the expression of diffuse political positions on the (North European) new right (see Chapter 7, this volume). These positions are infused by racism and ethno-nationalism, containing echoes of the fascist past, but they are also influenced by strategic thinking and reflect the need for such groups to 'rebrand' themselves as people's movements. In particular, Önnerfors has shown how PEGIDA was able to operationalise latent tensions and frustrations in East German society after the "Wende" to its own ends. In another view of the German right, Miguel Ayerbe took a closer look at the terminology used to refer to 'the people' in the manifesto, bulletin and Twitter accounts associated with Alternative für Deutschland (AfD), outlining the main terms used for and characteristics attributed to 'the people' in AfD's discourse (see Chapter 11, this volume). He explicated the role of certain types of people-centred discourse in legitimating AfD and delegitimating those currently in power. By detailed analysis of concrete instances, he has shown how AfD carves out a discursive position for itself as the only viable alternative for *politics as usual* and as the only true representative of the 'German people'. Importantly, however, he has also shown how the use of different terms (e.g. 'Bürger' (citizens)) may be part of a strategy to appeal to different segments of the electorate. By co-opting the vocabulary of liberalism ('citizens') in the official manifesto, AfD achieves a more neutral style of address than it habitually uses in, say, its Twitter account. Finally, also at the right of the spectrum, Hayriye Özen's chapter took on the under-researched issue of populism in Turkey. Her approach started from Laclau's notion of the "empty signifier", focusing on the notion of "the people" in the discourse of the Turkish ruling party Justice and Development (AKP) (see Chapter 4, this volume). She documented how this term was originally used to create a chain of equivalence which would

rally certain groups with unfilled social demands. However, importantly, she then shows how this term gradually underwent a process of transformation in which it was appropriated by the AKP to signify Islamic/conservative demands.

Other chapters in this book have taken a more distanced approach to the notions of 'populism' and 'the people', bringing to light emergent tensions between populism and people as descriptors and as objects of study. Chiara Degano and Federico Sicurella bridged the gap between theoretical enquiry and empirical analysis by looking into discourse *about* populism in the British and Italian press, asking how populism is socially understood and how populist identities are framed in the media (see Chapter 2, this volume). Using corpus techniques, they identified *definitional-evaluative clusters* surrounding the notion of populism and populists, finding clusters such as "populism as a threat", "justified grievances" and "populism as identity politics", which are all often linked in some way to the notion of the failure of mainstream politics. This approach enables opinion writers to "condemn populism while acknowledging the concerns on which populism thrives". Argumentative topoi in this context include the need to reject populism while addressing the underlying social demands, which are perceived as being related to the ongoing processes of globalisation. These authors pointed out that while academics are eager to reach a robust definition of populism, journalists adopt a "common sense" or "taken for granted" view of what populism is in a given context. Interestingly, though, commentary on populism can be seen to involve a more or less calculated (re)negotiation of the notion in each instance, so the way that a journalist frames populism – which is usually negatively connoted – forms part of his/her representation of the socio-political phenomenon itself.

Regarding analytical approaches, four of the chapters in this book started with a strongly lexical focus centring on parliamentary discourse, and offering a comparative empirical approach to the use of terms like 'the people'. Naomi Truan's analysis of 'the people' in the parliaments of the United Kingdom, France and Germany confirmed the role of this term as a basic component of political discourse across the political spectrum, but also showed that the choice of vocabulary is influenced by historical precedents, and that references to 'people' often remain indeterminate (see Chapter 8, this volume). Contrasting parties rather than languages, Furko focused on Hungarian parliamentary debates, identifying keywords and concepts such as 'the people', 'the elite', 'the will', 'us' and 'them' (see Chapter 13, this volume). Furko found more lexical items that can be associated with populist strategies in the discourse of the right-wing Fidesz party. Again looking at parliamentary discourse in one language, Maarten van Leeuwen's chapter offered a comparison of speeches by a populist and a non-populist in the Dutch parliament (see Chapter 12, this volume). He argued that the important point is not so much the frequency with which terms like 'the people' are used,

but the syntactic role that these terms play in politicians' discourse. Taking the example of two Dutch politicians, one populist and one not, he showed that the populist consistently foregrounded 'the people' and used it as subject, while the other politician tended to place 'the people' in relatively peripheral syntactic positions, rather than as subject or object of the core sentence. Moreover, the populist politician characteristically formulated his own ideas as "what the people want", while the non-populist seemed to envisage a mismatch between what 'the people' want and what he, his party or the establishment in general need to do. His chapter is proof that the relationship between 'the people' and populist discourse holds many nuances that are yet to be explored. Finally, Raluca Mihaela Levonian showed how the Romanian government tended to present 'the people' as the only agents responsible for their material well-being, while denying the possibility for them to influence the decisions taken in the political sphere (see Chapter 10, this volume). The Romanian opposition, by contrast, framed citizens as voters who have the democratic right to decide their rulers. Levonian brings in Laclau's notion of political logics to show how these politicians try to bind 'the people' together by creating a logic of equivalence that joins their claims and excites shared antagonisms. She then extended this to cover inclusive and exclusionary populisms (Filc 2015), considering how this might apply in specific ways to post-communist countries. She concluded that the opposition parties tend to be more 'populist' in presenting 'the people' as opposed to the political elite, but conceded that the line demarcating populist discourse from more traditional democratic discourses is not clear, and pointed to the fragility of such distinctions in countries where current political practice is still heavily marked by their communist past.

The meaning and function of these central terms poses another analytical challenge. As we have seen across these chapters, different strands of thought concerning the function of the signifier 'people' were interwoven in different ways. Some authors worked within a Laclauian perspective, considering 'the people' as a floating or empty signifier whose meaning is subject to considerable variation, or disentangling political 'logics'. For example, looking at Turkey, Özen showed how AKP's use of 'the people' evolved over time, mirroring a political shift towards conservative Islam (see Chapter 4, this volume). The logic of articulation originally roped in various underprivileged sectors, joining social dislocations, grievances and demands of many different kinds, in a shared antagonism towards the Kemalist political hegemony. However, after two terms in office, a subtle change became apparent: the "people" or "public will" became identified with the conservative/religious electorate of the AKP, whose "antagonist" became defined as all those opposing the government. Özen argued that the party's pragmatism gave it considerable flexibility in articulating its political discourse, and in exploiting the persuasive potential of the "empty signifier". For her part, in Romania, Levonian

provided a suggestive account of the way logics of equivalence might function in post-communist settings, prompting a stimulating contrast with Furko's account of the anti-European dichotomies established by Fidesz in the Hungarian parliament (see Chapters 10 and 13, this volume). Borriello and Mazzolini discussed the difficulties of defining 'the people' and its antagonists in the case of emergent political formations in Spain and Italy, pointing to glaring deficiencies in the logic developed by M5S and the greater coherence achieved by Podemos (see Chapter 3, this volume), while Montessori-Montesinos and Morales-López showed how the crucial element of time enters the scene in Podemos's discourse, providing a dividing line to organise the logic of "us" and "them" (see Chapter 5, this volume).

On the other hand, looking at similar evidence through the lens of a more traditional semantic approach grounded in corpus analysis, other authors came to interesting conclusions about the manipulation of lexical items referring to the people in populist discourse. Ayerbe showed how AfD modulate their use of partial synonyms (people, citizens) when addressing different audiences, the more 'populist' terminology being reserved for the social media (see Chapter 11, this volume). In the lexical dimension of his study, Bennett similarly found that strongly dichotomised discourse dominates particularly in the social media, engaging with previous societal discourses of privilege and resentment, and generating strong antagonisms (see Chapter 9, this volume). Using a similar empirical methodology, but working on speeches, van Leeuwen concluded that here it is not so much the actual terms used as their characteristic syntactic roles that enable us to distinguish between populist and non-populist discourses at text level.

One particularly rich aspect of this collection of chapters is to be found in the wide variety of corpora used and the combinations of analytical methods. While some studies were based on an eclectic set of articles, press interviews, campaign materials, parliamentary debates, etc. (Borriello and Mazzolini, García Agustín, Montessori and López-Morales), other authors worked with systematic corpora of manifestos and party bulletins (Ayerbe), tweets (Bennett), opinion articles (Degano and Sicurella), insider accounts (Önnerfors). Several made use of parliamentary debates and speeches (van Leeuwen, Truan, Levonian, Furko). A mix of quantitative and qualitative methods was often used (Furko, van Leeuwen, Truan, Levonian), providing accounts of the frequency with which key terms for the people occur, and information about their typical collocates, but also contextualised examination of the use of these words in context. The comparisons drawn were both cross-linguistic and cross-cultural (Truan), and between populists and non-populists (van Leeuwen), or government and opposition (Levonian). Although the interpretative perspective was Laclauian in some cases, this was operationalised in different ways. So, for example, García Agustín centred on the formation of nodal points, as a clear way of identifying and analysing populist

discourses. Özen took the view that the Turkish term 'millet' is an 'empty signifier', and showed how its meaning shifted substantially over the AKP years, moving from uniting a set of diverse social demands towards signifying Islamic conservatism. Other chapters avoided Laclau and approached the phenomenon of populism from positions informed by DHA (Ayerbe, Furko), or 'conceptual history' (Önnerfors), while some took a strictly empirical linguistic approach (van Leeuwen, Truan). Yet others integrated their analysis into a reflection on media effects and mediatisation (Bennett), or "symbolically mediated performance" (Moffitt 2016: 28) (Önnerfors).

The different chapters in the book have thus brought out particular aspects of how 'the people' are represented, and the ways they are woven into networks of association with other significant actors and motifs. These connections configure the particular imaginary of each political movement, and through this, the landscapes that they inhabit. Each of these discursive performances is different, as is the key notion of 'people', since it reflects the culture and history of the country where it is enacted – it is not the same to talk of 'la gente' in Spain and 'das Volk' in Germany, for example. At the same time, throughout this book, points of commonality have emerged from the dense interplay of associations, so that some articulations of the signifier 'people' can be seen to be more or less exclusionary, others more or less polarising. Importantly in all this, despite the pervasive association between 'the people' and radical populism at the far left and far right ends of the political spectrum, it is essential to observe that mainstream parties also appropriate discourses that foreground 'the people'. This observation places a question mark over the frequent claim that talk about 'the people' is the distinguishing feature of populists. It prompts us to go deeper, to look in more detail, because as these authors have shown, there are insidious differences in the way politicians speak *for* and speak *about* the people that may well have a subtle influence on the way their messages are understood and accepted. Finally, we should also consider the fact that if 'the people' is a signifier that is very open to a great variety of articulatory practices, it is therefore likely to play a role in a multiplicity of ideological projects.

As de Cleen stated in Chapter 1, we must stress that the analysis of populist politics is never exhausted by the notion of populism. The chapters in this volume provide some insights into the different political agendas that are somehow being lumped together under the label of populism. The contributions here help to reveal something about why this is happening, and to illustrate the highly varied nature of political tendencies and projects that place this appeal to 'the people' at the centre of their discourse. But the true nature of the political projects that invoke 'the people' in these ways is obviously a subject for further enquiry. Nonetheless, we hope that this volume will shed new light on our understanding of political discourse across Europe and its neighbours in the present uncertain climate.

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The political landscape in Europe is currently going through a phase of rapid change. New actors and movements that claim to represent 'the will of the people' are attracting considerable public attention, with dramatic consequences for election outcomes. This volume explores the new political order with a particular focus on discursive constructions of 'the people' and the category of populism across the spectrum. It shows how a unitary representation of 'the people' is a central element in a vast range of very diverse political discourses today, acting to anchor identities and project antagonisms in a multitude of settings. The chapters in this book explore commonality and contrast in representations of 'the people' in both radical and mainstream political movements, looking in depth at recent political discourses in the European sphere. The authors draw on approaches ranging from Essex-style discourse theory over critical discourse studies, corpus analysis and linguistic pragmatics, to investigate how historically situated categories such as the people and populism become fixed through local linguistic, textual and narrative practices as well as through wider ideological and discursive patterns.

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