POPULISM ON THE LOOSE

(eds.) Kovala, Palonen, Ruotsalainen & Saresma

NYKYKULTTUURI

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NYKYKULTTUURIN TUTKIMUSKESKUKSEN JULKAISUJA 122
JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO 2018

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Painettuja julkaisuja voi tilata osoitteesta Jyväskylän yliopisto, Nykykulttuurin tutkimuskeskus, PL 35, 40014 Jyväskylän yliopisto. Gsm. 040 805 45 87, Email: laura.piippo@jyu.fi, http://www.jyu.fi/nykykulttuuri/. Julkaisuja voi ostaa myös Yliopistokauppa Sopista (Jyväskylä) sekä muista hyvin varustetuista kirjakaupoista.

Julkaisun taitto: Pekka Hassinen
Painoasun suunnittelu: Sami Saresma
Kansi: Sami Saresma

Jyväskylän yliopistopaino
Jyväskylä 2018

ISBN 978-951-39-7401-5
ISSN 1457-6899

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FOREWORD

Rapid social change, multicultural challenges, social inequality, and the way different kinds of threat are disseminated by the media for public imagination, have given rise to populist protests and appeals to cultural values, usually combining anti-elite and anti-immigrant nationalism with nationally and locally bounded demands for social justice. Several theorists and empirical researchers have attempted to capture this phenomenon under the notion of populism. The title of this volume, 'Populism on the Loose' thus refers to two different tendencies at the same time - to the fact that populism has become ubiquitous and to how it is being defined in many different ways.

Instead of establishing a single vision, we seek to outline the multifaceted phenomenon through several approaches from cultural, gender, and communication studies as well as political science: this yields new insights to the phenomenon. While the book as a whole explores populism in countries including Venezuela to Italy, Romania, and Turkey, many of these papers reflect on Finland especially in relation to the Finns Party and its emergence in the 2000s and 2010s, and makes a significant contribution in this less studied phenomenon.

The origin of the articles in this volume is in the conference 'Populism as rhetoric and movement' which was organised in Jyväskylä, Finland, 17–19 March 2016 and which was based on the Academy of Finland research project (Grant SA251730) with the same name. Speakers were invited to write for the volume, further elaborating on the papers delivered at the conference.

While much of present-day populism studies have focussed on identifying features shared by populist movements or on populism as a social logic, this volume looks at the variability and intersectionality of populism. First, populist phenomena vary according to cultural context. Stock accounts of populism, more often than not, fail to pay due attention to the culture-specific features of populist movements. Second, populism gets entangled with gender, class and religion among other things. It therefore requires an intersec-

tional study paying attention to the web of potentially relevant factors. And third, the very concept of populism tends to get loose – it is both without clear limits and its content is object of cultural and political negotiation and struggle – to the extent of justifying the term 'floating signifier', familiar from Ernesto Laclau's approach to populism.

The authors are academics from a variety of fields such as political science, cultural studies, and gender studies. (See List of Authors in the end of the manuscript.)

We want to extend our thanks to The Federation of Finnish Learned Societies and Kone Foundation for their support for the conference 'Populism as Rhetoric and Movement' (Jyväskylä 17-19 March 2016) in which the first drafts for the chapters of this volume were presented. We are grateful to the Department of Music, Art, and Culture for supporting the conference and this publication and to Pirkko Luoma for her invaluable help in finishing the manuscript. Last but definitely not least, we thank Prof. Emeritus Erkki Vainikkala, whose interest in Ernesto Laclau and idea of using his approach to study the emerging populist movements led to this research project.

Jyväskylä and Helsinki 29 January 2018

The editors

POPULISM ON THE LOOSE: SEMINAL PREFLECTIONS ON THE CONDITION OF DIFFERENTIALITY

Urpo Kovala & Emilia Palonen

The term is on everyone's lips these days: shortcomings and liminality of traditional politics are blamed on it. The proliferation of the phenomenon commonly referred to as 'populism' is interesting because of its multifaceted character. Exploring instances of populism we can find similarities but contend that 'populism' exists in variations rather than as a specific form, demand or family of political parties. Hence, this multidisciplinary edited volume, *Populism on the Loose*, discusses and develops a range of definitions and concepts of populism. A central aim of our volume is to demonstrate the variety of the definitions and contexts of populism, and to give space for the process of defining populism. In this introductory chapter we pay attention to these defining processes that take place and to the differentiation between understandings and praxis of populism.

By claiming that populism is 'on the loose', we draw attention to the ways in which populism is articulated with varying contents. Populism as a punchline of our contemporary era turns it into a floating or an empty signifier – to borrow terminology from one of the political theorists of populism Ernesto Laclau's (2005). These key concepts of his understanding of both politics and populism are not static forms but logics and have related effects. When its meanings are being contested, populism appears as object of strife, a floating signifier. It plays a role in the articulation of meaning on the two sides of the contestation. When it works as a reference point for meanings, it turns into an empty signifier, overwhelmed by the variety in meaning making it loses specificity once afforded to it. This is when we no longer know exactly what populism is, even if we find it a common point of engagement.

When conferences set their focus on populism, colleagues use the occasion to extend the term. Others write books covering anthologies or aspects of it, or simply set out to define what populism is and anchor it with specific content, logic or style (e.g. Müller 2016; Moffitt 2016). Recently whole handbooks of populism have been published (e.g. Rovira Kaltwasser et al. 2017). In his field of political analysis, set definitions are necessary as one needs to know what to compare. Also different forms (e.g. De Raadt, Hollanders, and Krouwel 2004), types and degrees (Deegan-Krause & Haughton 2009) of populism have been discussed over the years. There is a recent trend is to try to tighten further the over-flowing usages and definitions of populism. In the field of comparative politics, particularly Cas Mudde (2007) carried out a successful definition project with 'thin ideology' (see also Stanley 2008), which fits the comparative analysis of both right and left populism (Rovira Kaltwasser & Mudde 2012). Others deal with populists as those who oppose liberal democracy (Pappas 2016), and further those linked with economic crises (e.g. Kriesi and Pappas 2015). Whether left or right, populism may vary in degrees between political parties, as Rooduijn and Akkerman (2017) demonstrate on people-centrism and anti-elitism. Yannis Stavrakakis (2014) has sought to address populism through anti-populism and affective ties. While populism can be negatively and positively perceived in its central imperative to 'trust the people' (Canovan 1999), it may be problematic for the analysis of the phenomenon itself to conflate it with nationalism (e.g. Palonen 2017). These do not simply emerge, but have to be constituted. Hence, rhetoric is crucial part of the phenomenon (Moffitt 2016). Rhetoric and practices have a constitutive role in both right-wing (Wodak 2015) and left-wing parties and movements (Katsambekis 2016, Kiuopkiolis 2016).

Definitions guide us to look for something – or try to offer common ground for discussion about the phenomenon. Fixing and unfixing meanings is an activity that shapes larger fields of understandings and connotations, it contests and maintains hegemony. Indeed, because of the proliferation, spreading, entangling and

multiplication of the phenomenon itself, there is no single answer to what is populism. As the definition of populism is on the loose and the phenomenon spreads, it may be only relevant to explore these different aspects of the phenomenon and the ways in which it would also have consequences to the ways in which we may define populism. Our volume demonstrates how the definition of populism is not only contested but also perpetually in process of redefinition – instead of relying on one definition, the volume presents this multivocality as an analytical undertaking.

In the everyday language scientific notions of populism have not been fixed, despite strong attempts by comparative politics scholars in the news commentary and social media, Mudde included. This book is probably the anti-thesis of the negative marking Twitter-active academics engage with #schmopulism offering tools for detecting populism from what it is not (Stanley 2016). Instead of revealing 'wrong' usages of the term we enhance the field with new perspectives to phenomena related to populism and develop new understandings drawing on cultural studies and political theory. These would be helpful in analysing what gets entangled with 'populism'.

One could argue that populism tout court does not really constitute an object of study. It always requires some attributes, or context. What makes this volume interesting for a 'field of populism research', if any exists, is the ways in which its writers negotiate space for studying populism. As they do not take it for granted as an object of study, they need to engage in conceptual work.

Contextualisations and conceptualisations of populism

Besides focusing on political science rather than political meaning-making and rhetoric, very often research on populism draws from examples from either West European countries or Latin America. It has been argued that ideas develop in peripheries where centre's views merge. As Henrik Stenius (2017, 263–4), an expert in Nordic

Studies, argues, peripheral actors were forced to navigate between centres, which gives peripheral actors potential to reveal the universalist credentials of the centre. In the same vein he argues that the centre probably will not be listening to the arguments from the peripheries. Even in this necessary but hopefully productive asymmetry (Nygård and Strang 2016; Jalava, Nygård and Strang 2018) by publishing a peer reviewed e-book from the University of Jyväskylä, we hope to reveal new aspects that perhaps even challenge the mainstream conceptualisations or, at least, offer food for thought.

Our volume seeks to exploit perspectives from some of the semi-peripheries of these discussions. These may be limit cases of populism, which include similar features such as Chavez and Erdoğan, or the lesser known Romanian context, which reveals it is not straightforward to simply apply the concepts of populism of the centre. We tackle issues which are seen as peripheral to populism in many of its studies, the limits of the people and othering that constitutes the 'people' for the populist rhetoric. Exploring the link between polarisation and populism (c.f. Palonen 2009), many of these chapters look at the dichotomous rhetoric at the core for populism that a fully anti-essentialist conceptualisation of populism entails.

Seen in a systematic differential light, the notion of populism starts to disperse. There may be different constructions of the people in one the same populist movement. In the case of Finland, the notion has been crucial in the party leader Timo Soini's rhetoric but not in that of Jussi Halla-aho, who became his successor as the leader of the Finns party in the summer of 2016 and hardly uses the term. There may be varying degrees of authoritarianism. The degree of polarization, which is so central to populism, may also vary considerably. Historical backgrounds can be very different - for instance between Eastern and Western Europe, as Mihnea-Simion Stoica in this volume points out. Different populisms also incorporate very different mythologies or 'heartlands' (Taggart 2000). Furthermore, populisms can be placed differently on the left-right continuum.

One of the key tensions in this volume is between the analysis of populist parties or dynamics related to populist parties, and populist rhetoric emerging elsewhere. While in the first part of the volume we explore political parties, in the second part we draw attention directly related to gender and its intersectional connections in populist rhetoric and movements. The final part of the volume explores other dimensions of populism – definitions of populism in the media, emergence and definition of hate speech and a new field of cultural populism or the emergence of dichotomous speech in culture. The most traditional field of populism research is the field of political parties. Going through the first part of this volume we can witness spill-overs to the cultural field. Going through some of the arguments made in the first part of the volume, we can see how populism becomes a cultural polarising force.

In the introduction we first explore the contextual variation, then cover the conceptual work, and finally highlight what actually is at stake in the different chapters. In so doing, we end up discussing the fleeting character of populism in populism studies. This volume highlights aspects of populism rarely discussed, such as intersectional and gender studies approaches, conceptual historical analysis, as well as populism in not so explicitly political contexts. When populism mainstreams, dichotomous speech and the generation of 'us' and 'them' spreads from politics to different other fields. The conceptual work shows for example in Tuula Vaarakallio's article exploring the meanings of 'populism', but it is also present in Björn Fryklund's article that demonstrates variety within 'populist parties' in the Nordic countries. Even in the latter (Scandinavia and Finland), which are considered to be culturally and societally rather similar, political populism has emerged at different pace and with different faces. The distinctions in the phenomenon in Eastern and Western Europe are outlined by Mihnea-Simion Stoica. The phenomenon and its entanglement with media is explored even in Venezuela by Virpi Salojärvi. The chapters on gender by Elisa Bellè and Barbara Poggio, Tuija Saresma and Jiri Nieminen highlight new dimensions in populism research regarding gender. The chap-

ters by Halil Gürhanlı and Emilia Palonen explore the conceptual limits of populism.

One of the reasons why populism has become a more and more studied phenomenon, is that it is not merely evidenced in the usual materials for comparative politics, for instance, election results and party manifestos, but rather is visible in the media, policy-making and many fields where political meaning-making takes place. We seek to cover some of these discussions in this volume.

Populism on the loose – in the political parties

In the first part of the volume, one of the well-known experts in Nordic Populism, Björn Fryklund argues that right-wing populism offers a gateway for understanding and explaining the effect of Sweden Democrats in the Swedish political system, related to migration and the consequences to the welfare state – once politicized, it boosted the support of the SD, just as in the other Nordic countries. It is a democratic dilemma, as the SD emerged through a parliamentary system with popular electoral support but with undemocratic values.

In fact, this is very close to what happened in Turkey, where the AKP also emerged through the parliamentary system by attracting electoral support. The AKP, in the same way as the SD, was able to argue for a crisis of representation as a crisis of democracy, providing a dichotomy between the powerholding elites and its consensual points and Kemalist foundations. Populism may however turn into something else altogether. Halil Gürhanlı's article explores the limits of populism through the case of Turkey. What happens to populism when the political difference it articulates is reduced to the love/hate of the leader and the polarisation of society down to the most intimate relationships.

Fryklund points to the illiberal and anti-immigration character of right-wing populism and the essentialisation of the people. In the case of AKP the love of Erdoğan seems to have replaced the con-

tents or political demands themselves. What remains is the political frontier between the true-believers and the enemies of the regime. In Figure 1 Gürhanlı outlines how 'actual populism' takes place in the space where institutionalism ends and populism develops into 'pure populism'. The democratic ethos of populism lies within the connection to politics and the political, but 'pure populism' is already far beyond it.

Drawing on Ernesto Laclau's work, Gürhanlı explains how the situation has become polarised: 'if there is one thing anti-Erdoğanists have in common with Erdoğanists, it is their understanding of politics as an existential war.' Polarisation sustains the two communities and generates a deadlock (c.f. on Hungary, Palonen 2009). Any criticism from the outside is interpreted in a historical framework where Turkey is portrayed as the perpetual underdog and reduced back to the polarisation where the well-meaning efforts to speak for the opposition in Turkey only enhance polarisation.

Virpi Salojärvi reconnects the analysis to Gramsci and the way in which the generation of us vs. them is a hegemonic operation which is carried over through politics and the media. She studies the case of Venezuela under Hugo Chávez and how the people, the leader, and the enemy were framed in the media. The 'Chavista' frames generated a sense of community. The key signifiers of Chavismo such as the people (el pueblo) and the sovereign (el soberano) were used synonymously but generated different interpretations in different parts of the society. Yet again they reproduced a line of polarisation. Both Chavez and his sympathisers and the Venezuelan opposition appealed to the people, and sought to generate a counter-hegemony.

In the case that Mihnea Stoica outlines, the dichotomy is established between Western and Eastern European populism. Like Salojärvi and others, he recognises populist techniques or discursive strategies such as anti-elitism, people-centrism, scapegoating and appeals for direct democracy.

In the same way as Salojärvi recognised populist rhetoric on both sides, Stoica finds multiple populist actors in Romania. Sto-

ica's findings draw attention to the meaning of the people and the praxis of democracy: while in the West appeals to direct democracy were made, in Romania this theme has marginal role in the populist rhetoric. The main difference between the two populist parties in Romania Stoica investigates laid in the focus of their rhetoric the Greater Romania Party, PRM, founded by the poet Vadim Tudor, focused on the economical crisis, whereas for the PPDD, Dan Diaconescu's People's Party, the issue was social, moral and political. Stoica's paper draws on a clear distinction between the two populist parties in the substance of their argumentation.

Nevertheless, he also reveals how there is a clear distinction between the political cultures of Eastern and Western Europe. In Eastern Europe, power has typically been distanced from the people - one could even say in the ethos of Antipolitics by György Konrád, or Power of the Powerless by Vaclav Havel that it had been distanced or even seen as a dirty game in the 1980s and from the 1990s on was delegated to the politicians. Hence, not all the arguments typical of populism travel past the divide between Eastern and Western Europe.

Intersectional analysis of populism

In the second part of this volume, the focus shifts to articulations of a second order – that is, to what are called intersectional relations between different approaches or perspectives to populism. In this line of thinking, accounts of populism should take heed of the multiplicity of 'background variables' or differences between people and groups of people and their social and societal backgrounds and especially the interplay and intersections of these backgrounds and the tensions and negotiations involved.

In this section of our volume, the attention is on the intersections of gender and religion especially. The article by Elisa Bellè and Barbara Poggio and that of Tuija Saresma address the populist nature of anti-feminist movements in Italy and Finland. The artic-

ulations of those movements are different - the former deals with the articulation of religion and 'anti-gender' politics, finding resonance with the article by Jiri Nieminen, who sets out to thematise a religious movement and ends up studying the nexus of gender, religion, and politics. The movement dealt with by Nieminen is the Finnish branch of the Patmos Foundation for World Missions. Tuija Saresma, in turn, takes up three cases and looks at the ways gender is performed in them. She shows that in these cases, gender is performed in a conservative, traditionalist way, underlining the strict and insurmountable gender roles for men and women. The contribution by Jyrki Pöysä and Urpo Kovala adds to this the analysis of the interconnections between rhetoric and media performance on one hand and identity politics on the other. In their chapter they look at the ways leading politicians of the Finns Party have appealed to masculinity and masculine values in their rhetoric and performance, and the nature of the masculinities brought to the fore in their political figures and the politics of the Finns party. In particular, they focus on the long-term leader of the Finns Party Timo Soini, who became the Foreign Minister and in 2017 the leader of the splinter group Blue Reform, when the party he was establishing on the remains of the Finnish Rural Party in 1995 split into two.

The contributions to this section illustrate how also the scope of the 'political' varies when the relationship between populist practices and gender takes on different articulations. Notions and definitions of an 'ordinary bloke', religious propriety, or naturalness and normality, and the strict distinction between friends and enemies, which recur in the analyses in these articles, turn out to presuppose the same kinds of conceptions of society that nativist political populism rests on, although the cases mostly move beyond the sphere of party politics.

These four articles together exemplify beautifully the importance of looking at differences, intersections and negotiations in connection with populism. What is in common between the articles is the focus on gender as conceived of in an intersectional perspective. Gender populism, to use Tuija Saresma's term here, is actually

a rather understudied topic within populism studies, partly because of the predominance of political studies in the field. The contributions here are more interdisciplinary, drawing on several disciplinary contexts in addition to political studies - linguistics, cultural studies, gender studies, and sociology especially.

Populism on the loose and floating

When populism gets on the loose, it floats to different dimensions and takes different paths. After the global although predominantly European approach above, in this section we explore cases from Finland. Even in this single country case context, definitions of populism are floating. The first two cases are related to the emergence of the Finns Party, and the third one is exploring the ways in which dichotomous speech present in the rhetoric related to the populist Finns Party is actually emerging in another field where meanings are debated: namely cultural policy. The authors explore meaning-making in newspapers, parliamentary debates and policy papers.

Populism's heterogeneous reference points emerges as a crucial dimension in Tuula Vaarakallio's article. In the Finnish national daily the range of references to populism followed usual discussions in the field of populism research (also Vaarakallio & Palonen 2017). Crucially, it was often used with positive and empowering connotations while this changed after the general elections in 2011 that brought a landslide of votes to the Finns Party.

One of the phenomena that is related to the emergence of populism is hate speech. In her article Maria Ruotsalainen explores how this takes place in practice in the Finnish Parliament where hate speech is debated and contested. The duality often present in populist rhetoric and constitution of subjectivity is also present in the parliamentary debate. Accusations of hate speech lead to self-victimization by those who are associated with hate speech themselves. Rhetorical moves of generating two extremes from one is a chosen strategy by the populist party.

In the final chapter of the volume, populism is precisely related to dichotomous speech and the constitution of 'us' in this contesting manner. However, now we make a leap from the traditional field of politics to the field of policy and cultural identities, which can be equally political and significant for meaning making. Exploring the case of Guggenheim Museum plans in Helsinki, Emilia Palonen's article shows how 'us' and 'them' are constituted through their mutual opposition and by claiming certain key elements. The dualism is there from the start. Even if this piece departs from the analysis of the Finns Party in this volume, rest assured, also the long-term leader of the Finns Party Timo Soini is featured in this piece.

Definitional struggle in overflow of empiria

Floating character is typical of populism. It may be a frustrating dimension for those engaged with research and commentary: how convenient it would be if we could indeed agreed on a single definition as Mudde (2007) has proposed – or perhaps a normative stand as Müller (2016) has argued! But it is typical of populism to contest, resist and rearticulate these definitions. Dichotomies where meanings are floating are typical of populism. Hence, the 'us' or the 'self' or the 'populist' is often left slightly ambiguous. The play of definitions is part and parcel of meaning-making, and populist praxis and research of populism both produce definitions. This is the logic of populism in Ernesto Laclau's (2005) seminal work. While some researchers following his work fix the reference point of 'people' at the heart of populism, his work has been extended from the angle of the study of rhetoric to cover the ways in which the style of meaning-making is at the core.

Looking from an interdisciplinary perspective we recognise how populism gets entangled with religion (Nieminen's chapter) and gender dimensions (Saresma's and Bellè & Poggio's chapter). While contesting and generating dichotomies, populist rhetoric and its ideological aspects generate a norm. Populism is seen as emerg-

ing from new forms of representation: the demand of who are being represented and who impede the possibility to be represented becomes the dominant frontier of antagonism. These may well get entangled with nationalism, gender – or even cultural policy!

The gendered dimensions of populist rhetoric, as said, reveal something more about the ways in which populist movements make meanings. Sometimes this is very much essentialising particular dichotomies and establishing lines of antagonism. Often, however, the multiple dimensions in which populist movement's rhetoric is drawn, confuse this clear picture. The set of contradictory elements assigned to or claimed by the movement empty it from particular meanings. The floating signifiers, typical in making clear political difference in Laclau's theory become empty signifiers. These, following Laclau are crucial in bringing unity to the movement.

In a similar fashion, in this book it has been the exploration of the concept of populism (and its limits) in different fields that has brought together these studies. The role of rhetoric and the making of meaning, the constitution of an 'us' and the character of populist movements play important roles in understanding of the concept and deciding upon what to study. New fields of inquiry open from attention to populism and the arts and culture. It is one of the dimensions that we hope to study in more depth in the future. Reflecting on this 'trendy' topic of populism(s) we may also address crucial dimensions of articulation of us and them, democracy and its limits, as well as the transnational flow of ideas.

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II CONCEPTUALISING POPULISMS IN NATIONAL CONTEXTS

POPULISM IN THE NORDIC COUNTRIES 1965–2015: THE SWEDISH CASE AS AN IDEAL TYPE OR COMPARATIVE YARDSTICK FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF POPULISM

Björn Fryklund

ABSTRACT

The objective of this article is to improve our understanding of the development of populism within the Nordic countries as part of the European context. The point of departure is a Nordic comparative perspective combined with a retrospective analysis of the Nordic populist parties of yesterday and today. The history of Nordic populism can be described as a changing process where different types of populism have been present at different periods of time. In the early 1970s the focus was on taxation issues in combination with populist appeals of political discontent. From the beginning of the 1980s up till today, populist appeals have evolved around aspects connected to concerns about immigration and nationalism. Popular dissatisfaction can also vary in content over time and space, regardless of whether it is based on 'too high taxes and increasing bureaucracy and the public sector' (= the tax issue) or 'too high refugee and asylum immigration' (= refugee- and immigration issues) based on nationalism, although a common denominator is that popular discontent is channelled via a single dominating (hegemonic) political issue (= organising principle) that whips up criticism in other political and social areas. The aim of this article is therefore to interpret the development of populism in the Nordic countries. Could we, through a historical reconstruction of the development of Nordic populism during the past 50 years, make a contribution to the understanding of the populist parties and their presence within a contemporary Nordic and European context? Here the development in Sweden is of particular interest, especially as a success-

ful populist party appeared on the Swedish political scene as late as at the beginning of the 21st century. Understanding the development in Sweden could therefore be a key to identifying central aspects that either promote or block populism. This could, in turn, be essential for a more general understanding of populism as a political phenomenon in the political discourse of today.

The populist parties in the Nordic context

> Denmark belongs to the Danes. - - A multiethnic Denmark would mean the breaking down of our stable homogeneous society by anti-development and reactionary cultures. (Danish People's Party Work Programme 2007).
>
> In our Sweden, Sweden is allowed to be just Sweden, and its inhabitants are allowed to be just Swedes. In our Sweden, the Swedish people have the power themselves, in the Swedish elections, to shape their common future. - - (The Sweden Democrats Party Programme 2010).

The above quotations come from the Danish People's Party (Dansk Folkeparti, DF) Work Programme respectively from the Sweden Democrats´ (Sverigedemokraterna, SD) Party Programme but could equally be quotations from the programmes for the other populist parties in the Nordic countries. The only difference is that we change Denmark and Danes, Sweden and Swedes to Finland and Finns or to Norway and Norwegians. The group of populist parties in the Nordic countries as part of the European context has secured a greater footing in recent decades and become a permanent feature on the political stage. It is clear that parties with a right-wing populist profile have gained strength in Europe since the end of the 1990s. Indeed, the years 1999–2000 can be regarded as a turning point in Europe with regard to the participation of these parties in the political arena. During these years the Front National (FN) enjoyed considerable success in France and their leader Jean-Marie Le Pen challenged Chirac in the presidential election. In the same period, Jurgen Haider´s FPÖ (Freedom Party of Austria) made sig-

nificant gains in Austria to the extent that the party became influential in the government. In Denmark, the Danish People's Party also gained influence – so much so that the party played a crucial political role in the Danish Parliament. Many right-wing populist parties also made significant headway in the European parliamentary elections held in 1999.

Since then, over a period of 15 years, these parties have increased their representation in the European Parliament, despite the general trend of parties losing seats due to EU expansion. The results from the 2014 election to the Parliament of the European Union point in this same direction. The electoral successes for the Right-Wing Populist Parties in (but not in all) several European countries really challenge Europe´s democratic development for the coming years. In France Marine Le Pen´s National Front became the largest party (25 %) together with UKIP ('United Kingdom Independence Party') in Great Britain (28 %) and the Danish People´s Party in Denmark (27 %). In Finland and Hungary the Finns Party ('Perussuomalaiset', PS or 'Sannfinländarna') with 13 percent and the party Jobbik with 15 percent became among the largest parties. These are some of the most exceptional/sensational results from the European parliamentary elections 2014.

In the Nordic context, the Progress Party has been part of the Norwegian government for some years (since 2013), with its leader Siv Jensen as Minister of Finance. In Sweden the opinion poll successes of 2015 continue for SD around 18–20 percent and in some latest opinion polls even rose above 20 percent.

In Denmark the Danish People´s party was founded 1995 as heir to the Progress Party after the split of the Progress Party. Already in the general election of 1998 the Danish People´s Party got their first representation in the Parliament with 7.4 percent of the votes and 13 seats but its breakthrough came 2001 with the election results of 12 percent and 22 seats. Since 2005 the Danish People's Party has strengthened its position and increased its electoral support. In the following elections 2007 and 2011 the party received 13.8 and 12.3 percent of the votes with 25 and 22 seats respectively. In the par-

liamentary election of 2015 the Danish People´s Party became the second largest party with 21.1 percent and 37 seats and a big winner of the election. The Social Democrats became the largest party, with 26.3 percent, while the conservative-liberal Party, Venstre, was reduced to third place with 19.5 percent. The Party Venstre was the biggest loser with a reduction of 7.2 percent since the last election in 2011. Despite this election result the conservative-liberal Party held the prime minister post and lead a new conservative government with foremost the support of the Danish People's Party as a collaborative partner in the parliament but outside government.

The Progress Party ('Fremskrittspartiet', Frp) has done the same in Norway. In the election of 2009 the party became the second largest party with almost a quarter of the votes. After the latest election 2014 the Progress party in Norway constitutes the Government together with the Conservatives. Siv Jensen, the party leader, also became and still is Minister of Finance. In Finland, the party known as the Finns Party, successor to the Finnish Rural Party formed 1995 (The Rural Party ceased to exist the same year.), developed and greatly increased its electoral support in the municipal respective European elections of 2008 and 2009. In the general election in 2007 the Finns Party gained 4.1 percent of the votes and 5 seats in parliament. In the general election 2011, the party obtained 19.1 percent of the votes and 39 seats. In the Finnish general election in the spring of 2015 the Finns Party became the next largest party after the Centre Party (in terms of seats but not in actual numbers) and received 17.7 percent of the votes and 38 seats. The party is now in the Government together with the Centre Party and Conservative Coalition Party ('Konservativa Samlingspartiet') forming a government alliance. The Finns Party have been allocated four important ministerial positions: Minister for Foreign Affairs, Minister for Defence, Minister for Justice and Minister for Social Security and Health. This means that in 2015/2016 populist parties in three out of four Nordic countries attract about twenty percent of all voters.

The exception from this development is Sweden and the Sweden Democrats ('Sverigedemokraterna', SD) who obtained about 13 percent in last election 2014 but the latest opinion polls in average point in the same direction as in the other Nordic countries - the party has during 2016 increased to 18-20 percent. These are significant figures and represent big changes in support for these parties over time in all Nordic countries. The challenge is to decide how to analyse and understand these parties. In Sweden the Sweden Democrats attracted almost 3 percent of the vote in the 2006 parliamentary election and at the same time acquired a large number of seats in the municipal elections, especially in the southern part of Sweden. The election result by 3 percent is not sufficient for representation in the Swedish Parliament. The electoral threshold for representation in parliament is 4 percent. In the 2010 election the Sweden Democrats obtained national representation in the Swedish Parliament for the first time, with 20 seats and 5.7 percent of the votes. In the 2014 election the Sweden Democrats can be said to have made a leap when the party more than doubled their percentage of the votes (12.9) and their number of seats (49).

Elec./ Country	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	See also 2014	2015
Sweden		1.4 (-)				2.9 (-)				5.7 (20)				12.9 (49)	
Norway	14.6 (26)				22.1 (38)				22.9 (41)				16.3 (29)		
Denmark	12.0 (22)				13.3 (24)		13.8 (25)				12.3 (22)				21.1 (37)
Finland			1.6 (3)				4.1 (5)				19.1 (39)				17.7 (38)

Table 1: General election results (percent and mandates/seats) for right-wing populist parties in the Nordic countries during the 21st century.

The history of Nordic populism – a brief overview

The history of Nordic populism can be described as a wave-like process – a process that moves from political dissatisfaction based on populist appeals related to the tax issue during the 1970s to those concerning refugee and immigrant issues in the 1980s, the 1990s and the early part of the 21st century. Although in the Nordic countries the populist parties – Mogens Glistrup's Fremskridtsparti (The Progress Party) in Denmark, Anders Lange's party for Strong Reduction in Taxes, Fees and Public Intervention and the successor (from 1978) Carl I. Hagen´s Fremskrittsparti (The Progress Party) in Norway and Veikko Vennamo's Landsbygdsparti (The Rural Party) in Finland – found themselves close to extinction in the latter part of the 1970s, they experienced a second wave of popularity in the 1980s. A third wave of popularity then helped to keep these parties buoyant during the late 1990s and into the 21st century.

In Denmark, Pia Kjærsgaard's Dansk Folkeparti (Danish People's Party) took over from the Progress Party 1995 after a split in the party and had a significant electoral breakthrough (13.3 %) in the 2001 election after receiving a representation of 7.4 percent in their first parliamentary election 1998. The party obtained victories partly through its marked balance-of-power role in the parliament and partly through being a driving, supportive partner for both the previous and present liberal-conservative government. In 2012 Pia Kjaersgaard retreated as party leader after a period of 17 years and was replaced by a new younger leader Kristian Thulesen Dahl. In the general election 2015 he led the party to its best ever electoral results with 21.1 percent of the votes. At the same time the party became the second largest party and the new Danish minority government consisting of only the liberal-conservative party Venstre is totally dependent on support from the Danish People´s Party.

In Norway Carl I. Hagen became the new party leader in 1978, four years after Anders Lange passed away. Under Hagen´s leadership the party changed its name to Progress Party. In his last and best elections, in 2005, the party obtained 22.1 percent of the votes

and 41 seats. He led the party until 2006. Carl I. Hagen's Progress Party, under his successor Siv Jensen, continued to harvest political successes and became in the general election 2009 Norway´s second largest party, with a percentage of 22.9 of the votes and with 41 seats in the Norwegian Parliament. In the next general elections of 2013 the Progress Party decreased to 16.3 percent and 29 seats but as a result of the elections, the party took for the first time a place in a coalition government together with the Conservative party (Höyre).

In Finland the Rural Party played out its political role 1995 and in reality ceased to exist. The Rural Party was replaced by a similar party known as the True Finns the same year. From 1997 the True Finns (later Finns Party) is led by the charismatic leader Timo Soini. In his first 2003 parliamentary election as leader the party obtained only 1.6 percent and 3 seats. In the municipal elections held in November 2008, support for the party increased to 5.4 percent of the votes, which was a marked increase in relation to the municipal election results of 2004. As previously indicated, in the parliamentary elections of 2007 and 2011, the Finns Party rose sharply from 4.1 percent of the votes and 5 seats 2007 to 19.1 percent and 39 seats 2011. In the general election 2015 the Finns Party obtained 17.7 percent of the votes (a small decrease by 1.4 percent) and 38 seats. As a result of the election the party became part of the coalition government together with the Centre Party and the Conservative Party. The party was given four ministerial posts in the government.

The occurrence of right-wing populism has not been as obvious in Sweden as it has in other parts of Europe – apart from the brief appearance of New Democracy (ND) on the Swedish political scene at the beginning of the 1990s. New Democracy was shortly represented in the Swedish Parliament during the period 1991–1994. In a popular protest election in Sweden 1991 the new party New Democracy (ND) gained representation in the Swedish Parliament by winning 6.7 per of the votes and 25 seats. However, in contrast to its Nordic counterparts, ND did not manage to keep its par-

liamentary representation. In connection with the election in 1994 ND disappeared from the political scene completely and ceased to exist. The main reason for this was that one of the two leaders of the party (The party had double leadership and they were jokingly called the Count and the Valet in the general public) and the most dominant, ‘‘he Count’ Ian Wachtmeister, decided that it was time to bring the political project of ND, as he called it, to an end. The other leader, ‘the Valet’ Bert Karlsson, wanted to continue with ND, but acquiesced when Ian Wachtmeister called a halt to the project.

Since the disappearance of ND in 1994, SD has been the only active right-wing populist party in Sweden. In actual fact, it was only at the beginning of the 21st century that the established parties in Sweden again began to experience competition from a right-wing populist party, the Sweden Democrats (SD). The party is from 2005 and still led by the young leader Jimmy Åkesson.

As this description indicates, populist parties have been part of the Nordic political scene for several decades and constitute a real challenge to the other parties. A better understanding of how these parties and their successors have developed and changed over time, in combination with factors that benefit or obstruct populism, also leads to new opportunities to address and deal with the challenge that populist parties can be said to represent (Kiiskinen, Saveljeff & Fryklund 2007).

Attempting to capture the changes in Nordic populism over time and space is best done through a comparative perspective. Including the Swedish societal context in this overarching Nordic framework is also important, since here the development of populism appears to differ from that of the other Nordic countries. In this sense Sweden can be regarded as ‘a straggler’. How is it, for example, that only now, at the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century and after the developments that have taken place in many other European and Nordic countries, do we also begin to see a marked populist party on the increase in the Swedish context? Analysing this development could reveal why Sweden increasingly resembles other Nordic countries and large parts of Europe, and be an impor-

tant key to the understanding of which political, social and economic factors counteract or support populism. An overall perspective of the political, social and economic changes that have taken place in the Nordic countries over a fifty year time-span is necessary if we are to fully understand the Nordic development of populist parties. In an article published 2014 in the journal Scandinavian Political Studies the political scientists Jungar and Jupskås put the overall question 'Populist Radical Parties in the Nordic Region: A New and Distinct Party Family?' This question is also the title of the article. The answer of their question is approximately as follows. 'Yes it is highly relevant to talk of a new and distinct party family in the Nordic countries. These parties are also part of the broader populist radical right parties in Western Europe. They embrace an authoritarian position in sociocultural policy and a fairly centrist position in socioeconomic policy. Their party names indicate a nationalist position and they are transnationally connected to each other as well as to some of the other 'usual aspects' within the European populist radical right party family.' (Jungar & Jupskås 2014.)

This article, a very interesting and clarifying one, is one of very few overall analyses of Nordic populism. I agree with their answer (a new and distinct party family with a nationalist position) but I want to add that it is important to historically follow and compare these parties political converging over time and space. How crucial are the different historical backgrounds/legacies for the process of converging? Is this process stable or could it, given other circumstances, start diverging (again)? I put this critical research question because for some researchers populism 'is seen as a chameleon that assumes the colours and hues of its surroundings' or with the same orientation populism 'is a thin ideology which can be filled with different content'. Therefore it is also central to see how these parties change in relation to the economic, political and social development in the different Nordic countries. Another interesting but shorter article about the populist parties in the different Nordic countries looks more closely at these parties' decisive role for the reproduction of national identities in the Nordic countries that are

less affected by the economic crises in Europe (Hellström 2015). See also more developed arguments from the same author in the newly published book 'Trust Us: Reproducing the Nation and the Scandinavian Nationalist Populist Parties' (Hellström 2016).

The different expressions of populism – a comparative analysis of the Nordic countries

The expressions of populism vary and change with the national and social context. Even though this may seem obvious, it is unfortunately often forgotten in analyses and social debates. Economic, political and social change processes can be broken down into a number of variables which I regard as central to the analysis of populist parties, namely class, popularness or popularism, political culture and nationalism.

The concept of class is basically determined by occupation (Esping-Andersen 1993; Wright 1997; Goldthorpe 2007). Populist parties have a tendency to describe themselves as not belonging to as representing 'ordinary people' and their interests in the nation. These parties also direct strong criticism towards other parties that they consider to preserve and contribute to a society based on class affinity and where the special interests of different classes are prioritised at the expense of 'ordinary people's' common interests. Populism is given an opportunity to develop in those contexts if some of the population feel ignored by the political elite and experience that their interests are not attended to. Populist parties have a capacity to encapsulate these tendencies and articulate populist appeals around experienced class differences. The significance of the concept of class thus becomes an important variable to relate to (Fryklund & Peterson 1981; Kiiskinen, Saveljeff & Fryklund 2007).

The concept of popularism or popularness, consisting of popular traditions, popular appeals and dimensions, can be regarded as part of an ongoing struggle between the people and the powers that be, regardless of what form the latter takes; a struggle that has man-

ifested itself in every nation's history. It is a common heritage that survives the different social systems and remains in the political and ideological domains as complete traditions or as parts of them, or as experiences in institutional or intellectual forms. Traditions of a political, ideological and cultural nature, as well as values, ideas and actions, are woven into the antagonisms between the people and those in power. Traditions like this have been developed around themes of nation, ethnicity, culture, religion, politics, democracy, work, family, ethics and social solidarity. Popularism and popular appeals have been and still are important components in the political development of European countries. Popularism thus constitutes another central variable in studies of populism, because populism is about popular appeals (ordinary people vs. the elite) that are regarded as deeply rooted in every nation. When the popular appeals of the established parties vacillate, populist appeals are given an opportunity to compete in the struggle to attract voters (Fryklund & Peterson 1981; Kiiskinen, Saveljeff & Fryklund 2007).

When it comes to the third central variable in the analysis, political culture, this can be exemplified by the different constructions and grounds for the social welfare state in the Nordic and other European countries (Bennich-Björkman & Blomqvist 2008). Here, my main thesis is that a country's political culture is made up of ordinary people's concrete expressions in the political arena. In my view, the form that political culture takes in a nation has its origins in the definition of the concept of popularness. Different and selective interpretations of the popularness theme give rise to a limited number of meaningful and consistent political cultures with a specific content. Political culture is the cornerstone on which politics rests and from which it is played out, and gives meaning to politics through justifiable material, cultural, social and political institutions. It is not enough to simply analyse political, social and economic structures in order to understand how a political system is supported or dissolved. That would be to disregard the very foundations on which the system, the national political culture and its traditions rest. How people understand and judge politics is important

for the system's legitimacy and serviceability (Edgerton, Fryklund & Peterson 1994). Even if similarities exist in the Nordic countries with regard to the democratic and social welfare model, there are also important differences between them. These are central factors to keep in mind.

In simple terms one can talk about a petit bourgeois-popular liberal Denmark, a popular-national Norway, a Swedish 'People's Home' (welfare state) and a strongly class-polarised Finland. These differences are matched by disparities in the political system, which also affect the articulation of popular appeals and the populism that results. When talking about a social welfare model, Sweden tends to stand out as an ideal type in the Nordic context. In other Nordic countries the development of the political system has characteristic features, e.g. (petit-)popular-liberal Denmark with its personality votes, collaboration and diffusion of class conflicts, Norway with its emphasis on decentralisation and district politics as well as a mistrust of central power and central control, and Finland, which due to its special history did not acquire any comparable political system until after World War II. From an overall European perspective the Swedish case specifically stands out as an ideal typical model for the general democratic and social welfare model/state, although more generally we can extend the Swedish model to a Scandinavian or Nordic one. It depends on what we compare. The differences outlined above are key factors to consider in a comparison of populism between the Nordic countries.

These differences correspond to differences in the political system, which also affects the articulation of popular appeals and with populism as a possible result. When we talk about Swedish social development as an ideal typical case for the formation of the modern welfare state, this mainly refers to an effective and smooth economic growth and its structural effects on social development. What is important here is a long standing social democratic governance and a tradition of agreements between the parties in the employment market (without state interference) – what is usually called the Swedish labour market model. Populist parties have a tendency to

take over parts of the popular political culture and, in a struggle for votes, use these as tools to undermine the political establishment. Analysing the national political cultures in the European countries with a focus on origin and (new) reproduction over time is therefore important in order to explain and understand the different expressions of populism.

Nationalism can be politically or ethnically oriented (Kohn 1944; Smith 1986). When it comes to (a lack of) democracy, there is an inbuilt ethnic national dimension in the populist appeal that concerns the struggle between the people and the powers that be (whoever the latter happens to be) and in that concerning how social welfare should be apportioned. In the former case, people with a different ethnic background to that of the national majority population are not included in the popular democracy, and in the latter case social welfare is only regarded as being available to the majority population (ethno-national welfare chauvinism). In the analysis of populist parties, a nationalism based on ethnicity is central, because an experience-based Danishness, Frenchness, Italianness, Greekness, Swedishness, Dutchness, Norwegianness, or Finnishness and so on constitutes the grounds on which the refugee and immigrant question is used as the organised principle for these parties' social criticism in other political issues. A suspicion or mistrust of foreigners, xenophobia and racism are deeply rooted in a nationalism that is formed on ethno cultural grounds and can differ between the European countries and how they have been articulated in time and space. How nationalism, on the basis of ethnic and/or political preferences, is used in populist appeals in the different countries is therefore important to analyse in order to explain and understand the different specific forms of populism. To clarify the importance of this; Swedish nationalism and national identity have not historically during the twentieth century been based on ethnicity but on social and democratic community (the Swedish 'People´s Home'). 'You don´t even need to be a Swedish citizen to be included in the national community' (Gur 2016). That does not mean that ethnic

nationalism has not been there but it has been historically marginalized in Sweden.

The choice of 1965 as a start date for the analysis of European populism refers to the time when the first indication of populist parties in the European countries (Le Pen's Front National in France and Veikko Vennamo's Finnish Rural Party in Finland) can be observed. The current decade (2010–) is of special interest, because it is during this period that we have been able to follow and analyse national election proceedings in all four Nordic countries at a time when we see the revival of strong nationalist xenophobic appeals in several European countries.

The populist challenge in the crisis of the European political system

In recent decades political parties with a clear populist profile have become much more successful in Europe compared with previous decades. The specific party family that is categorised as a right-wing populist one is an interesting study object. Despite being positive to democracy as a basic idea and form of government, and in contrast to the extreme right, it challenges certain aspects of today's liberal democracy. In my analysis it is essential to distinguish right-wing populist parties from extreme right-wing parties including fascist parties (see also Mudde 2010, 2014), especially when analysing the relation between the appearance of these parties on the political scene and the economic and social crisis in Europe. Besides this relation there are also distinct differences between these two types of parties in their relation to parliamentary and representative democracy. Mudde describes the populist radical right party as a pathological normal mainstream party. He changes the order of the dominant perception among researchers in politics that the populist radical right should be seen as normal pathology like fascism and right-wing extremism. He means that the normal pathology thesis does not hold up under empirical scrutiny. The key fea-

tures of the radical right ideology – nativism, authoritarianism and populism – are not unrelated to mainstream ideologies and mass attitudes. In fact they are best seen as a radicalisation of mainstream values and attitudes. Hence the populist radical right should be considered a pathological normalcy, not as a normal pathology (Mudde 2010).

The extreme right-wing parties have a tendency to become stronger/increase in size in periods of deep economic crisis, while populist parties mostly become stronger and larger in periods when the economy and the social welfare system is in relatively good shape, or at least not in bad shape. This, at any rate, is my hypothesis, which has gained empirical support in different countries in Europe over time (see also Mudde 2014 and Goodwin 2014, both of whom have drawn similar conclusions). In my mind it is much more relevant to relate the growth and success of the populist parties to periods of deep political cultural crises compared with relating it to economic and social crisis. Throughout Europe as a whole, parties that can be categorised as right-wing populist have won electoral support through a political agenda that questions and strongly criticises the development of multicultural societies and want to exclude people with foreign background from the welfare system and political democracy, politically prioritises socially conservative issues on national/nationalistic basis and claims to speak for 'ordinary people' against the political establishment or elite. The success of right-wing populist parties in Europe can be seen as a sign that voters criticise a social development in which growing tendencies towards globalisation, and more specifically international migration, change the way in which society has been built and formed historically. Some voters (or rather certain groups of voters) in Sweden, as in other countries in Europe, feel that the established parties have not chosen to or been able to deal with the criticism that has followed such extensive changes in society and that the political establishment instead 'is out of step with voters' on such issues. In this context it is highly relevant to talk about the losers in globalisation more generally and international migration

more specifically. The fact is that people's dissatisfaction with the political agendas promoted by the established parties is reflected in the size of the electoral support for right-wing populist parties in national elections.

The Swedish Case as a double anomaly

This article discusses the kind of populist parties that are active in the Nordic countries as part of Europe, with a special focus on the Swedish case as a double anomaly, and seeks to show the importance of continuous research connected to the continued development of these parties. At best, the Swedish case could serve as something of an ideal type or comparative yardstick for other countries, partly due to the long absence of successful Swedish right-wing populism and partly due to how this has been handled in the Swedish political system since its formation. The Swedish exception can thus be compared with successful populism over a fifty-year period in Europe, where adaptation to this has come a long way. At the same time, the article discusses and provisionally answers the important and difficult question of how parties that appear to challenge specific aspects of liberal democracy are treated in the political arena.

My prognosis is that we will very shortly be seeing a changed political landscape in Sweden, with SD playing a more central role in how majorities are formed in the Swedish political system, similar to that of the Danish People's Party, the Finns Party and Norway's Progress Party in our neighbouring Nordic countries. At the end of 2015 and the beginning of 2016 the discussion on how majorities are formed in the Swedish political system intensified significantly from both the largest party in the minority Government (the present Government is a coalition with the Greens), the Social democrats, and the largest party in the political opposition, the Liberal-Conservative party ('the Moderates'). The whole discussion is primarily about how to form a functioning parliamentary majori-

ty in relation to the Sweden Democrats, who are shaping their own third 'block' in Swedish politics. At the same time as these two largest and dominating parties confront each other about how to form a functioning majority they have both in a very short period (in a few months only) totally changed their migration policy from an open and generous one to a very closed and restrictive one and rapidly moved towards the Sweden Democrats´ position in migration policy. Yet paradoxically they do not want to have anything to do with the Sweden Democrats. Also in this respect it is reasonable to regard the political development in Sweden as lagging behind. It also shows the need for future research on what affects the content of the strategic attacks that the established parties make use of in order to deal with parties regarded as the ugly ducklings of politics (Hellström 2010).

Why has it taken so long for an explicitly populist party to gain a foothold in Sweden? So far research has mainly focused on a number of explanatory factors. The strong historical position of the Social Democrats has led to a unique political and ideological hegemony in Sweden in the form of a far-reaching consensus on Sweden democracy and the social welfare model. The lack of any decisive political and ideological social issue to unite or divide the population has also played a role. The Swedish economy has also been in good shape (and still is) and the social welfare system worked well up until the beginning of the 1990s. These relations seem to have made Swedish society and its political culture almost immune to populism at a time when it was taking shape in the neighbouring Nordic countries and in a number of other countries in Europe (Taggart 1996; Kitschelt 1997; Rydgren 2002, 2006; Bennich-Björkman & Blomqvist 2008).

This specific Swedish immunity ceases when political and social situations change, which in turn can open the doors to a successful populism. In the neighbouring countries of Denmark and Norway, the referendums relating to membership of the European Community (now the European Union) held at the beginning of the 1970s became a watershed that polarised the political system,

the political parties and electoral opinion for a long time. In Sweden, people had to wait until 1994 to vote on membership of the EU, which was then followed by a referendum in 2003 on participation in the EU's monetary union (the euro). The 2003 referendum in Sweden can have had a similar long-lasting effect on politics and public opinion as it had in Norway and Denmark. Here it would be interesting and relevant to make a comparison with the political situation in Finland, where the new populist Finns Party, successors to the old Finnish Rural Party, used opposition/resistance to the EU as a successful strategy. The party was among those in the frontline to oppose financial support for the southern European countries affected by the economic crisis. The party was especially against financial support for Greece.

Research also shows that xenophobic tendencies, or an emphasis on immigration issues, cannot fully explain the growth of populist parties or sympathy for them. If such issues are to influence how citizens choose to vote, then they must be politicised and linked to political discontent in other social areas, which in turn means that the immigrant- and refugee issue will also become the organising principle for political discontent in other social areas, such as law and order, criminality, family politics, social welfare costs and attitudes towards the European Union (EU).

During the 2014 election campaign in Sweden the immigration issue was increasingly politicised as the election date approached. We can also observe a deeper politicisation of the refugee and immigrant issue due to a relatively large and accelerated increase in immigration in Sweden in a very short space of time. The migration and refugee crisis in Europe primarily in the Autumn of 2015 and still in the Spring of 2016 led to an almost closed border in Southern Sweden with ID controls on the bridge between Denmark and Sweden. Identity control of asylum seekers to Sweden started in January 2016 after a sudden and unexpected Government decision in December 2015 and is still ongoing. This powerful action led directly to consequences for the other Nordic countries´ migra-

tion policy. First it strongly affected Denmark and then Norway and Finland.

Against this background, it is likely that the politicisation of the refugee and immigration issue will continue and presumably intensify. Based on the results of the Swedish parliamentary elections in 2010 and 2014 – first in 2010 when SD won parliamentary representation for the first time and then in 2014 when SD strengthened its position even further in Swedish society – it is clear that the existence of right-wing populist parties represented at the national level has now also become a very tangible part of the Swedish political context. In the aftermath of the 2010 election result, much of the debate focused on how the presence of SD in the Swedish Parliament ought to be dealt with and what kind of influence the party could expect in Swedish politics in relation to its electoral support. Following the election in 2014, and the success of this for SD, we can see that this debate has come back like a boomerang with even greater force and significance. I have called this the second exception/anomaly in the Swedish case, namely that all the established parties in Sweden do not accept SD as a normal party. SD is seen by the established parties as the ugly duckling of politics. It adopts a pariah position in the Swedish political system. This approach from the established parties is mainly based on a hegemonic antiracist norm in Swedish society and has probably reached the beginning of the end in the sense that the first dissenting voices in the consensus choir are heard more and more in the public debate.

Conclusions

It is thus possible to draw the conclusion that in the present Swedish political climate there is an urgent need for research related to the appearance of right-wing populist parties in the democratic political system and its institutions. The same applies to the political situation in the other Nordic countries and presumably also to the situation in many other European countries. It also shows the need

for future research on what influences the content of the strategic approaches that are used by the established parties to deal with parties perceived as the ugly ducklings of politics.

According to my analysis, right-wing populism is the gateway or the key to being able to specifically understand and explain the successive growth and success of SD in recent years in the Swedish political system. The same goes for understand and explain the successes of these parties in the other Nordic countries. The political support for a racist and/or xenophobic party in the Swedish (or Nordic) political system is negligible and cannot even be measured in whole percentage rates. SD's development can only really be explained and understood on the basis of its right-wing populist appeal for and mobilisation of a political dissatisfaction related to the issue of migration. The migration issue is both about the criticism of the growing asylum and refugee immigration to Sweden and its consequences for the welfare state and integration into Swedish society and about the increased presence of EU migrants in more and more Swedish municipalities in the last years and how this is dealt with. As far as Sweden is concerned, it is only recently that a greater politicisation of the migration issue in both these respects has occurred and has favoured SD. According to opinion polls on matters concerning migration there is a deep gap between voters and elected representatives, and it is precisely in this representation crisis that the Sweden Democrats mobilise an even broader electoral support. In this way, what I have called the democratic dilemma (a parliamentary party with popular electoral support but with undemocratic values) changes to a more overarching strategic dilemma about how the established parties should relate to SD's right-wing populism.

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POPULISM ON STEROIDS: ERDOĞANISTS AND THEIR ENEMIES IN TURKEY

Halil Gürhanlı

ABSTRACT

Perhaps the clearest indicator of one's partiality towards a Laclauian approach to populism is the belief that it is a constitutive dimension of politics without which the latter ceases to exist. The presence of a frontier between the 'people' and its 'other' is the precondition of politics. But what if this frontier itself becomes the sole point around which those identities are articulated? Is it still possible to speak of politics when there is 'too much' populism? The article answers this question through an analysis of the extreme polarization in today's Turkey over the hegemonic figure of the President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Praises for Erdoğan government as a democratic model for the Muslim world withered away once the regime had decisively turned towards authoritarianism and begun consolidating Erdoğan's personal control over state and society. A personality cult, named Erdoğanism here, has gradually materialised around his figure, overtaking all previous forms of political identity among his supporters and becoming one with 'the people'. Those who display even a minimal reluctance to submit themselves completely to his will are excommunicated as 'enemies' of the people. Most interestingly, such an extremely polarizing discourse appears to have turned into a self-fulfilling prophecy, for it has been reciprocated by virtually all opposition actors in the form of Anti-Erdoğanism. The very survival of opposition in Turkey seems to have been locked into an anti-Erdoğanist corner, risking to run the whole political field into a zero-sum game between two polar opposites, a case of pure populism.

Introduction

It is the tragic tale of a Turkish couple that prompted the writing of this article. The Dinçs had been married for almost three years when in early 2016 the husband took his wife to criminal court for allegedly insulting the Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Mr. Dinç claimed his wife would 'swear and curse whenever Erdoğan appeared on television' and was unyielding in the face of his warnings that 'our President is a good man and has done well for our country.' On one such night, Mr. Dinç explains, he warned that he would record her statements and when his wife dared him to go ahead, he finally did it and used the recording as evidence at court. He told reporters: 'I am sad to end my marriage but I would do the same even if it were my father who was offending Erdoğan' (Tremblay 2016).

This incident may look mundane to seasoned observers of Turkish politics. After all it is just one of about two thousand cases opened against individuals who are accused of insulting Erdoğan in the past two years, including high-school students, housewives, academics and journalists (O'Grady 2016). The tale of Dinç couple, nevertheless, is of special interest because it uniquely encapsulates just how deeply polarizing a figure Erdoğan has become in Turkey today, penetrating all the way down to the nuclear family and shattering even the most intimate relationships. It seems to suggest that there is no bond strong enough to overcome the love or hatred one feels towards him. Dinç couple could not help but kept quarrelling for years over their irreconcilable feelings for the President, because the way they felt about him overshadowed all other aspects of their relationship and determined who they were to one another: an Erdoğanist and an anti-Erdoğanist.

A recent survey by the German Marshall Fund titled 'Dimensions of Polarization in Turkey' demonstrates that far from being an odd couple, the Dinçs in fact constitute the norm. In the course of 14 years of uninterrupted single-party rule of Erdoğan's Justice and Development Party (AKP), politics has turned into an 'apocalyp-

tic existential struggle': 83 percent of the people do not want their daughter to marry someone voting for the "other" party; 79 percent reject the idea of doing business with them; 76 percent would not have each other as neighbours; and 74 percent would not even allow their children playing with those of others (Nasi 2016).

Families, friends, colleagues and all appear to be powerless in the face of political polarisation. How is this even possible? This article aims to answer this with a single term: pure populism (Laclau 2005, 45–46). Relying on the body of work of Ernesto Laclau, it first lays out a clear definition of populism as a political logic of articulation, in which a logic of equivalence prevails that of difference and society is depicted as divided between two antagonistic camps: the 'people' and its 'other' (Laclau 1990, 2005, 2007; Laclau & Mouffe 2001). This is a definition shared by many unorthodox scholars of populism who have the conviction that mainstream approaches, through their tendency to vilify it as an existential threat against democracy, inadvertently justify the increasingly undemocratic functioning of contemporary political regimes. They welcome Laclau's favourable take on populism as a breath of fresh air in an otherwise 'anti-populist' zeitgeist, a 'post-democratic' status quo where the common goal seems to be ruling without the people (Stavrakakis 2014; Crouch 2004).

But even these 'sympathetic' figures voice criticism over Laclau's assertion that populism, insofar as it postulates a 'radical alternative' to the status quo through the construction of the excluded 'people', is synonymous with politics per se (Laclau 2005, 47; 2007, 225). Benjamin Arditi, for instance, draws attention to non-radical instances of populism where the exclusionary logic is reproduced rather than contested and to the 'dark possibilities' that come along with it, such as a cult of personality and criminalization of opposition (2007, 58, 82). He even hints at a dangerous undercurrent in Laclauian theory that leaves the door open for an indispensable presence of the leader as the culmination of the ''people' (Arditi 2010). Similarly, Nadia Urbinati points out that the sine qua non of populism, unification of many under the single banner

of the 'people' and against an 'other', tends to go towards 'Caesarism' and 'polarization' (2013, 147). Like Arditi, she remains unconvinced by Laclau's attempts at downplaying the personalization as a convenient but not indispensable tool populism occasionally employs in order to make constitutive antagonisms more pronounced (ibid. 148–9).

This article concurs with these sympathetic critics. Polarization and identification of the movement under a leader is an ever-present prospect of populism. But the Laclauian theory's shortcoming is not that it disregards this. In fact it has a name for it: pure populism. Its failure is to dismiss pure populism as an impossibility, a 'reductio ad absurdum' point where politics could never reach in reality (Laclau 2005, 45; 2007, 82; Laclau & Mouffe 2001, 129–130). Examining the Erdoğanism phenomenon through the lenses of Laclauian ontology, this article makes a dual contribution. On a theoretical level, it demonstrates that a point of pure populism is actually realizable. At which point politics ceases to exist and gives way to a sort of 'bipolar hegemony', a zero-sum game between two homogenous camps that are separated by a single frontier and sustain themselves solely through their opposition to one another (Palonen 2009, 331). On an empirical level, it shows that Erdoğan uniquely constitutes that frontier in Turkey today. Instead of merely describing the polarization and personalization in contemporary Turkish politics, it focuses on the ideological context and reveals the logic behind the ways in which they are produced and reproduced.

Laclauian framework

One comes across with the post-foundationalist core of Laclauian framework frequently in the form of a single, provocative statement: 'society does not exist' (Laclau 1990, 89–92; Laclau & Mouffe 2001, 111; Marchart 2007, 134–138). In his critique of Marxist structuralism, Laclau stresses that envisioning society as a 'founding totality' formed by a base and a superstructure assigns it

an ‘essential’ status with a positivity of its own (Laclau 1990, 90). Its modus operandi is presumed as waiting to be discovered behind the superficial empirical variations of everyday life so that the knowledge of all social processes could be grounded on a consistent totality. His objection to this presumption of society-as-totality is based on a linguistically informed thesis for the ‘infinitude of the social,’ which is the idea that ‘any system of meaning is contingent, contextual, and relational’ (Howarth 2004, 266). For Laclau, the social is a contingent system of meanings that draws, and cannot avoid drawing, a ‘horizon within which some objects are representable while others are excluded’ (Laclau 2007, 117). Meanings assigned to objects and relations between them are fixated at the expense of infinite others that are left out. Hence society as an intelligible and unified whole providing exhaustive patterns of relationality between all social meanings does not and cannot exist.

Laclau considers this impossibility of society as the condition of possibility for the political, because the residual excess of meaning that is bound to remain out of the frontiers of any one social also paves the way for an ‘infinite play of differences’ which he calls the discursive (Laclau 1990, 172; Glynos & Howarth 2007, 113–117). It serves as the terrain on which the political, understood as the institution and contestation of the social regimes and practices, functions. The political, in the first place, is an attempt to draw frontiers, to create, however temporarily, a finite order, a hegemonic discourse within an infinitude, striving to ‘proceed to a relative fixation of the social’ (Laclau 1990, 90–1). Reaching such a relative fixation is not only possible but necessary, for we need a stable system of meaning so that we can avoid getting lost in a ‘psychotic’ universe where there is no fixed meaning at all (Laclau 2007, 70–71; Laclau & Mouffe 2001, 112–113).

The process of reaching a temporarily stable system of meanings corresponds to what Laclau, following Husserl, calls the sedimentation, which consists in forgetting the contingent origins of the social and mistaking them as mere objective presences (Laclau 1990, 34–35). That is to say, naturalizing the social sphere by equal-

izing what it is with what it has always been. Nonetheless, the political is also a contestation of the social that attempts at triggering 'a reactivation of the contingent moment of foundation,' unearthing that things have not always been the way they currently are, and 'thus disclosing the potential for different constructions' (Glynos & Howarth 2007, 116).

Political logics and populism

If the political is all about the institution and contestation of the social regimes and practices through contingent acts and decisions, political logics are the analytical tools offered within the Laclauian framework to unveil the underlying grammar of those acts and decisions in two opposing yet interconnected categories. While the logic of equivalence involves formation and reinforcement of new frontiers that simplify the political space by splitting it into two opposing camps, the logic of difference is concerned with acts and decisions that are aimed to impede or shatter this process of drawing frontiers by expanding and complexifying it (Laclau & Mouffe 2001, 129–130; Glynos & Howarth 2007, 141–145; Howarth et al. 2000: 11–12).

To clarify these logics, Glynos and Howarth invoke the example of a struggle between national liberation forces and an occupying colonial power. While the nationalists would characteristically try to 'cancel out the particular differences of class, ethnicity, region, or religion in the name of a more universal nationalism that can serve as a common reference point,' colonialists would 'attempt to break down these chains of equivalence' through 'the age-old practice of divide and rule,' aimed at separating 'nationalist groups into particular communities' (2007, 144–145). Although the political space depicted by an equivalential logic is a crudely simplistic one in which the meanings are condensed around two antagonistic poles, it serves the goal of national liberation perfectly. The logic of difference, conversely, provides such a complex pic-

ture that it weakens the sharp antagonistic polarity between the occupied and the occupier. Leaving no space for a collective mobilization between different communities, it is best suited for the purposes of colonialists.

It is possible to consider these logics in a continuous struggle for domination over the terms of political vocabulary, exerting their articulatory influences over the ways in which politics at any given moment is arranged – a struggle that accounts for the ultimate contingency of these arrangements (Arditi 2010, 45; Laclau & Mouffe 2001, 105–110). This is in harmony with the way in which Laclau conceptualizes actual politics as 'operating at the diverse points of a continuum' between two theoretical extremes: 'pure institutionalism' and 'pure populism' (Laclau 2005, 45). He argues that, as reductio ad absurdum points of logical impossibilities, these discourses constitute the unreachable poles of politics, whose concurrent presence and tension are nonetheless prerequisites of the very existence of politics and its perpetual movement on that continuum (ibid., 46). Their '[t]ension and reflection can be contingently combined in unstable equilibria, but neither is entirely able to eliminate the other' (Laclau 2007, 120).

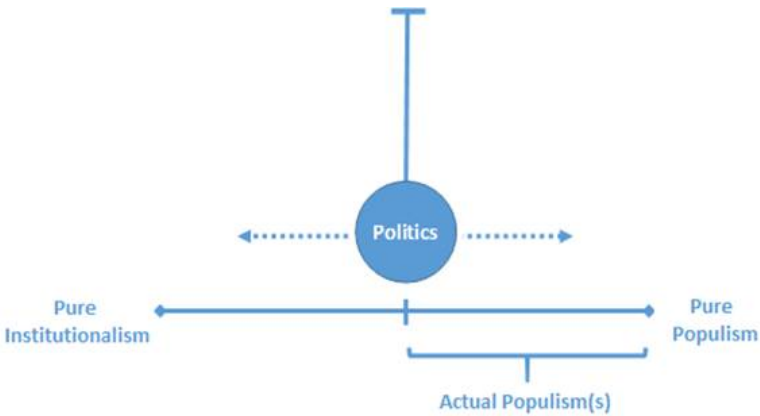

Figure 1: Laclauian Continuum of Politics. P 59

At one impossible end there is pure institutionalism, which is exclusively dominated by a logic of difference that emphasizes only the disparities between particularities and therefore eliminates any ground for their partial identification with each other (Laclau 2007, 62–63; 2005, 45). Laclau argues time and again that a social determined solely by the institutionalist discourse would entail 'the dismissal of politics tout court' and reduce it to the level of administration (2007, x). It would liken those in the myths of a totally reconciled 'society', such as Platonic republic or Disraeli's 'one nation', where the particular elements constituting a "society" are absorbed into the system in a completely individual manner and transformed into objective differences with absolutely nothing in common but their existence under one community (Laclau 1990, 69–70; Laclau & Mouffe 2001, 130). As the positive nature of all its terms is established within an infinitely static structure, there would be absolutely no ground for 'dislocation', hence for politics (Laclau 1990, 71–72; 2007, 78). In actual cases, however, the political arrangements where the logic of difference prevails [left half of the continuum in the figure above] liken more the consensual regimes of contemporary Western European countries where popular interests and demands tend to be dealt with in a technocratic manner, leaving little space for the formulation of collective political identities (Crouch 2004, 6; Stavrakakis 2014, 506).

At the opposite end of Laclauian political continuum resides an equally impossible discourse of pure populism. It is a discourse dominated solely by a logic of equivalence, requiring complete collapse of all social differences into a singular identity and consequently leaving no space for their differential particularities (Laclau 2005, 45). Laclau invokes the Freudian notion of a group whose only libidinal tie is love for the narcissistic leader as an example of this impossibly pure presence of logic of equivalence (2007, 52–60, 82). Placing the leader into the place of their ego ideal, group members reach a point of complete identification with one another that results in a total consumption of their particular egos under 'the name of the leader' (2005, 40). In Laclau's own words: 'The

equivalential logic leads to singularity, and singularity to the identification of the unity of the group with the name of the leader' (2007: 100). On a macro-political level, this means that pure populism conceives the social as a homogeneous whole whose coherence would be exclusively assured by the presence of a frontier separating the 'people' from its 'other', like in the discourse of messianic movements where a total submission to the messiah constitutes the identity of the movement and incredulous others its opposite (Laclau & Mouffe 2001, 130). The world here is so infinitely separated between a righteous movement and its negative reverse evil-incarnated that there exists no difference within those camps. Each and every element constituting them becomes identical with one another, bearing no particularity of their own.

Contrary to general assumption, Laclauian conception of populism emerges as a rather straightforward one once these ontological premises are laid out; it is a certain kind of political logic of articulation in which the logic of equivalence prevails over that of difference, i.e. right half of the continuum in the figure above. Like any political logic, populism institutes the social by imposing a finite and intelligible whole of meaning: a totality (Glynos & Howarth 2007, 141–145). Nevertheless, what makes a discourse distinctively populist is that the totality it institutes is predominantly articulated around an antagonistic division. It is concerned primarily with the construction of a political identity around the 'people' by welding an equivalential chain between various differential elements whose shared 'lack' is conceived as resulting directly from the existence of an 'other'; a 'constitutive outside' that is at once the nemesis of the 'people' and necessary condition of possibility of its existence (Laclau & Mouffe 2001, 127–134; Laclau 1990, 17–26; Mouffe 1993, 2). The 'people' of populism is, therefore, a partial component that aspires to be conceived as the only legitimate totality by instituting a frontier of exclusion, 'a part which identifies itself with the whole' (Laclau 2007, 82; Canovan 2000, 78–79).

Within this bidimensional depiction, it is possible to see the reason behind Laclau's controversial claim that equalizes populism with politics. The ineradicable presence of populism in politics stems from the impossibility of ever reaching the point where the logic of equivalence is entirely absent, i.e. pure institutionalism. There is always an excess of meaning that destabilizes its 'coincidence with the limits of community.' This is why, he insists, 'there is no political intervention which is not populistic to some extent' and, thus, the question is not if, but 'to what degree' populism is present in a given discourse (Laclau 2005, 45; 2007, 81, 154).

Erdoğanist devotion

But how about the other end where politics becomes too populist and ceases to exist? Is pure populism really an unreachable limit case as Laclau theorizes? This section makes use of the Laclauian framework and tools to illustrate that the polarization in contemporary Turkish politics has reached to such an extreme that it fulfils the conditions enlisted for a limit case of pure populism. Differential particularities in contemporary Turkish politics are all practically eliminated under two antagonistically constructed identities and the line dividing them: Erdoğanists and anti-Erdoğanists.

From the time of its foundation in 2001, Erdoğan's AKP has won every single election with an ever increasing landslide, consolidating its support base to roughly 50 % of the electorate in the last few years. But especially since his ascension to the presidency in August 2014, Erdoğan is not leading a party but a movement, what is called dava [the cause] (Alaranta 2015, 98). Erdoğanists in Turkey pledge their oath of allegiance to the leader not the party, whom they regard as the 'steel core of the cause' (Eseyan 2016) and the 'voice and breath of the people' (Fraser 2016). The party, for all intents and purposes, functions as an institutional tool for Erdoğan to keep appearances in a formally parliamentarian regime where

the executive power lays in the hands of PM and the presidency remains largely a ceremonial position.

Arguably this has been the case for long but become most apparent once Erdoğan left his post as the AKP leader for the presidency while maintaining his monopoly over the party. In a move that has de facto suspended the constitution, he keeps picking and appointing the party leader, council members and government ministers, as well as leading the cabinet himself. Most recently, Erdoğan even forced PM Ahmet Davutoğlu to resign from his post for failing to keep a 'low profile' and, instead, acting as if he really held any power (Akyol 2016c). He was promptly replaced with Binali Yıldırım, a long-time Erdoğanist with a low enough profile to push through the constitutional changes that would ultimately terminate his own office and transform Turkey into an executive presidential regime – or as Yıldırım himself has put it: 'to legalize the de facto situation' (Mert 2016).

But far from being limited to the AKP cadres, Erdoğanists constitute a significant portion of Turkish society who are loud and proud in their devotion to the leader. AKP supporters make up approximately the half of Turkey's electorate, among whom Erdoğan's approval rate is around 80 percent (Erdoğan 2016, 2). Millions of users gather daily in various social media groups like the 'Lovers of Erdoğan' to celebrate their shared adoration for 'the eternal owner of [their] hearth' in the form of photos, songs and poems. Usually venerated as the 'chief' [reis] or the 'master' [usta], Erdoğan's image, along with his quotes, make up all the content on those incredibly popular pages. One of their most popular mottos on Twitter reads, 'Whatever the Chief says, that's it!' Another group of devoted Erdoğanists often appear in rallies wearing their signature dress of burial clothes that symbolize their readiness to sacrifice themselves for him (Çağaptay 2015).

It is tempting to discuss the Erdoğanism phenomenon, specifically the astonishing devotion it has aroused in masses and the peculiar relationship it has formed among them, in close contact with the above-mentioned Freudian notion of a group in which the only

common tie is the love for the leader. Having elevated him into the place of their ego ideal, members of such a group reach a point of complete 'identification' with one another, resulting in total consumption of their particular egos under that of the leader (Freud 2001, 105-116; Laclau 2007, 52-60). What ensues is a distinctively libidinal bond formed between the group members and the leader as their shared object-choice of love, in which the latter is idealized to the point of sublime and thus becomes immune to criticism (Žižek 2008, 192).

Statements by Erdoğanists from all ranks and creeds are indeed a testimony to the functioning of such a libidinal bond. Interviewed during a presidential rally, a 65 years-old housewife declared that, like her co-Erdoğanists wrapped in burial clothes, she would 'die gladly' if Erdoğan asked her to, for he was 'the joy of [her] life.' Her friend also stated that her 'greatest desire in this world' was to make her 2.5 years-old son meet the President, who was 'in love with Erdoğan just like his mother' (Çetin 2014). In a similar tone, Nuran Yıldız, the local head of AKP's Women's Branch, encouraged women to become members of the party, which she regarded 'a spousal link to Erdoğan himself' (Keneş 2013). It is important to note that this is in no way a phenomenon limited to the female Erdoğanists. Fettah Tamince, a billionaire businessman, went on record as early as in 2004 stating: 'I have fallen in love the moment I met Erdoğan and since then I see him in my dreams 3–4 days a week' (Süsoy 2004). Ethem Sancak, a leading media tycoon, followed the suit more recently: 'The more I saw him, the more I fell in love. As I got to know Erdoğan, I realized that such a kind of divine love between two men is possible. I say to Erdoğan: 'May my mom, dad, wife and children be sacrificed for you' (Tremblay 2015).

This common emphasis on self-sacrifice is of special interest because the use of religious, particularly Islamic practices, terminology and vocabulary in reference to Erdoğan as a holy figure is another, even more prevalent way in which Erdoğanists express their veneration for the leader. For instance, a glass Erdoğan drank

water from while making a speech was carefully preserved by the head of AKP's Youth Branch in Istanbul and exhibited like a sacred token (Gürsel 2016). The three provinces Erdoğan was respectively born in, served as a mayor and got elected MP from were labelled as 'holy cities' by the then Minister of EU Affairs, for they had 'paved the way for the emergence of the greatest leader Turkey has ever seen' (Hakan 2013). A leader so rare and special, according to another AKP deputy, that 'we shall pray a special prayer twice a day to thank Allah for granting [him] to us' (Taşkın 2011). A leading columnist of Takvim daily took a step further and counted Erdoğan as belonging to a holy species of leaders that are 'sent down from Heaven' with a duty to 'put things in order and complete whatever is missing' (Akarca 2013).

It is not easy to dismiss these acts and remarks as hypocritical displays of devotion either, because they often go beyond a rhetorical sanctification of the leader and become outright heresy according to the Islamic norms both Erdoğan and his disciples strictly adhere to. In 2008, a religious book containing a poem with the lines 'Erdoğan is the guardian of the way to Allah, to upset Erdoğan is to upset Allah' were distributed in thousands with the consent of local authorities (Çetin 2008). His name was listed among Mohammad's children in a so-called id paper fashioned for the Prophet by local AKP cadres during election campaign (Karadaş 2012). Government's approval of building a new hospital was praised as 'Erdoğan's Sunnah' – an Islamic term used exclusively for the deeds of Prophet himself (Gezen & Küçükkuru 2013). In fact, Erdoğanists sometimes do not even bother beating around the bushes and express it directly that Erdoğan is like a 'second prophet' to them (Kılınç 2010). So much so that they believe 'even touching him is a form of worship' (Üzer 2011). Ultimately, this belief in him as the 'messenger of Allah' (Velidedeoğlu 2015), 'leader of all believers' (Önal 2014) and 'caliph of the Earth' (Bozkurt 2014) turns literally into deification at times, as in the case of yet another AKP deputy who went all-in with his statement that Erdoğan could rule

the world because he 'embodies all the qualities of Allah in himself' (Akyol 2016c).

Enemies within

Considering this intense devotion to Erdoğan that often reaches to the level of worship, it is plausible to propose that Erdoğanists are not a group of ordinary political supporters but of disciples following a sublime leader who is beyond criticism in their eyes. He is nothing less than the perfect embodiment of the cause, the party and the people for them. Any act that breaks their unity poses an existential risk to the identity of every individual member and that of group as a whole, since the latter functions on the premise that its members are one and the same in an entirely homogenous union. Therefore anything less than a complete submission to the leader on the part of a member, regardless of their office, equals automatically to treason and, in order to ensure a successful preservation of group homogeneity, is responded by excommunication. A recent column in the pro-Erdoğan daily Star aptly summarizes the way in which this principle functions and therefore deserves to be quoted in extenso:

> [Recent change of leadership in the AKP] signifies a change of mentality regarding how to situate oneself in relation to the leader and how to administer the movement accordingly, [which] entitles not just fidelity but also loyalty and dependence [to the leader] - - The cause and the leader are one and the same thing, which can never be separated. One cannot have a sense of the cause without a bond of loyalty to the leader - -Erdoğan is not just the founding leader of a political party but someone who has materialized the cause in himself and thus become the embodiment of hope for the people and ummah - - None of us is indispensable whereas Erdoğan is our indispensable leader - - It is surely a mistake that anyone, regardless of their office, could dare to equalize oneself with the leader or speak of him as if he is their equal. That is what we believe in and live by. (Metiner 2016.)

In a recent interview, a once-leading member of Erdoğan's inner circle has explained how this principle works among Erdoğanists, speaking of a 'system of intimidation and bullying' to obtain complete submission: '99 % allegiance would not suffice to save you from being turned into nothing in [Erdoğan's] eyes…After even the tiniest of criticisms there comes a machine gun of slanders, blackmails, threats and insults.' (Bekdil 2016; Ongun 2016.) Naturally, the list of loyalists-turned-traitors is getting longer each day.

Let us just take the examples of Bülent Arınç and the ex-president Abdullah Gül. Arınç was a long-time deputy PM, parliament speaker for the party, and one of the most prominent members of 'the cause' overall. Along with Gül and Erdoğan, he makes up the so-called 'founding trio' who established the AKP in 2001. Yet his credentials could not stop the wrath of Erdoğanists once he voiced reservations over the president's interference into government issues and diverged from the official line sanctioned by the leader on issues like the Kurdish problem and freedom of expression. On pro-Erdoğan dailies he was labelled as a 'traitor' who was 'speaking in the language of the terrorists' to topple the president (Akyol 2016a). Erdoğan refused to utter Arınç's name thereafter, calling him instead the 'dishonest one' (Küçükşahin 2016). The same goes for Gül as well. His plans for switching offices with Erdoğan in a Putin/Medvedev style move collapsed when he showed signs of disapproval towards Erdoğan's policy of brutal suppression of public protests in the summer of 2013 and called attention to the risks of increasing polarization (Çandar 2015a; Gardner 2016). He too was called a traitor, acting 'greedy' like 'Brutus' and protecting enemies of the cause (Yılmaz 2015). Since then both have practically disappeared from the political arena.

Other AKP heavyweights accompanied them into political limbo, never to be seen again. The party's founding deputy and ex-minister of education Hüseyin Çelik was labelled a 'cryptic terrorist' for criticizing his party's polarizing politics and promptly demoted from the government ranks (Yılmaz 2016). Ali Babacan, known as the AKP's 'economy tsar' responsible for the country's

financial recovery in the 2000s, was accused of 'high treason' for defending the independence of the Central Bank and not sharing Erdoğan's conspiratorial views about a global 'interest rate lobby' undermining Turkey's economy (Yackley 2015). Sadullah Ergin, ex-minister of justice who spearheaded the legal reforms in harmony with the EU acquis, lost his seat after refusing to prepare laws that would bring judiciary under complete control of the executive and was declared a member of terrorist organisation (Çandar 2015a; Ramoğlu 2016). And finally, the most recent casualty in this war between Erdoğanists and their 'enemies within' turned out to be Ahmet Davutoğlu, who stood by Erdoğan's side since the beginning, first as his chief foreign policy advisor, then foreign minister, and lastly PM. Even he could not avoid being excommunicated as a 'traitor' who 'collaborated with the West' and 'its Trojan horses inside' once he diverged from the leader's will, i.e. attempted delaying the transition towards executive presidency and rebuilding bridges with domestic opposition and the EU (Akyol 2016b).

Poverty of anti-Erdoğanism

Even a bigger source of worry for the future of Turkish politics in general is the fact that the opposition actors inadvertently contribute to the reproduction of this exceptional bond fortified around the messianic image of Erdoğan. Just like his disciples, they place Erdoğan to the epicentre of their own discourses, albeit in the exact opposite way, and effectively reinforce his position as the sole frontier polarizing the society into two camps that are mirror images of each other: Erdoğanists and anti-Erdoğanists.

Streets of Turkey were shaken by mass anti-government protests for several months in summer 2013. Despite being triggered by a council plan to demolish a park in Istanbul for the construction of a shopping mall and residential complex, Gezi Uprisings quickly amassed millions of protestors all around the country chanting a single slogan: Down with Erdoğan. It immediately became clear

that the issue was not just the trees in a park but what they symbolized: Erdoğan government's evermore authoritarian rule (Özkırımlı 2014). Having disregarded the demands and lifestyles of a significant portion of the population, the government began to heavily impose a set of religiously-informed moralistic policies on all spheres of society that made everyday life increasingly more suffocating for those who did not agree with its policies nor shared its values. Regardless of the versatile profile of the groups that made up the Gezi protestors in terms of ethnicity, religion, ideology or party affiliation, they all had one thing in common; the same staunch opposition to Erdoğan. This was largely thanks to his strategy of criminalizing the protestors as 'terrorists' and staking a personal claim on the police brutality they faced, which succeeded in putting him into the heart of a rigid antagonism. In fact, Erdoğan quickly turned the whole picture into a battle for the survival of the 'people' by organizing a series of counter rallies titled 'Respect for the National Will' where tens of thousands of Erdoğanists chanted 'We are the soldiers of Tayyip' and asked their leader to give them the order to 'crash' the protestors (Gürsel 2013). Consolidating his constituency, Erdoğan emerged victorious from all four subsequent elections.

A crude anti-Erdoğanism forms the backbone of other, more organized opposition actors as well. In a bid to mobilize their grassroot supporters and gain further popularity, they actively promote it as reason d'être of their existence and end up reinforcing the Erdoğanists' pure populism. In a typically anti-Erdoğanist speech he gave at the parliament, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, leader of Turkey's main opposition party (CHP), aptly summarized his party's mission: 'Erdoğan dreams of being an executive president but he cannot reach his goal before he crushes our bodies, spills our blood and annihilates us completely' (Demirtaş 2016; Elcivan 2016).

Until recently, electoral support for the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), latest successor of pro-Kurdish parties in Turkish history, used to fluctuate around 6 percent, which the party received overwhelmingly from the Kurdish-populated southeast for

advocating their ethno-cultural demands for decentralisation (Casier et al. 2011). Despite the leadership's efforts to emphasize the party's leftist stance with a distinct focus on egalitarian issues and a record number of female and minority candidates, for long the HDP failed to break off the ethnic label and its popularity remained limited to pro-Kurdish groups (Celep 2014). This changed almost overnight following HDP leader Selahattin Demirtaş's historically brief speech in the parliament, which unmistakably pronounced anti-Erdoğanism as his party's raison d'être and enabled it to appeal to a completely different cluster of non-Kurdish voters who saw in HDP the unique opportunity to stop Erdoğan: 'I will express my message in just one sentence: Mr. Erdoğan, you will never be able to be the head of the nation as long as the HDP exists and as long as the HDP people are on this soil. We will not make you the president. We will not make you the president. We will not make you the president' (De Bellaigue 2015). Minutes after #SeniBaşkanYaptır mayacağız [#WeWillNotMakeYouThePresident] hit the worldwide trending topics list on Twitter and in June 2015 elections HDP more than doubled its votes with 13 percent, becoming the third biggest parliamentary group.

Such an unprecedented surge in the support for HDP and its comparatively less radical agenda of decentralization meant a significant loss of popularity for the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), an illegal terrorist organisation fighting Turkish state for an independent Kurdish state since 1980s (Yavuz & Özcan 2015). In a move quite uncharacteristic for the organisation, PKK leader Cemil Bayık attempted to compensate this loss by engaging in a bit of anti-Erdoğanism of his own, stating: 'This is a war of life and death for both parties. If Erdoğan eliminates us, he will win and be able to defeat everyone on the side of democracy. We are the biggest obstacle in the way of his dreams. We want to topple Erdoğan and the AKP, otherwise Turkey will never become a democratic country' (Loyd 2016).

So, if there is one thing anti-Erdoğanists have in common with Erdoğanists, it is their understanding of politics as an existential

war. The fact that they are in equal degrees obsessed with Erdoğan only fuels their adversaries' purely populist discourse that promotes a vision of the world ultimately divided between the leader-as-people-embodied and his negative reverse evil-incarnated. In the eyes of his disciples, it gives credit to Erdoğan's grandiose views about a global network of conspirators working together to topple him personally. His list of 'enemies' includes, but is not limited to, the opposition parties, Gezi protestors, Kurdish terrorists, finance speculators, Alevites, BBC, New York Times, Jewish lobby, Germany, Italy, Armenian lobby, ultra-nationalists, and homosexuals (Idiz 2013; HDN 2015). As one of Erdoğan's top advisors put in his daily column: 'Turkey stands on a delicate equilibrium where Erdoğan is the golden point of balance. Those coalition of crooks…are ready to turn Turkey into a colony if only they could reach their dream of seeing Erdoğan gone. Their goal is crystal clear: Topple the strong leadership to feed off the treasures, lives and blood of Turkey. Just like in the old times' (Bulut 2016).

This is particularly why any international reaction against Turkey's dramatic slippage down to authoritarianism in recent years, no matter how well-intended, morally upright or friendly-toned it is, fails to strike a chord within the country. Insofar as they inevitably pose a challenge to Erdoğan's infallibility, critics are doomed to get dismissed a priori as 'foreign enemies' of the people and equivalentially chained to the 'enemies within' (Cornell 2014; Armstrong 2015). Far from easing the polarisation, they paradoxically deepen it by helping Erdoğan to consolidate his constituencies even further and, consequently, weakening what little chance the opposition may have in dislocating some of them.

The poverty Turkish opposition suffers within the limits of anti-Erdoğanism is perhaps best described by the CHP leader Kılıçdaroğlu. In a tone that reflects real despair, he stated: 'Erdoğan is a true narcissist who listens to no one but himself, abides by no rules but his owns. We discuss among ourselves whether or not we should take such a person seriously and combat him but, alas, we have to…We have many projects but presenting them has no appeal

right now [when] Turkey is de facto an AKP state. From mayors to teachers, academics to doctors, all consider themselves as servants to its rule. We are asked to correct this picture [while] playing the game of pseudo-democracy, which is imposed on everyone and opposing it equals to treason.' (Özgüven 2016.)

Conclusions

The politics in Turkey today seems to be rather analogous to the Dinç marriage. It is a tale of two people who are on the brink of divorce but nonetheless condemned to a perpetual dialogue of the deaf to maintain who they are. It is stuck in a vicious circle, or what Emilia Palonen calls a 'bipolar hegemony,' where two homogenous camps occupy the entire political space and sustain their identities solely 'through their opposition to one another' (Palonen 2009: 331). Any new cleavages or demands are instantly articulated into this existing system of pro- vs. anti-Erdoğanism, leaving no space for a third position – not in party politics, business life, neighbourhoods or even families. The fact that there seems to be no way out of this deadlock at the moment but a divorce, a complete division of Turkish society into two distinct people(s), is a strong warning for not equating populism with politics per se as Laclau does. Far from being a theoretical limit concept, pure populism is an actual, albeit extreme, possibility, which can be realized when a logic of equivalence rages unabated. Therefore it is plausible to side with Laclau's 'sympathetic' critics who more or less share his ontological categorization of populism as a political logic of articulation without endorsing its ultimate conclusion. As the Erdoğanism case demonstrates, their warnings of an inherent risk of extreme polarization and personalization in populism are far from being ungrounded.

This article argued that, as the dominant discourse in contemporary Turkish politics, Erdoğanism has reached the extreme point of pure populism, whereby a total consumption of one's ego under that of the leader becomes the precondition of being counted in

'the people', who never question or criticize but simply love, obey and follow him. Although it is commonplace to observe that polarization is an 'instrumental electoral strategy' Erdoğan employs to 'consolidate his constituency,' little attention is paid in the literature to the extreme ways in which this strategy consumes the particular identities of his followers (Keyman 2014). It also simultaneously pushes the opposition to a dark corner where adopting an equally polarizing anti-Erdoğanist stance emerges as the only way of survival, even though this amounts to being labelled 'enemies of the people' and paradoxically reproduces the Erdoğanist discourse. This author sincerely hopes that the present article, at the very least, manages to draw some attention to this significant lack in the literature on Turkish politics.

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TOGETHER WITH THE PEOPLE: FRAMINGPOPULISM IN GOVERNMENT AND OPPOSITION NEWSPAPERS IN PRESIDENT CHAVEZ'S VENEZUELA

Virpi Salojärvi

ABSTRACT

President Chávez' (1999–2013) rhetoric, policies and style of administration are often connected to populism. This study focuses on how this populist politics affects the contents of the media. In the research, populism is approached from Laclau's (2005) point of view as a political logic which is about constructing the people. The research includes three different case studies collected from Venezuelan newspapers. In the case studies, four different newspapers that have politically and economically distinct backgrounds are examined, focusing on the last years of Chávez's presidency. There are three different news events, and in each of them one of the core concepts of populism – the people, leader, and enemy – is brought into focus using frame analysis. This analytical approach allows for an examination of both the diffusion of different frames in different newspapers (i.e. the discursive struggles of different power holders) and the journalistic techniques of each newspaper. The research notes that both the Chávez supporters and the opposition are competing to show that they know what the people want and, in fact, that they are the people. Newspapers report the populist politics in different manners depending on the editorial style. Yet, they are still able to hold on to some journalistic principles such as balanced news reporting by using certain techniques.

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For decades, the Venezuelan media (e.g. Granier 1987) has taken clear stances on political issues in Venezuela and cooperated with politicians in order to maintain their privileges, and the politicians

in the region have relied on the media to transmit messages to the masses in pursuit of increased power (Corrales & Sandoval 2005; Matos 2012). When Chávez's presidency (1999–2013) began, private media closely reported on his triumph (Bisbal 2009, 16–17), but relations between Chávez and private media started to fall apart already early on (cf. Bisbal 2009; Delgado-Flores 2006). One of the consequences of this fallout was political polarization of the media, as state-financed media came to mostly support the government while private media came to mostly oppose it.

Chávez's rhetoric, policies and style of administration are often connected to populism (e.g. Bisbal 2010; Brading 2013; Hawkins 2009). However, this paper focuses on how populist politics affect the content of the media. One characteristic of populism is an appeal to the notion of the people (Canovan 2005; Laclau 2005b). The concept of power should be noted in this context since politics can be seen as a power play (cf. Mouffe 2005). Power plays in populism include strong anti-status-quo feelings, and thus, populism can be understood as raising counter-hegemony against the prevailing hegemony (Laclau 2005b).

In this paper, the theoretical approach is discussed before being applied to case studies of Venezuelan newspapers. In the case studies, four different newspapers that have politically and economically distinct backgrounds are examined, focusing on the last years of Chávez's presidency. There are three different news events, and in each of them one of the core concepts of populism – the people, leader and enemy – is brought into focus using frame analysis. This analytical approach allows for an examination of both the diffusion of different frames in different newspapers (i.e. the discursive struggles of different power holders) and the journalistic techniques of each newspaper. Ultimately, these case studies reveal fundamental dynamics regarding the construction and penetration of populist discourses in the Venezuelan context.

Theory of populism and the media

In a Gramscian sense, in order to attain hegemony both political and economic power is required among others but also hegemony needs to be filtrated through different ideological institutions, such as the educational system, the church, or mass-communication media. This makes the media a prominent, contested field between hegemony and counter-hegemonies. The media are actors on the political stage and must be taken into account by political strategies (cf. Kunelius et al. 2009, 62).

There are several different theories of populism, but this study focuses on Ernesto Laclau's theory. The basis of Laclau's theory is rooted in the Gramscian notion of hegemony. Laclau (2005b) takes the figure of 'the people' as the core of his analysis and starts describing populism 'from the people' because it is the underdogs of a society that are raised to the centre-stage in populist politics (cf. Canovan 2005, 80). No matter how charismatic a leader might be, the leader's position is secured by voters in a democratic society. Therefore, politicians may try to appeal to their audience as one of 'the people'.

Thus, in populism a silent or silenced part of the population becomes heard and noticed and they become a politically significant group. Therefore, populism may be seen as a way to construct the very unity of the group. However,'the people' does not contain the whole population even though it desires to be thought of as the only legitimate totality. This 'only legitimate group' can be formed in many different ways. The people desire to feel that they are part of a unity and in order to strengthen this sentiment the population needs to be divided into two groups: 'us' and 'them'. This division is formed using some pre-existing signifiers in order to maintain the antagonism. The enemy may be called, for example, 'the regime' or 'the oligarchy', and the oppressed underdog referred to as 'the people' or 'the nation' (Laclau 2005a, 81–87). This antagonism allows populists to fashion their needed enemy and to construct an identity

among the people (Taggart 2000, 94). They know who they are not, and this helps them to develop a sense of unity among themselves.

The us/them division of populism extends to the media as well, even though it may also be seen as an essential part of media representations in general, alongside the depiction of the 'ignored' group (Sonwalkar). From the perspective of populist governments, news organizations and journalists either support the government or are against it. In Latin America generally, the non-governmental media have embraced an antagonistic role and have been at the forefront of the opposition against populist governments (Waisbord 2013). This is also the case in Venezuela.

The people, the leader, and the enemy are three core populist examples of floating and empty signifiers. The basis of signifiers is in isolated demands that prevail in the population. These demands find each other and an equivalential relation between them is formed. This chain of demands gets longer when more demands are combined to them. When one signifier rises to nominate this equivalential chain of demands, the signifier ends up being imprecise because of all the different demands it is representing. This happens because its connection with specific, original demands gets weaker. Yet, sometimes this equivalential chain confronts rival equivalential chains, which interlink with some of the demands of the original chain. This way independent popular signifiers that differ from the original ones, are produced. The original chain is not unique or independent from equivalential articulation any more. Its meaning becomes imprecise and alternate with the equivalential chains of alternative equivalential frontiers. Laclau calls the first nominators empty and the latter nominators floating signifiers. However, in reality the two signifiers are useful as analytical tools and they overlap each other. (Laclau 2005a, 39–43; Laclau 2005b, 131.)

'The people' is a special signifier. It is floating but it is special in a sense that its existence is central to populism. The 'leader' – in this case Hugo Chávez, the creator of Chavismo – is an empty signifier that symbolizes and unifies the whole movement in rhet-

oric - language, images and other texts. The 'enemy' of Chavismo is the Venezuelan opposition but it may also include other groups. These three concepts are looked at more closely in the remainder of the paper in order to see how their media presences and representations are constructed, legitimated and challenged by different power holders.

Methodology and case studies

The following case studies explore three different news events and the focus of the discussion is on how each of the core phenomena – i.e., the floating and/or empty signifiers – is constructed in these particular news events. In total 817 articles were included in the study (see table 1). The newspapers studied represent different economic and political backgrounds. *Últimas Noticias* (UN) was the biggest national newspaper in Venezuela during the period of the study's focus, but it differed from other private media in that its editorial staff included both Chávez and opposition supporters (personal communication 2011). Privately owned *El Universal* (Uni) was also one of the oldest and biggest newspapers in the country during that time, and was directed to middle and upper middle socio-economic classes (personal communication 2011). *Tal Cual* (TC) may be described as an anti-Chávez newspaper. *Correo del Orinoco* (CdO), which is supported by the Ministry of Communication and Information, is the newest of these media outlets since it started circulating in 2009.

The articles were discovered by searching for certain words in the newspapers. Frame analysis was chosen for the qualitative research since it enables examining the texts thoroughly, finding similarities and differences without losing the bigger picture. Frames usually perform four different functions: define problems, offer causal analysis, give moral judgment and promote remedies (Entman 1993). All of these were examined in the data. Frame analysis offers a way to detect discourses found in the society at large, as-

Table 1: The data

Newspaper	The people 11.-17.12.2010	Leader 30.6.-6.7.2011	Enemy 12.-18.2.2012
Últimas Noticias	26	52	97
El Universal	32	96	178
Tal Cual	23	44	81
Correo del Orinoco	25	88	75
Total	**106**	**280**	**431**

suming that given a large enough data set the media content may be thought to reflect the broader society. The frames found in each case are presented in table 2.

Case 1: The people

My first case concerns law enacted in response to heavy rains that caused several people to lose their homes in the fall/winter of 2010. The case offers a strong example of antagonism between the government's perspective and the opposition's perspective in Venezuela. In addition, it involves antagonism as to who 'the people' are, what this conceptual group is believed to be, since the government justified the law by saying it was needed in order to help the people.

Table 2: The frames found in two or more newspapers

	The people	**Leader**	**Enemy**
Common frames	1) **Passive people** (CdO, UN, Uni) 2) **Active and smart** (UN, Uni, TC) 3) **Excluded** (CdO, UN, TC) 4) **Unified nation** (UN, Uni)	1) **Human being** (CdO, UN, Uni, TC) 2) **Supreme leader** (CdO, Uni) 3) **Cult figure** (UN, Uni, TC) 4) **Weak leader** (Uni, TC) 5) **Popular leader** (CdO, UN) 6) **Strong leader** (CdO, UN, Uni) 7) **Authoritarian leader** (Uni, TC) 8) **Revolutionary leader** (CdO, TC)	1) **United** (UN, Uni, TC) 2) **Democracy** (CdO, UN, Uni, TC) 3) **Bourgeois** (CdO, UN, TC)

Chávez often described 'the people' in his discourse as vigorous, hard working, and revolutionary (Lander 2005, 30–31). In the data, the variety of Chávez's discourse is not reflected but the people of Chavismo are seen as making everyday contributions to the society. The varied collective, organizational forms of Chavismo were assumed to operate in the background while individuals were raised as examples of how to become organized and be active. However, all examined media except for the anti-Chávez *Tal Cual* represented the (Chavista) people as passive.

The civil society working against the government is presented as active ('active and smart') in the private newspapers. The (non-governmental) people are shown as smart. Politics or politicians cannot fool them. In this frame, there exists another antagonism

apart from the one between the government and the opposition. Political confrontation is seen as prevailing between the people and the government. *El Universal* frames the 'people' as having power since they forced the government to withdraw from the confrontation during some incidents in the past.

Three newspapers (CdO, UN & TC) frame the antagonism between 'us' and 'them' as presented ('excluded'). This framework that represents the 'other' is especially clear in the two most extreme newspapers (CdO & TC). They both have a clear enemy, which is likely due to both having clearly defined niche audiences. The two more neutral newspapers assume their audience to be a more varied group. Therefore, they do not frame a clear 'enemy'. They attempt to position themselves as balancing journalistic principles and telling both sides of each story. Surprisingly, *El Universal* has a more neutral stance since it presents the government's point of view using quotations through the framework of a 'unified nation'.

As mentioned above, 'the people' in populism does not include the whole population. In the newspapers, the 'other' was the political opponent. However, it should be noted that those 'ignored' (cf. Sonwalkar 2005) in the data are almost always voters for the opposing side. This means that they are not given recognition even though how to best recognize the wants and needs of 'the people' through the democratic process is brought out as the main question. However, in some of the media frameworks all the citizens are invited to the group of 'the people' just as long as they are willing to stand for democratic rights. Therefore, it does not matter who they have voted before just as long as they share the same view of democracy.

The people as civil society is a varied group and this is projected also in how the media frames stories. The private newspapers raise the concerns of different groups, such as students, NGOs, lawyers, experts of the constitution, etc. For the private newspapers, civil society consists of different groups that are all active and trying further activate other groups. In *El Universal*, low socio-economic classes are specifically referred to, and not ignored like they are

by other newspapers. *El Universal* presents the most varied picture of the people because it does not employ the frame 'excluded', and does not construct a sense of belonging to a restricted group.

Case 2: The leader

News of Chávez's cancer in June–July 2011 serves as a case study to examine the signifier of 'the leader', since the illness of this leader added new nuances to his image. The great number of competing frames shows the struggle over Chávez as a signifier. These frames display the diversity of Chávez's character and role, but also hidden power structures, since some of these frames come across through citations of the political power holders. Over the years, Chávez became a floating signifier representing different things to the opposition.

A point of view that all the newspapers shared was to emphasize Chávez as a 'human being'. Chávez is framed as a strong person, but the cancer showed that he is a normal human being after all and can get seriously ill. In the private newspapers, it became essential that Chávez admitted that he had made mistakes. They focused on Chávez's statement where he confessed that he realizes he had made mistakes since he has not taken better care of his health. *El Universal* and *Últimas Noticias* frame Chávez so that the human touch in his image makes him more fragile. They describe how Chávez is seemingly affected not only physically but also emotionally. This is something that is completely missing in *Correo del Orinoco*. *Tal Cual*'s framing tactics offer a different approach and underline that the political leader should be differentiated from the human being. In *Correo del Orinoco* the confession of making mistakes is presented as a lesson that all the Venezuelans could learn; they should observe their habits and make needed changes in their own exercise and eating routines.

As 'supreme leader', Chávez is framed to be one with the whole nation; he is an extremely loved leader and the emotional connec-

tion between the leader and the people is highlighted. The framing of Chávez as a 'cult figure' could be an ironic response to this. The private newspapers deal with this pretty pretentious framing of Chávez as supreme leader by saying that there is a cult of personality built around his persona. He is not a normal human being but a 'superman'. *El Universal* in particular tends to use sarcastic metaphors.

In *El Universal* and *Tal Cual*, Chávez has also weak abilities (framed as a 'weak leader'). The role of Cuba in Venezuelan politics is one of the common themes. These two newspapers imply that Venezuela and Cuba have a relationship that is too close, and that Fidel Castro is the true power behind Venezuelan politics.

Within the framework of the 'popular leader', Chávez's celebrity around the globe and popularity among Venezuelans is underlined. Different actors from differing backgrounds honour him and wish him strength and show their solidarity in his new battle against cancer.

'Strong leader' is a frame inside of which Chávez is presented as working hard and taking action in spite of his illness. He is a strong, vital, independent leader who has a lot on his shoulders but is not afraid of his responsibilities. In *Últimas Noticias* and *El Universal*, this frame comes across mostly through the quotations so it can be seen as a 'Chavista' frame.

Inside the frame of the 'authoritarian leader', Chávez is presented as an autocratic leader who does not listen to anyone else. His government is just following his orders and without him they are nothing. Keeping secrets and running the country by rumours are also signs of an authoritarian leader or an internal power play.

Inside the frame of the 'revolutionary leader', Chávez is represented as a leader who shows a direction to the people. He has organized everything and also in the future he will be the head of the revolution. However, because of his absence, a new phase of the revolution can begin; the people need to participate more in the making of the revolution because it cannot depend on just one man. *Tal Cual's* framing implies that Chávez may be the most exception-

al leader in Latin American history, but it also notes that Chávez is irreplaceable to his supporters, not to the opposition.

Case 3: The enemy

In February 2012, Chávez's political adversaries held a pre-election for the same year's presidential and regional elections. This case study focuses on Chavismo's point of view regarding the political adversary, the Venezuelan opposition: i.e., the 'other' that does not represent 'us' (Chávez's supporters). However, it should be remembered that many private media in Venezuela openly opposed Chávez, and for them the Venezuelan opposition might represent 'us' while Chávez and his politicians form 'them' (these concepts being relative, as noted in case 1). Focusing on the case of pre-elections makes it possible to say something about both political power blocs.

The private newspapers share a framework where the opposition is described as 'united' and as one with the people. The opposition is framed as uniting not only the opposition politicians and parties, but also as uniting a divided Venezuelan nation. The 'united' opposition, then, does not include the parties and the politicians only, but also the common 'people'. Therefore, the opposition includes members of different social classes, ages, and genders.

Inside of the frame of Venezuelan 'democracy', the opposition is shown to follow democratic principles, rules and values. The opposition is also framed as distanced from the past, from the era of the Fourth Republic. Interestingly, *Correo del Orinoco* has a similar frame that tells a story of democratic opposition, but with a twist. In *Correo del Orinoco*, the opposition is seen as democratic since they finally recognize the democratic institutions of national electoral council and national army forces. Therefore, the opposition is finally entering a democracy that is already held to exist in the country.

All four newspapers frame the 'bourgeois', but it is sometimes a strong (CdO, UN, TC) and sometimes a weak (Uni) frame. In this frame, an elitist opposition represents the political right or extreme right that neither care about democracy nor have morals. They just seek to obtain their own interests – mostly financial interests. In *Correo del Orinoco*, where this frame is the strongest, the opposition consists of conservatives, rich bourgeois who represent not only themselves but also Americans, plutocracy, old 'oligarchic' parties, and others involved in the coup d'état of 2002. They do whatever it takes to uphold capitalism and neoliberalism in the country. Even though this Chavista frame did exist in other newspapers, it was represented with a hint of sarcasm or using quotation marks in their pages.

Discussion on the frames

Three main points stand out from the analysis. Next, I will focus on each, first by concentrating on the us/them division, then by looking at the varied image of the leader and the more uniform representations of the opposition, and finally by discussing journalistic techniques.

By focusing on the concept of the people, it is possible to tell who the newspaper is addressing – how it conceptualizes its readers – given the subjects and points of view mainstream journalism presents. *Correo del Orinoco* addresses the 'us' directly, but does not identify the 'us'. The 'us' of that newspaper is vaguely the people understood to be building a nation together. This includes the people from the barrios and the countryside, but also e.g. the hotel owner who sacrificed his livelihood for a greater cause. In Tal Cual, the 'us' is not mentioned often, and when it is, it is left vague and undefined. However, it also includes a variety of people in its definition of Venezuelans, as if seeing its readers as only a portion of all Venezuelans (against Chávez). The frame describing the 'enemy' ('excluded') in both of these newspapers serves the function

of uniting the population by depicting who they are not, and this way bringing cohesion among the population these papers address. This helps to maintain the antagonism that already exists in the society (Laclau 2005a, 87). These more extreme newspapers have a narrower, niche readership and they are able to address their audiences more directly.

Últimas Noticias and *El Universal* try to be more universal in tone since their circulation, and thus the readership, are broader. They do not create contrasting boundaries crossing the population, and in this sense they are less populistic.

The various frames surrounding Chávez signal a signifier that is trying to respond to many demands prevailing in the population. Within a single newspaper, up to six frames appeared. In the private newspapers, contradictory frames displayed different prevailing discourses. Some of these were consistent with the frames of *Correo del Orinoco*, which means that the official governmental view was able to penetrate through to private media as well. This may be interpreted as a struggle over discourses in the pages of the newspapers.

In cases 1 and 2, the newspapers reflect the conflicting situation of Venezuela. In his rhetoric, Chávez often used the words the people (el pueblo) and sovereign (el soberano) as synonyms, which created different kinds of interpretation among different parts of the population. To upper-middle and upper classes and many of the intellectuals (i.e., the assumed readers of Uni & TC) this discourse was a source of division and animosity, highlighting the divide between rich and poor that was a threat to democratic stability but also their own personal security and property. For popular sectors, the division of Venezuelans was not just a product of Chávez's discourse. In fact, recognition of this rhetoric and its appeal to the majority (the people, sovereign) had an integrating effect. (Lander 2005, 33.) As Lander (2005, ditto) points out, even though their material conditions may still be poor, Chávez's symbolically integrative discourse generated a sense of belonging. Thus, the 'Chavista'

frames may be interpreted also as constructing identity within the movement.

In the third case, the division between the newspapers into the governmental and private media is clearer, since the image presented of the opposition in the private newspapers is more unified. As stated above, some of the populist features include dividing the society between 'us' and 'them' in an effort to raise a counter-hegemony through appealing to the people. The battle between hegemony and counter-hegemony is a battle of competing discourses because producing an opposing discourse to a prevailing power structure means making decisions which are acts of power, exclusion and frontiers (Tambakaki 2014, 9). As previous research has already suggested, both of the power-blocs – Chávez and his government, and the Venezuelan opposition – may be described as populist since each frames a strong enemy that they must battle against (Samet 2013; cf. Salojärvi 2016). The current research also shows that both of the power-blocs are battling against hegemony – although against a different one. Chávez's side is fighting against the 40-year hegemony of the Fourth Republic, which was in power before his era, and the opposition against the hegemony of Chávez's regime, which was in power for 14 years. The research also shows that both Chávez's supporters and the opposition tried to appeal to the people as if knowing what the people desire and as if sharing this desire with the people.

The last point to consider in this paper is journalistic techniques. Even though research (Waisbord 2013) suggests that populism has the tendency to develop a pattern of one-sided news coverage, the ideal of 'neutral, professional journalism' can be seen in all of the newspapers studied. However, in addition to the volume of the articles focusing on a certain political approach, the newspapers were able to convey some statements by using techniques such as quotes, sarcasm, and layout.

Quotation marks were a commonly used technique. Usually, it was the opposing side's comments that were presented in exact quotations, sometimes just one word. The technique enables the news-

paper/journalist to write about the points of view of the opposing side and maintain the image of balanced news reporting, while still distinguishing it from the editorial line. However, this technique works both ways. It is also useful for the political power holder, who is able to get her/his discourse (that otherwise perhaps would not be presented in the media) to penetrate the newspaper.

Latin American journalism has a tendency to stress opinions and commentary, and the media often publishes/broadcasts distinct political views. This provides room for sarcasm, which was used especially in *Tal Cual*. In addition to the editorials and opinion articles, sarcasm was shown in subheadings, for example. Other newspapers had a different, less confrontational style, but still used sarcasm in a more discrete way.

Layout was also an important manner of constructing the stories. For example, after an article about the opposing side, there was sometimes a larger piece of news representing the newspaper's own editorial line. *Últimas Noticias* was the most interesting case in this sense, because it is considered as one of the most balanced newspapers in the country (Samet 2013, 531). Thus, it presented pieces of news showing both sides of the conflict. However, the layout of a page of *Últimas Noticias* usually consisted of a large heading and underneath it up to six smaller articles about the heading's subject. Even though the heading suggested a Chávez-minded approach, these smaller articles might be divided in two against four in favour of the opposition.

Conclusions

The construction and challenging of different populist signifiers in Venezuelan print media has been in the focus of this paper, to provide an overview of how different populist discourses were formed. The context of the case studies was populist politics, to the extent that both of the competing power blocs might be considered populist following Laclau's criteria (Laclau 2005b). Chávez and his

sympathizers and the Venezuelan opposition both tried to raise counter-hegemony against the existing hegemony and both tried to appeal to 'the people'. The difference between the two was that they defined the people differently, and fought against different hegemonies.

Media texts may be considered the result of a power struggle between several different actors, including political and economic actors, and also including different media actors such as owners, journalists and editorial staff. A medium attempting to practice neutral, professional journalism, as does most of the media (cf. Mancini 2000), reports news events in a 'balanced' way that appears to include both sides of the story. Nevertheless, by using editorial power, and journalistic techniques such as volume, quoting, sarcasm and layout, they highlight a certain stance.

However, it would be oversimplifying the issue to say that it is only populism that affects the content of the newspapers. For example, leftist ideology has a strong impact on the way the government-supported *Correo del Orinoco* explains the world. Government actions, individuals working for the wellbeing of themselves and the nation, and popular empowerment may all be explained as having leftist origins (Salojärvi 2016; cf. Kitzberger 2012). However, based on the data of this research, it is clear that many populist elements are found in the content of Venezuelan mainstream print media.

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ROMANIAN POPULISM: BETWEEN RADICAL NATIONALISM AND COMMUNIST NOSTALGIA

Mihnea-Simion Stoica

ABSTRACT

A number of recent studies assess that populism in Western Europe is quite different from that in the Eastern part of the continent. However, the literature still offers an unbalanced view. The difficulty of studying politics in Eastern Europe stems from the complex political situations in former communist countries, most of which underwent lengthy transitions from dictatorship to democracy. This study focuses on Romania, an Eastern European country in which the evolution of populism reveals an interesting situation, both before and after the country has become a member of the European Union in 2007. In this particular case, populist movements went from being marginal to almost winning the presidential elections and then having their main messages incorporated in the communication strategies of the mainstream parties. The current paper aims to deconstruct the populist message in Romania and to understand the profile of those voting for populist parties. Our first findings indicate that such political movements in Romania constitute what we call the 'populism of contradictions'. They have conflicting and confusing attitudes towards the state, the EU, the church, towards ethnic and sexual minorities, using messages that combine elements of communist legacy with violent nationalist rhetoric.

Introduction

Over the years, populism has become a very popular (sic!) issue for political analysis. Much of the growing attention towards the topic was determined by what was identified to be its accompanying

threat of illiberal democracy (as opposed to the liberal democracy that all modern societies strive to achieve or maintain). Some political scientists consider populist parties to be dangerous especially because they exploit the tensions that can develop at the heart of democracy (Canovan 1999). Others consider that the attention towards such parties was generated mostly by the fact that they started to represent a threat for mainstream political actors (Bale et al. 2010, 410). Given the high number of studies, populist parties have received various labels, ranging from terms such as anti-immigration parties (Fennema 1997, 475) to pathological symptoms of democracy (Canovan 1999, 6). Political scientists have tried to study the homogeneity of these new challenger-parties and the results have shown that there is actually a very high diversity amongst them. Studies point out several distinctions (Pappas 2016, 23). But unfortunately not too many studies compare populism in Western Europe with that in the Eastern part of the continent.

Moreover, given the latest developments throughout Eastern Europe, with serious discussions over rule of law in Hungary and Poland, the interest in studying populism within former communist states is yet again revitalized. Populists envisage a democracy that does not understand the need for individual freedom of expression, an element that they consider to be a constraint rather than a necessity, thus neglecting any rights of minorities – be they of expression or of representation (Riker 1982). Throughout her account on populism, Margaret Canovan argues that the most dangerous feature of this political movement is that it exploits the gap between promise and performance that can sometimes appear in democracies. Her argument goes even further as she considers that entering this dangerous game might end up with populists entering the government (as has happened in a number of cases). Given the high expectations that such a party can create for the electorate and given its inability to live up to them, the gap between promises and reality will grow even greater, making room for new and even more exaggerated populist appeals. This vicious circle leads to even more pop-

ulism, which generates new messages of the same type, thus pushing the political spectrum towards its extremes.

There are also studies related to the impact of the populist right upon other parties, and the theory of the so-called contagion from the right proved to have quite solid grounds (Norris 2005, 41; Bale et al. 2010, 414), because right-wing populists seem to cast their influence not only on the right flank of the party spectrum, but also on the left. Earlier research has also pointed out that contemporary populism is very much related to the new issues of identity, legitimacy and political order that arose in Europe. The so-called politics of identity has become a salient topic, triggered by the uncertainty in respect to the balance between national, local, regional and European identities (Laffan 1996, 82).

But in spite of the growing literature, most of the vagueness of the concept – which was partly pointed out by Isaiah Berlin in 1967 – still persists. It appears that the greater the attention, the bigger the confusion on even its basic elements. After so many years of intense research, the only consensus reached is that the term has a content that is far from clear or even obscure (Laclau, 2005; De Raadt et al., 2004). There is still enough fog surrounding the dividing line between the extreme right, the far right and populism – not to mention the association of populist parties with racist or anti-immigration rhetoric. Maybe one of the best explanations in understanding the difference between such political features was offered by Meindert Fennema (2004), who wrote that extreme right parties are those who celebrate their fascist roots, whereas parties who see immigrants as inferior and base their discourse on ethnic resentment are racist. Finally, he added that parties who celebrate the wisdom of common man against a corrupt elite are protest or populist parties. These definitions developed what the author called the 'nested features' (see figure 1).

Populism therefore appears as an overarching concept with malleable borders, a characteristic that constitutes the main source of confusion surrounding its conceptual stretching. The central debate currently preoccupying the literature is related to the ideological

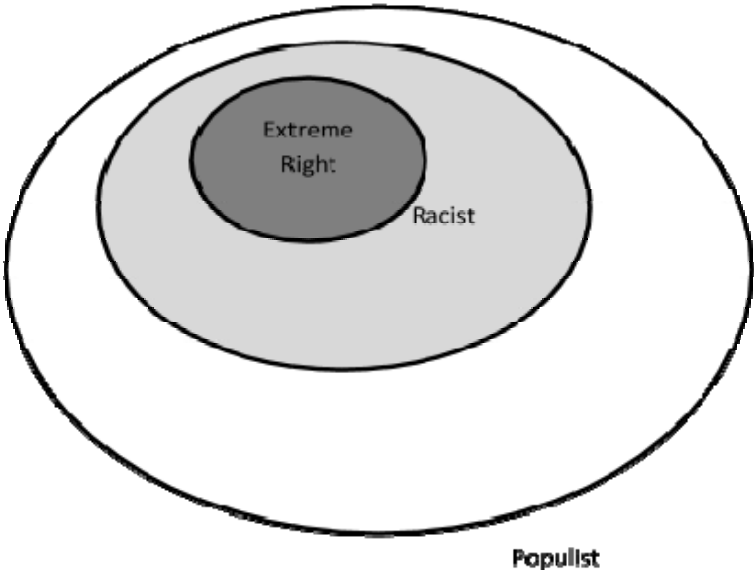

Figure 1: The nested features of political parties, according to M. Fennema (2004)

nature of populism. In terms of its constitutive elements, how much of populism truly resembles an ideology? Paris Aslanidis (2015) recently addressed the issue splendidly and reopened a debate that seemed stuck in outdated arguments. The author dismantled the theory that considers populism to be an ideology and suggested that it should rather be conceptualized as a discourse. Other authors considered populism to be a style that attracts voters precisely because of not having to bare a complex ideological weight (Taggart 1996). Jagers and Walgrave (2003) also considered populism to be a mere strategy, one that aims to gather votes exclusively by appealing to the emotional dimension of the electorate. However, those who considered it to be an ideology argued that populism is not only a reaction against the establishment, but more importantly an appeal to a supreme authority: the People (Canovan 1999). Koen

Vossen (2011) believed that whether populism should be seen as a strategy or as an ideology is basically a question about the motivations of the producer of the discourse.

The current paper considers populism to be an ensemble of discursive strategies that work together in order to attract voters (Krouwel & Abts 2007) . We thus consider populism to be a political rhetoric based on two homogeneities, i.e. elites and minorities; populist leader and the People; and four antagonisms, i.e. populist leader vs. elites; elites vs. the People; the People vs. minorities; minorities vs. populist leader (see figure 2).

The major rhetorical elements that characterize populism revolve around the four main concepts presented above. Populists will therefore employ discursive strategies related to (1) anti-elitism, (2) people-centrism, (3) scapegoating and (4) appeals for direct democracy. Despite the fact that these four strategies can be found in analyzing both Western and Eastern European populism, their content differs to a certain extent. As such, given the lower levels of euroscepticism in some of the former communist countries, one should not be surprised to find that the European Union or Brussels as political entities are not on the list of the 'oppressive

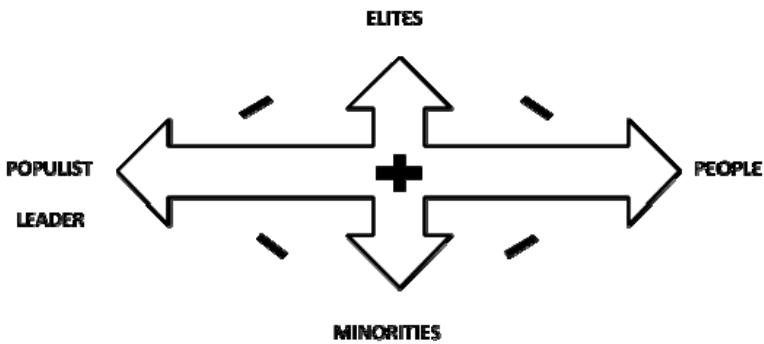

Figure 2: The two homogeneities and four antagonisms of populism

elites' that Eastern European populists strive to remove from the decision-making process. Moreover, since immigration levels have remained low in Eastern Europe as compared to Western Europe, the scapegoating rhetoric rather aims at ethnic, social or sexual minorities instead of immigrants.

Populism in Eastern Europe

Populism has generally remained a political phenomenon that received far less attention in Eastern Europe than in the West, despite the different political developments of the two. It is argued that as opposed to Western Europe, where populist parties are pariahs of the political system, in Eastern Europe they are rather seen as potential coalitional partners by mainstream parties (Mudde 2000, 45). Given the recent authoritarian (mostly totalitarian) past of Eastern Europe, political systems have developed quite differently in the two parts of the continent, as it has been argued that populism in this part of the continent is a legacy of the practice of communism (Skolkay 2000, 4). Studies identify a very pronounced dimension of ethnic nationalism in Eastern populist right-wing parties. Resentment against minorities seems to be a common denominator of populist parties in Eastern Europe, as the Bulgarian Ataka is renown for its hate-speech against ethnic and sexual minorities, together with its attitude against foreigners - whom the party accuses of influencing national politics (Ibroscheva 2013). Jobbik, the extreme right-wing populist party of Hungary, has also become renown for its strong irredentist and ultranationalist discourse (Varga 2014). There have been authors (Smrčková 2009) who underline the fact that the success of far right parties in Eastern Europe was determined by an ingenious combination of orthodox Christianity and anti-Semitic messages.

However, whereas in Bulgaria Ataka still manages to gather enough votes to ensure its representation in the national parliament, Greater Romania Party has virtually disappeared once its lead-

er Corneliu Vadim Tudor passed away in 2015. Different regional contexts seem to generate different variants of populism, but issues such as irredentism, 'social national' economy, opposition to ethnic minorities and corruption are central to these parties (Pirro 2014). Less so seems to be the topic of the European Union, which for Greater Romania Party is less of a concern than for populist parties in neighbouring countries. This might be related to the shifts in its strategy aiming to broaden its electoral appeal since 2000, when it became the largest opposition party in the country (Tiut 2006). There are also various specificities that are related to what one can consider nostalgia for communist or pre-communist totalitarianism. The leader of Greater Romania Party openly declared his admiration for the late Communist dictator Nicolae Ceauçescu, whom he praised for his nationalist rhetoric. The Greek Golden Dawn is not very different either, given its hate speech against anyone who is non-Greek and its fascination for the Nazi ideology (Dalakoglou 2013).

An overview of populism in Romania

The Romanian political system has had a very sinuous evolution since the fall of the communist regime in 1989, witnessing a continuous fading of the ideological differences between the main political competitors (M. Stoica 2015). Populism in Romania developed as a reaction not only to the cultural changes that marked the post-communist society, but also as a reaction to the sudden economic changes, against which populists promised to provide a strong economic safety net at the expense of all those who represented the new establishment. This created a favorable environment for the development of populism with a strong ethno-nationalist flavour, which was very skillfully picked up especially by the Greater Romania Party (PRM). Founded in 1991 by poet Corneliu Vadim Tudor, PRM reached the peak of its electoral success in 2000, when it entered the second round of the presidential elections.

PRM probably represents the most vivid example of what can be called the populism of contradictions: the name of the party is identical with what Romania used to be called in the interwar period, when its territory was more extended than it is today, thus making reference to a golden period of the country. As such, nostalgia is a basic element that PRM built its appeal on (G. Stoica 2013, 194). However, despite the fact that one of the major elements that characterized Romania in the interwar period was its monarchical regime, Corneliu Vadim Tudor was always a staunch opponent of King Michael I of Romania, the oldest surviving head of state from the Second World War, whom Vadim Tudor used to call names in his party magazines (one entitled 'Greater Romania' and the other 'The Tricolour'). Moreover, another important element of the interwar period was the strength of the Church, an institution whose contemporary leaders were frequently criticized by the leader of PRM, since he associated them with the establishment.

In 2000, therefore contemporary with PRM, the New Generation – Christian Democratic Party (PNG-CD) was founded, a small populist party lead by businessman George Becali (who likes to call himself 'The Warrior of Light'), a rather eccentric public figure mostly known for his ownership of 'Steaua Bucharest' football club. The party lost much of its individuality once it signed an alliance with PRM in 2009, a decision that won the two parties a common ticket to the European Parliament. Even so, PNG-CD did not manage to overcome the image of a political organization tailored as a business for its comically loquacious leader – or rather owner (Ieţcu-Fairclough 2007, 36).

However, the main competitor of PRM appeared only after the 2009 European elections, when television owner and talk-show host Dan Diaconescu founded his eponymous party: Dan Diaconescu People's Party (PPDD). For his party's campaign, Diaconescu relied heavily on his TV station (OTV), which broadcasted many of the party's actions, taking live phone calls from supporters to show how much he and his team cared for the problems of the electorate, usually with a lower income and education. In quite a short period

of time, the self-made businessman managed to transfer the sympathy of the public from his own person towards his newly created anti-system party. The moment that contributed to soaring the notoriety of his political ambitions was when he broadcasted his own arrest. Using the enormous ratings of his TV show, he posed as a whistleblower and denounced a conspiracy of the entire political class against him (M. Stoica 2012).

Data and method

Retrieving the programs of the two parties – PRM and PPDD – was not a very easy task, as the official website of the first was subject to various cyber attacks over time and at present hosts lacunar information, whereas the website of the latter is currently out of service, which most probably comes as an effect to the dissolution of the party in 2015. However, both programs were preserved through the individual social media platforms of the party leaders (the personal blog of Simona Man in the case of PPDD and the facebook fan page of Corneliu Vadim Tudor in the case of PRM).

The study focuses on the party platforms used in 2012 by the two main populist parties mentioned above, as they represented the 'usual suspects': PRM and PPDD. The reason for choosing to study Romanian populism in relation to these specific general elections is a simple one: 2012 represented the clear demise of Greater Romania Party and the best score of Dan Diaconescu People's Party. The first stage of the analysis is a quantitative one and it is based on the saliency approach (see De Raadt et al. 2004). It entails a simple calculation of the percentage of sentences referring to the four discursive strategies of populism: anti-elitism, people-centrism, scapegoating and appeals for direct democracy. The aim is to highlight the proportion of sentences that refer to each of the above and therefore to measure the degree of populism.

The second step of the analysis represents a more qualitative approach and it tries to offer explanations related to the reasons of

success and failure of the two parties, as can be understood based on their party platforms, but also in connection with other elements. The main goal of the paper is to confront the two party programs and to understand the major differences between them. The final step allows us to tap into the differences between the party platforms analyzed in the current paper and those of other populist parties in Western Europe.

Findings

The results show clear differences between the two populist competitors, which can also reveal some of the reasons for their different outcomes in the 2012 general elections. As the numbers show, there is no doubt that the platform of PRM contains much more populist statements than the one of PPDD. However, it is important to highlight which these differences are. Greater Romania Party scores highest on anti-elitism, which was always one of the major characteristics of Vadim Tudor's public discourse, who picked

Party Programs	**Anti-elitism**	**People-centrism**	**Scapegoating**	**Direct democracy**	**TOTAL**
PRM	13 **19.69***	8 **12.12**	3 **4.54**	1 **1.51**	25 **37.87**
PPDD	7 **4.60**	8 **5.26**	0 **0.00**	7 **4.60**	22 **14.47**

Table 1: Level of populism for PRM and PPDD

*In bold: the relative size of the quantitative indicators; they indicate the percentage of sentences containing a particular type of populist statements.

on just about anyone during his TV appearances or through the articles he published in the two newspapers of his party. The People's Party, however, scores highest on people-centrism. Moreover, PRM scores lowest on direct democracy, while PPDD seemed to have totally abandoned the scapegoating rhetoric. Judging from the numbers, the two party platforms look almost totally opposed to each other: PRM chose to focus on 'the other', i.e. the elites and the minorities, whereas PPDD focused on 'the People'. It is also important to stress the difference in relation to the appeals for direct democracy, which has only one reference in the program of PRM. The legitimate question is whether an unbalanced populism, one that rests mostly on an anti-elite rhetoric has less chances of winning votes than a more people-centrist populism. There is no definite answer not only because there are also other factors apart from party platforms that influence the outcome of an election, but also because as different as they might look in terms of absolute numbers, when taking into consideration the relative size of the quantitative indicators one understands that direct democracy is actually quite of a marginal topic in both platforms. The perspective also changes when having a comparative look at these party platforms and those of Western European populist parties.

By far, PRM seems to remain the party with the most pronounced populist rhetoric out of the entire lot. It scores highest of all in terms of anti-elitism and people-centrism. When comparing in relative sizes the appeals for direct democracy of Greater Romania Party with those of Front National or Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs, one might be tempted to conclude that there is actually no relevant difference between them. The relative numbers also indicate that the rhetoric of Partidul Poporului Dan Diaconescu also abounds in statements related to direct democracy. However, nuances change if analyzing the absolute numbers. There is only one reference to direct democracy in the entire party platform of PRM and not more than seven in the party platform of PPDD, as compared to the 55 of Front National or even the 15 of FPÖ. Breaking down intermediaries in the decision-making process seems to be of

Party Programs	**Anti-elitism**	**People-centrism**	**Direct democracy**	**TOTAL**
FN	1.68	2.40	1.54	**6.81**
LPF	0.33	6.76	7.52	**14.61**
FPÖ	1.23	2.07	1.15	**4.44**
PRM	19.69	12.12	1.51	**37.87**
PPDD	4.60	5.26	4.60	**14.47**

Table 2: Level of populism compared: FN, LPF, FPÖ, PRM and PPDD
Obs. The table contains only the relative size of the quantitative indicators.

less importance for populists in Romania as compared to those in Western Europe. It is an unbalanced type of populism, one that can be called 'populism of contradictions', i.e. anti-elitist, but with very little interest in bringing the decision-making process closer to the people. In Eastern Europe, more so than in the West populists seem to constitute an anti-elitist elite.

A qualitative analysis of the two Romanian case studies underlines that the program of PRM is built on a very pronounced communist nostalgia, combining a sharp ethno nationalist rhetoric with positive references to the former political regime. 'Before the events of December 1989, Romania had a strong and competitive economy' (PRM 2012: 1) is the statement that opens the program

used by the party. The introduction continues: 'We were exporting in over 130 countries, we had a performing educational system […] Moreover, the Romanian economy was booming, with a modernized production, with over one million specialists, with an efficient import-export system, with a high number of people directly involved in the production sphere and with a very low number of pensioners.' (Ibid.) There can be no better proof of the nostalgic tone. Nevertheless, an interesting feature of the PRM program is also related to the economic measures it promises: the constant blaming of the privatization process and the intentions to heavily tax the rich, push the party ideologically towards the left.

The program abounds in anti-system statements, the representatives of the elite being sometimes referred to as 'those who are guilty' [in Romanian vinovaRomanian vinovații], or those who 'dictate' solutions – as opposed to consulting the People about them. The IMF and USA are the most cited 'elites'. Interestingly enough, the program does not double anti-elitism with scapegoating, with only minor exceptions, i.e. the foreigners or 'the foreign interests'. Even so, scapegoating refers only to 'foreigners' from outside the European Union, to whom it should be forbidden to buy land in Romania. This goes hand in hand with the anti-elite statements, which – as mentioned above – mention various culprits for what is described to be the worsening economic situation of Romania, none of which are from the European level.

As compared to the political program of PRM, the one of PPDD appears to be less dense in populist statements. Much more pro-European and with a favorable attitude towards foreign investors, the challenger of Vadim Tudor's party seemed to have skillfully used populism without its scapegoating dimension. The manifesto of PPDD even refers to national and European moral values (PPDD 2012: 5); therefore, the party saw Europe rather as a partner than as a threat for Romania. From this perspective, the two parties were quite similar, since the EU was not mentioned by any of the two in their anti-elite rhetoric.

In terms of contrasts, the dominant area of interest, i.e. the most common domain that the party platforms refer to, constitutes yet another major difference between the two programs. When coding the texts, we also labeled the statements as either 'social', 'economical' or 'political'. A vast majority of the statements belonging to PRM were economical, whereas most of those belonging to PPDD were political or social. In its platform, the latter actually confessed that in its opinion Romania was going through what resembled less of an economic crisis and more of a 'social, moral and political' one. Dissatisfied with the economic solutions for the crisis, the electorate seemed to have been convinced easier by political solutions rather than by those that seemed to resemble more of a technical set of solutions.

Conclusions

The current paper highlights a number of general characteristics related to populism in Eastern Europe, showing both the major differences in comparison to similar parties of Western Europe, but also underlining what can be considered the evolution of populism in Romania.

The results show quite an important contrast between the two main populist competitors of post-communist Romania, i.e. Greater Romania Party and Dan Diaconescu People's Party. The different electoral experiences of the two and the contrasting communication styles (of both the organizations and of their leaders) greatly influenced the outcome. It is in this sense that the party platforms of the two were most probably not the only elements that contributed to the different fortunes in the 2012 general elections. The means of disseminating the information was also crucial: by then, Vadim Tudor was left with a very poorly financed and read newspaper, whereas Dan Diaconescu benefited from all the visibility that a national TV station could offer in a political campaign. Moreover, the novelty of TV host Dan Diaconescu running for Parliament (in

the same electoral district as former Prime-Minister Victor Ponta) was far more sensational than PRM participating in its already sixth electoral competition.

The study also underlines the fact that, overall, populist parties in Romania have a very poorly developed rhetoric related to direct democracy. There is not enough evidence if this is related to the famous lower-class authoritarianism (Germani 1978, 88), but previous studies on the profile of the electorate of such parties in Eastern Europe might indicate this hypothesis to be true (M. Stoica & Kutyisky 2015). This can constitute an element that reveals a major difference between Eastern and Western European populism, the latter having been built primarily around the idea of breaking down intermediary structures between the People and the decision-making process. The paper demonstrates that the concept of populism bears the weight of both geography and time, calling for a more thorough study so as to remove superfluous generalizations.

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III INTERSECTING POPULISMS

NEW FACES OF POPULISM: THE ITALIAN 'ANTI-GENDER' MOBILIZATION

Elisa Bellè and Barbara Poggio

Abstract

Over the past years, there has been an increasingly acrimonious polemic in the Italian public discourse against a theoretical construct – gender – hitherto largely confined to the academic debate. The sudden notoriety of this concept, also in the media, has been due to a mobilization campaign carried forward by Catholic and conservative associations and movements against the so-called 'gender ideology' or 'gender theory'. In the article we analyse the rhetoric and discursive strategies of two of the main groups engaged in this campaign: *Pro Vita* and *Manif pour Tous – Italy*. The analysis focuses in particular on the main content and the general structure of the official websites of the two organizations, and on the main political documents specifically related to the anti-gender mobilization. In particular, we argue that the ongoing processes can be viewed as expressions of populism, of which they exhibit significant features: in particular, the opposition between 'them and us', an insistence on naturalness, and the production of moral panic.

Introduction

Over the past years, in the Italian public discourse there has been an increasingly acrimonious polemic against a theoretical construct – gender – hitherto largely confined to the academic debate, whether specialized or feminist.

The sudden notoriety of this concept, also in the media, has been due to a mobilization campaign carried forward by Catholic and conservative associations and movements against the so-

called ‘gender ideology’ or ‘gender theory’. This campaign originally arose in the 1990s amid attempts by the Vatican to criticise and delegitimize theoretical approaches perceived as threatening the naturalness of the sexual order and the traditional family. But in recent years it has been taken up and virally amplified by various fundamentalist Catholic associations and neo-conservative political groups. It now assumes the features of an outright moral crusade.

One of the reasons for the extension and exacerbation of the discussion is certainly the tabling in parliament of bills to sanction forms of verbal and physical violence based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity; to promote initiatives in schools to tackle gender stereotypes and the various forms of bullying associated with them; and, more recently, to legalize civil unions, including same-sex ones.

From 2009 onwards, various associations, largely supported by the Italian Catholic and conservative press, organized public events and began circulating information materials with alarmist content and censure of the courses on gender differences then spreading in public schools. The following years saw numerous public events, national and local, taking the form of rallies, ‘vigils’, conferences and seminars organized on an ‘anti-gender’ platform and in defence of the ‘natural family’. These campaigns were joined not only by individuals but in many cases by public bodies as well: for instance, certain municipalities which passed resolutions to remove from libraries and nursery schools publications for children which proposed non-traditional family models, or to prohibit initiatives in schools concerned with gender differences.

In this paper we analyse the rhetoric and discursive strategies of two of the main groups engaged in this campaign, both of them recently established: Pro Vita and Manif pour Tous – Italy. The analysis will focus in particular on the main content and the general structure of the official websites of the two organizations, and on the main political documents specifically related to the anti-gender mobilization. In particular, we shall argue that the ongoing processes can be viewed as expressions of populism, of which doctrine

they exhibit significant features: in particular, the opposition between 'them and us', an insistence on naturalness, and the production of moral panic.

The 'anti-gender' discourse as populist rhetoric

The debate on populism is very broad and cuts across different disciplines. It is consequently difficult to specify the distinctive features of populism with clarity and thoroughness. However, it is possible to identify some recurrent dimensions. These we shall now seek to describe, showing some similarities and resonances with the phenomenon that we intend to explore, i.e. the growth and spread of 'anti-gender' movements and public discourses.

One of the essential components of populism is, of course, its emphasis on the sovereignty of the people, understood as a silent majority and a homogeneous community by history and destiny, and in which the individual is subordinate to the whole. In the populist worldview, this community has a moral monopoly, which must be defended against external threats, principally that embodied in everything that assails the community's homogeneity. Whence derives the typically Manichean vision in populism which distinguishes the world between friends and enemies (Meny & Surel 2002; Zanatta 2013) and therefore the antagonism between 'us' and 'them'. Among those most demonized are the elites (who have betrayed the people through the abuse of power and corruption) and foreigners and minorities (who threaten the community's survival). Populism claims that the 'primacy of the people' must be restored (Mény & Surel 2002, 11) through the suppression of such threats. In what follows we shall seek to show how this discourse is declined in relation to the debate on gender.

The ‘them and us’ opposition

> The first aspect that we highlight is the opposition between ‘them’ and ‘us’. This, as said, is a constitutive dimension of populist discourse (Mény & Surel 2002).

Populist rhetoric, in fact, often draws a sharp distinction between, on the one hand, a corrupt and predatory elite (them), and on the other, the exploited and suffering people (us) (Sawer 2008). Whilst the ‘we’ is often represented as a homogeneous group without differences of gender, race or class, the ‘them’ are usually represented as elites, groups with particular interests who exploit their specificities in order to reach a privileged position, to the detriment of the rest of the population.

A first effect of this distinction is the delegitimization of policies and public actions aimed at social justice and equal opportunities (Sawer 2008). Such policies, which usually concern women, LGBTQ persons or migrants, are seen as immoral and discriminatory.’Feminist and other equality seekers have been framed as rent seekers, lacking any moral authenticity. Men’s rights groups and anti-feminist women’s groups promote the idea that equal opportunity programs discriminate against the men and the women who choose to be economically dependent on them.’ (Sawer 2008, 122.)

In recent years, gender has become one of the main targets of this imaginary opposition between ‘us’ and ‘them’, in Italy, as we will see in the rest of the paper, but also in other European countries, characterized by similar social movements, such as France and East Europe (Kováts & Põim, 2015). As Ranieri (2016) points out, this ‘othering’ process with respect to gender can be interpreted in light of two main issues. First, populist rhetoric deploys a ‘conspiracy theory’ whereby the feminist-homosexual-marxist elites plot to undermine the ‘traditional and natural family’, leading to demographic decline. They are therefore extremely dangerous to the population. In this frame, populists even raise the spectre of a ‘new totalitarianism’ pursued by those elites and whose ultimate goal is to de-

stroy human civilization itself (Mayer, Sori & Sauer 2016). Second, the tendency to consider gender in relation to other categories of difference (sexual orientation, nationality, class) can be seen as a strategy to generate ambivalence and contradiction, and to consolidate the 'us versus them' dichotomy. In this process an increasingly important role is played today by the new digital media. These can be used to acquire an ever wider audience and more easily reach young people, and they lend themselves well to the use of simplificatory and conventional language and rhetoric.

The threats to the natural order

A second feature apparently typical of populist discourse is its constant reference to the existence of a 'natural order' (Rydgren 2003) threatened by the elites or by the minorities. This natural order is based on constructs – such as the homeland and the family – represented as primordial institutions harmonious with a social order represented as ancestral, universal and natural. Particularly emphasised is the 'natural family', the reference being to the specific type of family consisting of a man and a woman and aimed at procreation. Phenomena like modernization, individualization, globalization, ethnic contamination, the equalization of gender roles, and the emergence of new family models are seen as dangerous threats to the original and natural order and as symptomatic of a progressive corruption and degeneration of society that must necessarily be halted. Populist movements therefore put themselves forward as 'defenders of the values of the status quo ante' against artificiality, relativism, and cultural decline.

In particular, gender studies – called '*teoria del Gender*' (Gender theory) or '*ideologia del Gender*'(Gender ideology) – are accused of denying what is instead considered to be a self-evident and incontestable anthropological fact: the natural difference and complementarity between men and women based on biological and anatomical differences. This accusation is taken from a debate ongo-

ing within the Catholic Church since the mid-1990s in which strong criticism is made of the theories and approaches that denaturalize the sexual order (Garbagnoli 2014). The main accusation brought against gender theory is that is a 'Trojan horse' used to introduce, on the pretext of equality and freedom, a worldview based on a 'denial of the sexes and an egalitarian relativism' against which the people must rebel (Anatrella 2012).

Moral panic

A third ingredient of the theoretical debate on populism that we can find in the anti-gender debate concerns moral panic. With this latter expression we refer to the discursive strategy which creates, often with the support of the media, a state of anxiety or fear concerning what is perceived to be a threat to social order (Krinsky 2013). It is based on the narrative construction of the gradual corruption and subversion of the natural order of things, which represent a mortal danger for the population (De la Torre 2014). It is in fact 'a political strategy for maintaining the hegemony of the nuclear family, the sanctity of heterosexual relationships and the heteronormative social order' (Robinson 2008, 114).

The aim is therefore to restore traditional values by re-establishing the order thrown into crisis by globalization and individualization (Hier 2011). The discourses most frequently mobilized concern children and sexuality, especially those relative to non-heterosexual subjectivities. In a growing quest for existential security (amid increasingly uncertain scenarios) there spread populist discursive constructs characterized by dramatization, alarmism, and especially the delegitimization and stigmatization of what is considered 'different' and/or 'other', always on the basis of reproduction of the heteronormative social order. The reference to children is a recurrent feature of strategies to create moral panic. In fact, focusing on the danger of certain behaviours for children escalates the level of victimization that would obtain if only adults were in-

volved. Such behaviour thus represents an even greater threat to the social order (Jenkins 1992).

Important drivers of moral panic, and consequently of the impact of populist discourse, are new technologies, and in particular the Web. These are the most effective generators and transmitters of moral panics because of their combination of viral and instant communication with scant verifiability (McRobbie & Thornton 1995).

Methodology

This study concentrates on the populist dimensions of the public discourse that has arisen in Italy around the theme of 'Gender'. It considers two organizations recently created to safeguard the values of the traditional heterosexual family, to oppose gender education initiatives in schools, and to campaign against legislative initiatives to recognize the rights of homosexual couples.

The ProVita (pro-life) association was created in Italy in 2012 following the first 'National March for Life', an anti-abortion event which emulated the 'March for Life' first organized in the USA during the 1970s. It describes itself as a non-profit organization, which aims to promote the values of life and the family, especially in order to protect children. It carries out its action through a web portal organizing public events, petitions, and awareness campaigns.

The Manif pour tous association was founded in France in 2012 with the purpose of opposing the institution of marriage for same-sex couples and the introduction of gender education courses in schools. The organization soon established itself in Italy as well, with similar purposes (although in relation to a different political debate): primarily, to protect heterosexual marriage and to oppose the anti-homophobia bill then being debated in parliament. It has branches (74) throughout the country and operates through a website and various social networks. It organizes public events and distributes promotional materials.

Our analysis first concentrated on the main content and the general structure of the official websites of the two organizations. We then selected for each group the main political documents specifically related to anti-gender mobilization. The texts were selected according to two criteria: one more closely connected to the thematic focus (among the various materials present on the websites, we identified those that dealt most directly with 'gender theory or ideology'); the other to the aim (we chose texts aimed at framing the theme in a general, theoretical and ideological way, avoiding petitions or reports on specific events).

Our main interest was to reconstruct the topics and political frames of this new conservative and populist wave, and we decided to base our work on the Qualitative Discourse Analysis methodology (Wodak & Krzyzanowski 2008). More precisely, we used some basic tools of the Discourse analysis such as the rhetorical construction of the discourse, the analysis of the texts' structure, the main and/or recurrent linguistic uses and their symbolical implications, the self-representation of the speaking subject and the representation of the enemies (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). We have also referred to some suggestions provided by Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), considering how discourse, at social and political level, reproduces and reflects power dynamics, ideologies, and inequalities (van Dijk 2001). Specific attention is paid by CDA to the capacity of texts to inculcate, support, or even change ideologies (Wodak & Meyer 2009), where ideologies are understood as means to establish and maintain asymmetrical power relations (Thompson 1990).

In our analysis we tried to identify and deconstruct the political strategies and the value systems implicit in the anti-gender discourse. According to van Dijk (2000), one of the heuristic principles for analysing the ideological dimension of discourse is manipulation, which is based on the strategy of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation. The main processes that characterize manipulation are the following: i) ideological polarization: in our case the counter position between 'us', the good, innocent people and 'they', the corrupted elites of gender theory and homosex-

ual lobbies; ii) positive self-presentation by moral superiority: the natural/divine order counter-posed to a scientific dystopia; iii) discrediting of the opponent, depicted as a corrupted and corruptive threat against the social and moral order of the people; iv) the emotionalization of the argument, organized on the basis of the threat's rhetoric (against the people in general, but particularly against the more pure and vulnerable subject: childhood) and the moral panic (the homosexual contagion and the subversion of an universal anthropology, based on the complementarity between traditional codes of masculinity and femininity).

Overall, we identified four texts in the case of Manif pour Tous and six in that of Pro Vita (which had shorter texts on average). We analysed the structure of the texts (dispositional macro structure) and identified thematic sequences (Reisigl 2008). We then performed analysis of the contents, the arguments, the various linguistic uses, and rhetoric strategies. As we will show in the next paragraphs, the discursive construction of the two organizations is structured i) on the basis of an ideological polarization between two counter-posed fronts; ii) a strong emotionalization of the arguments.

The anti-gender rhetorics: the threat, enemies, nature, and science

This section sets out the main results of our text analysis. On the basis of the interpretive categories that emerged from the study of the selected texts, the section is divided into a first part devoted to the presentation of the threat (gender), which is analysed following the various ways in which it was discursively constructed. Interwoven with analysis of the threat there are descriptions of the various enemies indicated, for various reasons, as responsible for it. We will then clarify what kind of identity/subject emerges from the 'them versus us' opposition, highlighting the argumentative axis and the

main conceptual and rhetorical strategies used to sustain both the discourse and the collective identity constructed.

The threat of a new totalitarianism: gender

The element most recurrent in the various texts analysed had to do with the – classically populist – theme of threat, impending danger, emergency. This element permeated and structured the discourse of both organizations. The threat, evoked and summarized by the label-item gender ideology, emerged as a multifaceted, composite dimension within which there intertwined diverse elements to construct a narrative of sexual (Herdt 2009) and moral panic (Robinson 2008; De la Torre 2014).

Most salient among all the elements was the danger of the corruption, precocious sexualisation, and psycho-physical impairment of children due in particular to courses on affectivity and gender equality in schools:

> We've started collecting hundreds of reports from schools throughout Italy. They range from a little boy coming home wearing lipstick (because he had to learn, by force if necessary, that the lipstick/woman association is a stereotype to be eliminated), the dark curtain behind which nursery-school children are pushed half-naked so that they touch each other more or less by accident (because they have to learn ... but what do they need to learn in this case? We wouldn't want to think that these are lessons intended to normalize paedophilia). (Manif pour Tous.)

> The attempt ongoing in schools to convince children of all the world, according to the new commandments issued by the United Nations, that they must be initiated into the joys of sex as early as possible. [...] It comes to nobody's mind that these are unscrupulous adults who, after experimenting with everything, feel the need to start innocent children along the path towards corruption of body and mind. (Pro Vita.)

What is apparent here is the connection between text/argument and context. As pointed out by other studies (Robinson 2008), the theme of threatened childhood often appears in the public debate on

the issues of gender education in schools and, especially, on homosexuality and the recognition of same-sex civil unions. The theme of child protection makes it possible, on the one hand, to avoid a direct attack on homosexuals, thereby conveying an impression of respect and moderateness, and on the other, to construct an opposition based on moral panic and a not openly declared but implicitly suggested fear of 'homosexual contagion' ('hundreds of reports from schools throughout Italy. They range from a little boy coming home wearing lipstick…'; 'unscrupulous adults who, […] feel the need to start innocent children along the path towards corruption of body and mind').

The threat to children in schools has consequences which further exacerbate the moral panic: principally, the loss by families of their right to have their children educated as they wish, the slide towards a totalitarian state, and a general, anthropological subversion:

> 'This phenomenon [gender education courses] conflicts with the freedom of families to know what is being taught to their children, and how, and to choose whether or not to permit it. It is typical of a totalitarian state to remove educational responsibility from the family and transfer it to the public political power (which authorizes and finances these courses)'. (Manif pour Tous.)
>
> 'The range of action of gender ideology – which aims to accomplish an unprecedented anthropological subversion which destructures the very nature of people – is constantly expanding. (Pro Vita.)

As will be seen, both organizations use words and expressions that evoke a threat, a social one, but with different nuances (the attacks against the educational freedom of families in one case, and the anthropological subversion in the other). Manif pour Tous tends to give greater emphasis to the issue of education, showing that it pays particular attention to the current political debate. In order to influence this debate more effectively, it repeatedly appeals to the constitutional right to freedom of education ('Serene dialogue with the school authorities is one of the prime rights (and duties) of parents, so that they can exercise – as stated by the Constitution – freedom

of education in regard to their children'). The reference to the Constitution – the founding document of the Italian democratic system – gives the discourse an aura of secular sacredness which contributes to constructing the speaking subject (Manif pour Tous) as the people, the majoritarian and legitimate force. Pro Vita seems to concentrate less on the contingent dimension of the political agenda and more on the abstract and eschatological level of moral and cultural corruption, the irreversible mutation of the categories of the human ('... the ideology of gender intends to eliminate all the constraints imposed by mother nature on the relationship between human beings and the created').

In both cases, it is interesting to note how the discursive scenario of moral panic, in a crescendo of pathos, assumes the features of an outright dystopia:

> The intention with civil unions is to destroy the system that in Italy recognizes and promotes the family. [...] through the impersonal techniques of filiation, in which the child becomes one project for individual fulfilment among many, which no longer has the slightest connection with bigoted references to a 'mum' and a 'dad' in the concreteness of their existential amalgamation in the child's mind and body, but concerns free access to the market of reproductive factors: sperm, eggs and uteruses for rent (at least until the advent of the artificial uterus on which the biotechnology industry is already working, anticipating the multi-billion business of the cultivation of human beings). (Manif pour Tous.)

> A body open to every possibility: this is the ideal pursued by the more radical proponents of gender [italics in original]. [...] Gender thus seems bound to follow the same route as the 1968 movement. [...] The youth rebellion, disoriented by permissiveness, deluded itself that it was fighting capitalism and technocracy. In fact, it placed itself in service of a project to subvert the traditional moral order, the indispensable pillar of a just society. [...] The genderist revolution only serves to continue this great transformation in which a market economy becomes a market society. [...] There is a significant difference: a market economy is an instrument, even a valuable one, with which to organize production activities. A market society is instead a lifestyle, a way of life in which every aspect of human life is valued according to the parameters of the market. (Pro Vita.)

Again, some relevant differences are apparent between the two organizations. The dystopian scenario of Manif pour Tous is closely connected to the current political agenda. The text, in fact, refers to the specific political context of discussion concerning possible enactment of a law on civil unions including recognition – albeit partial – of parenthood to homosexual couples. Hence the evocation of dystopia acts as a deterrent to the possibility of such recognition, contrasting the generative act of 'existential amalgamation in ... mind and body' to the cold 'reproductive market': in the former case, a family-formation project (thus implicitly generous) born from the love of 'Mom and Dad'; in the latter, an individual choice (thus implicitly selfish) 'colonized and incentivized by the free market'.

The rhetoric of Pro Vita instead emphasises the link between 'gender ideology' and subjugation of all social relations to a market economy. Significantly, the 'genderist revolution' – note the accentuation of the ideological aspect through the use of the suffix ist – is associated with the protest movement of around 1968 because of its 'subversion of the moral order'.

It is important to note the nuances of the argument. In fact, there is no criticism of a market economy (a valuable instrument with which to organize productive activities), but condemnation of a market society, in which the value of people is determined by a price. The 'gender' thus becomes permissiveness, relativism, the wearing of one's body like flaunting a designer outfit until it goes out of fashion (as stated elsewhere in the same text). This is a version of dystopia less tied to political contingency and more markedly ideologized. The criticism of the market's pervasiveness with respect to the value of people, traditional values, and common decency resembles the rhetoric of the neo-fascist right, which is distinguished by a mix of anti-capitalist/anti-globalization and traditionalist positions (Cammelli 2015).

The necessary populist corollary to the threat is the construction of a hostile otherness. This is present in the discourse of both organizations. The first enemy consists of 'the associations of the

Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual-Transgender movement [...] one of the least representative trade-union groups in the country' (MpT), otherwise termed the 'homosexualist lobbies' (PV). Such terminology contributes to constructing the campaign for recognition of civil unions as elitist/minoritarian, anti-popular, and therefore contrary to the general interest (of the people). If, therefore, 'the homosexualist lobbies' (once again, the suffix relates to a dimension of ideological and totalitarian manipulation) are the most obvious enemy, they are flanked by 'the political party that serves as a support [for the gay lobby] in the corridors of power', the 'politically correct politicians' supported by supranational bodies like 'the United Nations', 'the European Union' and the 'Tribunals', guilty of legitimizing dissemination of the gender ideology and thus endangering the natural moral order and the right of families to live according to that order.

Lobbies, politicians, Tribunals, Europe: all enemies not new to the construction of the discourse of right-wing populist forces. However, there is an enemy of an entirely distinctive kind, a new hostile otherness entering the anti-gender discourse: the persons responsible for the production and cultural dissemination of the gender ideology. In fact, for every ideology there are ideologues. In this case they are identified especially with the university system; and their 'pro-gender' activities are subject to constant monitoring and denunciation via the Web. There thus arises a new enemy, which can be called a 'false science' dedicated to moral corruption and, which is, above all, highly ideological:

> The philosophical, psychological and sociological frame of reference of these courses [gender education in schools] is that of 'gender theories', a set of speculations on how people's sexual identity is culturally structured (Manif pour Tous).

We have seen thus far that the threat and inimical otherness – classically populist elements, even in their variants – constitute the core components of the discourse. We will now see how, by means of this contraposition with otherness, the anti-gender movement constructs its identity in the transition from 'them' to 'us'. We will also

analyse the main argumentative strategies used by the movement to support its discursive structure and its identity as a threatened subject.

The argument: nature, universal anthropology and science

The collective subject that emerges in opposition to the threat of gender ideology and its supporters – coherently with a recurrent configuration of populist phenomena – presents itself as the majoritarian social actor expressing a common sense and a common feeling:

> If in the coming weeks Parliament does not give concrete signs of having understood this mortal danger [the recognition of same-sex unions], the Italian people will astonish many [...]. Everyone should take careful stock, because the generation-of the family has just been born, and history is us. (Manif pour Tous.)

In the case of Manif pour Tous, an organization especially concerned to influence the political debate and agenda, the anti-gender movement does not only coincide with the people; it represents an entirely new generation, the generation of the family ('generazione-famiglia'), arisen with a specific project: to construct a reaction (also in the political sense of the term) in defence of the natural order and its right to survive the gender threat.

Also in the Pro Vita discourse 'we' tends to coincide with the institution of the 'natural family', the last bulwark against moral corruption and total commodification:

> The dream of unbridled capitalism is to destroy every kind of identity so as to have lone, insecure individuals needful of the services that the free market can supply. The national and political identities of most of the population have already been destroyed, or almost, and it is now the turn of the natural family and gender identity. The natural family is by definition the enemy of capitalism because it saves, recycles and cares for its members, the exact opposite of the lone 'customer individual'. (Pro Vita.)

According to the populist paradigm of victimization, this is a threatened 'us' subject to attempts at ideological manipulation which principally harm the 'younger (and therefore weaker) part of the population' (Pro Vita). This is a 'we' that represents itself as able to counteract the dystopian and totalitarian intent of gender ideology by virtue of its absolute legitimacy, which in turn is the argumentative axis of the anti-gender discourse. The 'nature', ordering principle and moral force of which the anti-gender movement is an expression:

> The natural complementarity of male and female, with all that this naturally entails also in relational and social terms, like the right and natural need of every unborn child to grow up with the father and mother that have been necessary for one even to speak of 'childbirth' [...] 'Gender' theories are [...] opinions challenged or simply rejected by huge numbers of Italian families. (Manif pour Tous.)

> The gender ideology intends to eliminate all the constraints imposed by Mother Nature in the relationship between human beings and the created. To achieve the New World it is necessary to erase all antiquated dualisms: male/female, homosexual/heterosexual, natural/unnatural, moral/immoral. Only then will come the triumph of modernity and progress. This is a demented utopia destined, like all utopias, to be dashed on rocks of reality, but which will cost everyone dearly. (Pro Vita.)

Nature is the argumentative core of the entire discursive structure and its underlying ideological representation. Nature is the moral and material force that regulates the beliefs, values, choices and inclinations of the people of the family (or generation of the family). It is the law of nature that the ideology of gender wants to eliminate with its 'demented utopia' and subjection to commodification. Nature is still the invincible force which counteracts the threat of sexual indifferentism, which defines what relations can be defined as 'familial', and which determines the boundaries of political rights and citizenship.

As reinforcement to the natural order argument there are two intertwined rhetorics that are presented as empirical evidences and objective proofs. The first is the universal human anthropology

modelled directly on the laws of nature; an anthropology that does not counterpose nature and culture but instead constructs the latter as naturally in accord with an unspecified 'biological reality':

> Gender ideology denies the anthropological and biological reality of the human being. It is disrespectful of the right of learners to be instructed in the categories of the real. (Manif pour Tous).
>
> The gender ideology aims to accomplish an unprecedented anthropological subversion which destructures the very nature of people. (Pro Vita).

The universal feature of humanity is the existence of a polarization and complementarity between male and female, understood as incommensurable and ineliminable 'natural' dimensions rooted in biology, in the anatomy ('amalgamated in the mind and body', Manif pour Tous). There therefore exists, contrary to what the ideologues of gender propagandize, a universal human nature based on the male/female, heterosexual/homosexual, natural/unnatural dichotomies that time and space do not alter and which descends from a higher order. This universal human nature persists in time and does not vary in space; to a certain extent, it is transcendent. Here the non-explicit, silent but implicitly present element in the discourse is the divine, although it is not mentioned directly. Indeed, somewhat surprisingly, the second rhetoric adopted to reinforce the discourse on nature is a secular, science-based one. In fact, this anti-gender discourse opposes to the manipulative and ideological 'false science' of gender theories a 'true science' which instead tests, confirms, and defends the natural order of male and female:

> Classic science is unforgiving of errors and does not bend to ideologies [...] 'tame science', like psychology, is much more malleable.' (Pro Vita).
>
> 'We are certain that the girls-dolls and boys-mechanical games imposition stems from a masculinist patriarchal culture or the fact that the boys from the eighth week of intrauterine life develop the aggressiveness area of the brain thanks to a massive influx of testosterone that induces them from birth to prefer movement or geometric shapes, rather than prefer games that simulate relations as do girls who do not receive

> this wave of testosterone and develop to a greater extent areas of the brain devoted to emotion, communication and empathy, and therefore at birth are ready to develop and mature the capacity for relationality and nurture typical of women. (Manif pour Tous*)*.

Pro Vita explicitly and programmatically distinguishes between 'domesticated science' (like psychology, but also a vaguely defined science of education) and 'classic science' which does not yield to compromises and ideological pressures, thus confirming what is already intimately known, because it is inscribed in the universal laws of nature. It is also important to note that the Pro Vita website contains numerous articles that in regard to other issues, especially surrogate gestation, cite pseudo-scientific sources in order to cloak its discourse with the semblance of credibility, transparency, and impartiality. Another important feature revealed by the examination of the Manif pour Tous document, but also apparent in the rhetoric of Pro Vita, is the use of explanations intended to demonstrate the naturalness of gender differences (and inequalities), and their intimate accord with the laws of nature. It is consequently possible to identify, albeit indirectly, a profoundly populist discursive construct: the seduction of a timeless order, an ancestral harmony, which regulates human destiny and which must be defended. This is an argument that, in line with several empirical manifestations of populism, simplifies the order of the discourse, forestalling any possibility of criticism (and deconstruction of stereotypes) through the use, on the one hand, of natural self-evidence (it is so because it is natural for it to be so) and, and on the other, scientific rhetoric (also true science confirms that it is so).

Conclusions

In this study we have analysed a relatively recent socio-political phenomenon – the Italian Catholic anti-gender movement – using analytical lenses and conceptual tools related to the broader debate on populism. In particular we analysed the texts produced by two

organizations particularly active in the anti-gender movement and published on their official websites. The attempt to connect the phenomenon in question to the debate on populism has been experimental and circumscribed. It has been a first analysis of a phenomenon still little studied (Kuhar & Paternotte 2017), and therefore conducted in the absence of consolidated theoretical frames. It is therefore necessary, in conclusion, to briefly recall the main similarities between populist rhetorics and the anti-gender movements considered.

First, as we have seen, a classically populist feature of the phenomenon analysed concerns construction of the threat of impending danger. The discourse of the two organizations, in fact, is primarily aimed at defining gender as a dangerous ideology intent on abolishing every sexual order, mainly through the indoctrination of young people. The gender threat, viral and totalitarian in character, is associated with the onset of an outright dystopia consisting of sexual indifferentism, the end of the individual and the family, and the total commodification of the human (in which science and technology collaborate).

Predictably, the threat is associated with identification of a number of enemy othernesses, another key feature of populist discourses: in this case, the homosexualist lobbies (and the politically correct politicians who support them), together with the gender ideologies identified especially with the academic community that gravitates around gender studies.

With the threat and the enemy identified, also the collective identity of the movement emerges: the threatened 'us', the victim of attempted moral corruption and totalitarian tendencies, is the family (or generation of the family) which embodies the silent majority that lives according to the laws of nature and common sense. Nature is the core of this discursive architecture: nature and its laws constitute the anti-modern seduction tied to the sacredness of a traditional dichotomous order, which can be substantially identified in the hetero-patriarchal ideology.

Here arises a particularly interesting aspect of the phenomenon studied: its ambivalent relationship with ideology. In fact, (gender) ideology is, as shown, the threat par excellence which the movement identifies, and ideologization is the crux of the dystopian scenario, as well as being the enemy's main aim. If ideology is the threat, however, it is quite evident that the discourse of the two organizations in its turn has markedly ideological content, within a significant process of projecting and mirroring its own discourse on that of others. A discourse made of tautological assumptions, the absolute and immutable truth of established orders, oriented to defining general concepts and issues, but above all power relations, in fact, is very close to being an ideology.

Connected with the question of ideology there is another point which we believe to be of great interest: the ambivalent role of science. In the discourse of both organizations, in fact, science is both the enemy – 'the false science' tamed in the interests of ideology – and the ally – the 'true science' which demonstrates the immutability of the laws of nature. The anti-gender Italian discourse often presents itself as moderate, reasonable, documented, and scientific. However, in appealing to science, it constructs the same simplification of the discourse, the arguments, and the reasons that we find in many other populist phenomena, albeit sometimes in refined and formally moderated tones. The relationship with scientific argumentation is a theme less common in populist language and discourses that could be worth exploring.

A final issue relative to the interweaving between populism and anti-gender movements that could also be subject to further study concerns the reciprocal influence of the relationship between discourse and socio-political context. The media-driven impact that this discourse has had on public opinion has in fact been a boon for right-wing parties, which have immediately taken it up and amplified it further. It would therefore be interesting to observe the subsequent developments of this relationship in terms of radicalization, generalization and (de)legitimation.

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POPULISM AND THE CHRISTIAN RIGHT IN FINLAND: THE POLITICAL RHETORIC OF THE PATMOS FOUNDATION FOR WORLD MISSIONS

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ABSTRACT

The former executive director of the Patmos Foundation for World Missions, Leo Meller, is known for his prophecies of the end of the age and for bringing American-style evangelicalism, especially the sales pitch, to the Finnish context in the 1980s. More recently, the Patmos Foundation for World Missions' research director and doctor of theology, Juha Ahvio, has attempted to bring the themes of the U.S. Christian right to Finnish political discussions in the wake of populism after the Finns Party's landslide victory in 2011. He has written pamphlets that focus on defending traditional marriage, tracking the ideological roots of cultural Marxism, decrying the Islamization of Europe, warning about the threat Russia poses and the need for the revival of nationalism, etc. This article analyzes the political rhetoric of Ahvio - more precisely, the way he categorizes friends and enemies in his political narrative.

Introduction

> A religious community which wages wars against members of other religious communities or engages in other wars is already more than a religious community; it is a political entity (Schmitt 1976, 37).

On March 16, 2016, at the Hilton Helsinki Kalastajatorppa hotel, the second Finnish version of a National Prayer Breakfast was held. Participants represented political and business interests. Although the event was politically nonaligned, the politicians who attended were mainly from the Christian Democratic Party and the Finns

Party; politicians representing the National Coalition Party and the Center Party and one participant from the Social Democratic Party also attended. This event is an example of the revival of religion in the Finnish political culture and discussion. In particular, American-borrowed spirituality and discourse in political and theological questions have come together in recent years. U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower invented the Prayer Breakfast, previously held with religious businessmen, as an official part of political life in the United States.

This article considers religious (especially American borrowed) manifestations in Finnish politics as part of the third wave of the radical right and the rise of populism since the 2011 Finnish parliamentary elections and focuses on one case. To clarify the populist style, which is characterized by simplification, polarization, and intensification, as a political party revival of religious speech, the article utilizes German jurist and political theorist Carl Schmitt's concept of the political. First, the article, referring to Schmitt's concept, asks how a religious community tries to create a political entity that separates friend and enemy. Second, the article asks how religious, moral, or ethical questions are transformed into political antagonism in populist discourse.

The empirical case focuses on the Patmos Foundation for World Missions, one of the most notable evangelical organizations in Finland outside the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, and especially the blog writings and political pamphlets of the foundation's research director and doctor of theology, Juha Ahvio. His writings are worth researching for their perseverance: he wrote a weekly blog on Patmos websites as a political memorandum and has published at least one political pamphlet every year since 2011, in which he refers to themes popular among the U.S. Christian right, paleoconservatives, and the Tea Party movement in order to introduce them as part of the Finnish evangelical movement and create a political discussion about these issues (and last year defends Donald Trump's policy). For example, Patmos Foundation for World Missions employees were pivotal figures in the movement against

the same-sex marriage bill, and Ahvio was one of the movement's key authorities, along with professor of education Tapio Puolimatka, in the Christian media. The two were invited as specialists to hearings held by the parliamentary committee by members of parliament who oppose same-sex marriage. In addition, Ahvio's opinions seem to have received support among secular supporters of the Finnish anti-immigration movement. This article suggests that his political writings are not only a curiosity; that politics and religion have become closer in populist discourse in a new way in recent years, but they are also part of a new conservative, anti-liberalist, and especially anti-feminist movement in Finland (e.g. Hännikäinen & Melender 2012; Vihavainen et al. 2015).

Background

According to the Patmos Foundation for World Missions' own webpages, the organization, founded in 1971 and funded only by Finnish private donations, have worked as a missionary and relief agency on four continents and in 24 countries. The foundation's missionary work is divided into missionary work abroad and in Finland. Pamphlets, blog writings, and media appearances by Ahvio alone or with media pastors are part of Patmos's domestic missionary work with 'spreading of the Christian faith and gospel by broadcasting (radio, television, the Internet), printed media (book publisher Kuva ja Sana) and events'. The Patmos Foundation for World Missions is best known for its former executive director, Leo Meller, who, in the 1980s, introduced American-style evangelicalism, including prophecies of the end of the age and the Rapture of true Christians, the belief that heavy metal music and roleplaying games are satanic, etc. (e.g. Hjelm 2005), and especially the sales pitch, which focused on making money, which was new in Finland.

In late 2011, doctor of theology Ahvio was recruited by the Patmos Foundation for World Missions as its research director. Since then, he has written pamphlets for book publisher Kuva ja Sana and

political blogs and appeared as an expert at Christian events and on Christian media channels such as Heaven TV7 and Radio Patmos. His writings are not particularly academic as he began as a research director (not even his popular theological writings), but there is a clear continuum with his former academic career as the docent of dogmatic theology at the University of Helsinki: His dissertation concerned the theological epistemology of contemporary American confessional reformed apologetics (Ahvio 2005; Ahvio 2006). Repeated themes in Ahvio's political writings include arguing against same-sex marriage, tracking the ideological roots of cultural Marxism, decrying the Islamization of Europe, warning about the threat Russia poses and stressing the need for the revival of nationalism, denying climate change, criticizing the welfare state as socialism, and defending Israel's current political actions against Palestinians. These themes are also well-known from the current discussion in the United States among paleoconservatives and the Christian right.

Paleoconservatism refers to a political philosophy that was founded in the United States during the interwar period, when the philosophy influenced the United States' refusal to participate in the League of Nations, reduce immigration, and oppose President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal policy. Paleoconservatives question the supposition that European culture and mores can ever be transplanted or even forced upon non-Western cultures, due to separate cultural heritage. (Foley 2007.)

The Christian right—or Fundamentalists as the group previously called itself—was mainly an anti-political movement before the Six-Day War in 1967. However, after Israel defeated its Arab neighbors, a dispensationalist dream among the Christian Right renewed the movement as a political subject, and followers began to demand that the United States support Israel unconditionally. Since the early 1970s, members have also participated in domestic policy, concerning moral issues: pressuring against gay rights, abortion, and pornography (e.g. Ruotsila 2008). In the 1980s, the Moral Majority was the collective organization for the Christian right, and to-

day, paleoconservatives and the Christian right have created a new prominent alliance with the Republican Party's Tea Party movement, which is trying to remake Republican conservatism (Skocpol & Williamson 2012).

Traditionally, Finland, as a Lutheran country, has interpreted the two kingdoms doctrine as the separation of politics and religion, at least in public. An exception is the smallest party in Parliament—the ultraconservative Christian Democratic Party, which has strong ties to newer Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church's revival movements since the 1960s as well as Pentecostalism. However, the Finns Party's landslide victory, the increase in conservative voices, and the decrease in the Evangelical Lutheran church's influence (in the 1970s, more than 95 percent of Finns were members of the church, but today, fewer than 75 percent are) in Finnish society have opened up possibilities for new arguments and interpretations of the two kingdoms doctrine, the revival of religious discourse. The Finns Party attracted religious voters, and its former long-time chairman, Timo Soini, openly spoke about his faith as the background to his politics, especially concerning moral questions (Parkkinen 2017). However, the party electorate's attitudes toward religion in politics are disorganized (Mykkänen 2011). This article assumes that the rise of the Finns Party and political populism made it possible for Ahvio to copy and paste the themes of the American Christian right and paleoconservatives to Finnish politics.

The concept of the political

This article utilizes German jurist and political theorist Carl Schmitt's concept of the political in order to understand Ahvio's political rhetoric as part of populism. Schmitt insisted that the concept of the political is determined by a distinction between friend and enemy, which separates it from other human categories of action: In the realm of morality, the final distinction is between good and evil; in the aesthetic realm, beautiful and ugly; in the econom-

ic realm, profitable and unprofitable (Schmitt 1976, 26). However, emotionally these categories are easily confused, but Schmitt (1976) stressed: 'the morally evil, aesthetically ugly or economically damaging need not necessarily be the enemy; the morally good, aesthetically beautiful, and economically profitable need not necessarily become the friend in the specifically political sense of the word' (27). In addition, he wrote that '[t]he friend and enemy concepts are to be understood in their concrete and existential sense, not as metaphors or symbols, not mixed and weakened by economic, moral, and other conceptions, least of all in a private-individualistic sense as a psychological expression of private emotions and tendencies.' (Schmitt 1975, 28). According to Schmitt, recognizing enemies and friends is, literally, a political decision, which a political agent has to accomplish, without referring or subordinating it to any moral, aesthetic, or economic judgment. The art of politics is to find proper enemies and friends who connive for their own objectives, and a properly chosen an enemy will bind friends, create unions, and form a political entity.

Weimar German and the Nazi regime inspired Schmitt's political thinking: his concept of the political could be understood as written against – or as a warning to – political liberalism, which tried to deny the possibility of war, and thus politics, for example, as Chantal Mouffe (2000) presented in her interpretation of Schmitt's political thinking. Pertti Lappalainen (2002) called the Schmittian concept of the political, in which the political agent actualizes a distinction between friend and enemy, achieving media publicity over institutionalized party politics', style-intensive politics. Lappalainen used new social movements in the late 1990s and early 2000s, such as environmental movements and anti-globalization movements, and their performances as examples of style-intensive politics in the field of civil society. According to him for the political left, Schmitt is the challenger of uniformity. However, this interpretation has been criticized. Sari Roman-Lagerspetz (2009, 140) argues that for Schmitt, the nation-state chooses a political identity, even though he admits that categories of race, social class,

or national origin are par excellence political identities, and thus, a nation-state's objective is to minimize politics inside the nation-state. Indeed, this article argues that the concept of intensive politics aids in understanding third wave of the radical right even better than political left. In his own time, Schmitt's political thinking influenced American Conservatism: e.g. Leo Strauss's first published work was a commentary on Schmitt's Concept of the Political. Ahvio does not refer to Schmitt's (or Strauss's) thinking directly, but he seems to be well aware of the tradition of American conservative thinking.

The passage from party democracy via audience democracy (Manin 1997) to convergence culture (Jenkins 2008) has made the intensive political style more acceptable, if not mainstream, in Finnish politics. According to Lappalainen, institutionalized politics, such as ordinary parliamentary rhetoric, is not usually recognized as a political style at all: its intensity is low. But when political agents define their enemies, objects, from which they want to dissociate, and make it extraordinary and ostentatious with clear antagonism, the level on intensity rises (Lappalainen 2002, 159). In this sense, populism is the style of constructing a political enemy and creating a political entity—of which Ahvio's blog writings and pamphlets are fine examples—instead of discussing certain issues in politics such as anti-liberalism, anti-feminism or anti-globalization.

Specific Audience

This article is not interested in the theological claims themselves but interprets all of Ahvio's texts as political writings. The texts' religious context is only a literary device because his employer is a missionary foundation, and his potential readers are mainly people who identify themselves as evangelical Christians. Of course, as said before, Ahvio's background in academic theology is not meaningless, but the article does not deal with the topic. Following

Chaïm Perelman's (1982) theory of rhetoric, this article assumes that Ahvio talks foremost to a specific audience. First, he tries to convince his audience by taking a subject position called research director, where he analytically tells people how things are ordered, and his starting points is self-defined conservative Christian values, whose superiority he shares with his estimated audience. The political agent has to construct a narrative in which sentences become understandable and acceptable to his particular audience. Second, he addresses the corrupted and failed world outside these values. A political agent's first principle, in the Schmittian sense, is to make a clear distinction between friend and enemy.

Narrative: 'Cultural Marxism'

Ahvio's first well-publicized public appearance in the Finnish evangelical Christian media concerned his claim about 'the sexual revolution's hidden agenda' and the term cultural Marxism. This happened in the Autumn of 2010, and the concept was relatively new in the Finnish context. Originally, the 'theory of cultural Marxism' was associated with American religious paleoconservatives such as William S. Lind, Pat Buchanan, and Paul Weyrich. The theory advocates that the Frankfurt school of critical social sciences had a plan to deliberately cause the collapse of the West using multiculturalism and political correctness as their methods, and since then, it has been implemented by liberals and leftist politicians and activists. Later, Anders Behring Breivik made the theory even more famous in his manifesto with the theme of Eurabia, a theory that claims that Arabs will try to take control of Europe and liberals and leftist politicians. After Breivik's attacks on Utøya Island and Oslo in Norway in 2011, Ahvio stopped referring to the theory of cultural Marxism for a while. However, in 2013 Ahvio wrote a pamphlet in which he returned to the topic of 'cultural Marxism' and wrote the following as a sale pitch on his blog:

> I want to show how private property and traditional marriage and family as institutions have been in the line of fire of different Marxists and why, for the socialist revolution to be successful, it needs a sexual revolution and a change in traditional moral values, and how especially the gay movement's goals are still connected to these issues (2013).

The theory of cultural Marxism creates the flow of exposing of gnosis over Ahvio's writings, which work as a political strategy and rhetorical trope for his audience – and a starting point of political action. Historian Richard Hofstadter (1964) analyzed how so called paranoid politics works as mobilization of a political movement: (1) post 'a great conspiracy on a scale so immense as to dwarf any previous such venture in the history of men'; (2) declare its infiltration of the government to be massive and pernicious; and (3) insist that time is running out, and without immediate action their takeover will be complete. However, Ahvio denies that his claims of cultural Marxism are some kind of conspiracy theory because his book is only 'a conclusion of previous material from the academic world and gay movement' (2013). On the other hand Ahvio uses highly asymmetric sources to prove his arguments (gay movement dictates for politicians how to make legislation in order to make Marxist revolution): his references vary greatly, and his deduction proceeds quite fast. In a single text, he draws on academic peer-reviewed articles, political blog writings, newspapers, and average-level master's theses without making any distinctions between them.

Referring to the alleged theory of cultural Marxism not only started Ahvio's career as a famous political orator on the Finnish evangelical Christian scene and in the anti-immigration movement but also created the framework for his later work. His assumptions about the sexual revolution and its consequences are connected to all his other opinions and writings. With the theory of cultural Marxism, he has managed to create a narrative which seems to be plausible to his potential audience, using it as the glue for making a distinction between friend and enemy, that is, politicizing social issues.

Internal enemies: feminists, greens, socialists, liberals

A week before the parliamentary elections in 2015, Ahvio analyzes political and social issues in Finnish society. His analysis is crystal clear: 'In Finland, an open cultural war is going on against home, religion, and the fatherland's blue-white and Christian values, finally stubbing them out. This war is going on both in society and in church and parishes.' (2015b). The term 'culture war' was introduced by sociologist James Davison (1991), who referred to a dramatic realignment and polarization of American politics and culture, and was made popular among Christian right and United States Conservatives Patrick Buchanan at Republican National Convention in 1992. Ahvio's internal enemies are '[c]ultural Marxist secular humanist atheists, who, for a long time, have been in a hegemonic, i.e., dominant position and now abuse the media and judicial system, changing by force our understanding of humanity and culture, restricting disastrously the freedom of speech, religion, and economic liberty to create a totalitarian society' (ibid.). The focus of this attack against traditional Christian values was the 'so-called gender ideology that tries to destroy the realities of masculinity and femininity away from the whole society using human rights policy as an instrument' (ibid.). For Ahvio, other internal enemies include liberals in the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran church, who today constitute the majority among the priesthood, and even among Pentecostals (e.g. 2015a; Ahvio 2012), and even those in the Finns Party who support a welfare state, because it threatens traditional family values (Ahvio 2011). Indeed, and the lack of welfare chauvinism separates him the most of European populist parties ideologies – Ahvio does not support in his writings state guaranteed social benefits for anybody. Ahvio's rhetoric constitutes the threat of not only external but also internal enemies, even among deceived conservatives and parishes.

According to Schmitt, the political enemy should not be thought of as a personal competitor or just any partner of conflict in general. 'An enemy exists only when, at least potentially, one fighting col-

lectivity of people confronts a similar collectivity.' (Schmitt 1975, 28). However, Ahvio's theory of cultural Marxism reminds us that the enemy can also be fictional for outsider. It is enough that the enemy is recognized collectively in order to produce a political entity. In this case, the political entity is Ahvio's specific audience, who take his argumentation seriously. Second, Schmitt stressed that the enemy should not be hated personally, but because of human psychology: 'Emotionally the enemy is easily treated as being evil and ugly, because every distinction, most of all the political, as the strongest and most intense of the distinctions and categorizations, draws upon other distinctions for support.' (Schmitt 1975, 27). This article assumes that, as a skillful agitator, Ahvio is well aware that, for example, politics and morality are separate categories, but associating them together in his text is an effective rhetorical device. His potential audience is interested in moral and economic issues, and that is why he claims that political enemies are morally corrupt and unprofitable in the field of economics. He avoids actual hate speech in his blog writings and pamphlets but does not explicitly condemn it, either.

External enemy: threat of Russia and Islamization

Finnish nationalism has been constructed based on anti-Russian discourse since the late nineteenth century (e.g. Harle & Moisio 2000). During the Cold War, among the Finnish Pentecostal and evangelical movement there were popular prophecies and visions that Communist and atheist Russia—or, rather, the Soviet Union during that period—would occupy parts or all of Finnish territory as a scourge of God if the people did not demonstrate repentance and pray diligently. However, in recent years, members of the anti-immigration movement and Evangelical Christians have presented opinions that today Russia is actually more Christian and loyal to its tradition than most Western countries. In addition, many European right-wing populist parties have close ideological and eco-

nomical ties to Russia's current government, such as French Front National, and among the Finnish anti-immigrant movement some have suggested that patriots should finally abandon the anti-Russian attitude. Ahvio is forced to remind his audience that Russia is still external enemy number one for Finnish conservative Christians as he puts it in his blog post:

> Does it go that Barack Obama's government in the United States represents totalitarian global radicalism and Putin and Russia represent Christian conservative patriotism, a bold counterforce to Obammunist rainbow ideology? (2015c)

The answer to the rhetorical question is again about 'the sexual revolution's hidden agenda'. Ahvio writes how during the Winter War in 'late November 1939, the whole Finnish nation from lords to peasants united literarily to defend home, religion, and the fatherland' (ibid.), but in November 2014, 'the majority of the members of Parliament directed by the National Coalition Party's prime minister supported the legislation, which means that traditional marriage and family are no longer fundamental institutions in Finnish society' (ibid.). Ahvio argues that Russia benefits when Western European countries enact same-sex marriage bills. Putin's regime opposes sexual liberation in Russia and masquerades as a good Christian in order to mislead conservatives to be kind to the current Russian regime. However, in reality, according to Ahvio: 'Vladimir Putin's Russia has always been governed by a clandestine agency and a few money-making clans, totalitarian, monitoring its citizens, imperialistic oligarchy. – – Pan-Slavism still threatens Western societies, especially Finland' (ibid.). Actually, Ahvio insists, those who support same-sex marriage do a favor for the current Russian regime, because Western societies rise and fall depending on how they treat the institution of marriage. This is because the Russian aim is to break the moral backbone of Western countries in order to occupy them more easily; that is, Putin's regime has a common goal with cultural Marxists—and that is how Ahvio's rhetorical device manages to unify both internal and external enemy as one fa-

tal entity, against which good Christians and patriots should exalt themselves.

Friends: Christian conservatives

Religion is a special case of the political for Schmitt: 'A religious community which wages wars against members of other religious communities or engages in other wars is already more than a religious community; it is a political entity' (Schmitt 1975, 37). Here, Schmitt is probably referring to the Catholic Church and its problematic relationship to secular princes since the late medieval periods and early modern times, to nation-states. However, Schmitt's speculation can also be understood to problematize the demarcation between the use of religion and secular power in general; that is, style-intensive rhetoric together with antagonism is also a highly political discourse. In the last instance, this article claims that Ahvio's goal is to produce a new political entity using religious discourse. For Schmitt, the concept of the political was not only recognition of the enemy or making separations, but also recognition of the friend and creating unions by referring to a common enemy.

> Finnish conservatives have to gather all their strength and begin an active cultural counter-revolution. – – But it demands that conservatives have to become active, influencing in a concentrated and long-term manner at every level of society, beginning with the municipality, parliament, and church. In addition, ordinary Christian and grass-roots-level everyday conservatives have to activate themselves in their own family life and everywhere they work and spend their leisure time. (2015b)

Indeed, Ahvio's real challenge, which his creation of both internal and external enemies serves, is how to wake up Finnish conservatives as political subjects. Louis Althusser (1971) developed the theory of interpellation that describes how the ideological state apparatus hails individuals as mere subjects. In Ahvio's case, the ideology is conservatism that relates evangelical Christians and oth-

er potential specific groups, such as people in the anti-immigration movement and the Finns Party, to become active political subjects. His task is to make the outside sound familiar to his reader, so that they recognize themselves as good conservatives, not only in theory, but also politically as active citizens, and begin to create a recognized political identity that forces them to be taken seriously among other politicians, parties and mainstream media. He creates for his readers the vision that there is a possibility to strike now and that every vote has meaning in current critical political situation.

Conclusions

During the 2003 parliamentary election, the campaign executive director of the Patmos Foundation for World Missions, Leo Meller, decided to support Christian Democratic Party candidate Pekka Reinikainen. The only result was that the Finnish Christian Democrats lost their only member of the European Parliament, Eija-Riitta Korhola, who defected to the National Coalition Party and said that Meller's aggressive style was the last straw. Juha Ahvio's strategy – borrowed from militant fundamentalists such as Carl McIntire and Jerry Falwell, who managed to transform an unpolitical movement into a political pressure group in the late 1970s in the U.S (cf. Ruotsila 2015) – as the research director of the Patmos Foundation for World Missions has been more successful. He seems to be a popular speaker in the Finnish Evangelical movement and among those Finns Party and Christian Democratic Party activists who still opposed the same-sex marriage legislation or the rights of the transgender people. In addition he has fans among a popular anti-immigration forum. Of course, it is hard to measure his direct effectiveness in Finnish political discussion.

Ahvio's project will rise and fall with the popularity of the Finns Party. The Christian Democratic Party is too small to influence Finnish political questions by itself. The National Coalition Party and the Centre Party are bound to the Finnish Evangelical

Lutheran church's main line and those of its four traditional revival movements that are loyal to moderate politics. The only critical mass can be found among the Finns Party, many of whose supporters are religious and are disappointed with the current direction of the church's main line and whole society. However, after the Finns Part joined the government in 2015, the popularity of the Finns Party has decreased dramatically. This could mean that in the long run the Finns Party will radicalized and turn more right-wing, and will resemble more other European third wave radical right wing populist parties (e.g. Mudde 2007). Ahvio's political situation is similar to that of his American comrades, who are trying to influence the direction of the Republican Party, after the failure of President George W. Bush's economic and foreign policies, through the Tea Party movement (e.g. Skocpol & Williamson 2012), the actual enemy of which is not the political left, but the moderate right. However, Donald Trump's presidency has not affected the popularity of the Finns Party. But at least Ahvio has received a lot of new material for his writings. Thus, it remains to be seen where Ahvio finds his future allies or friends for his political project, and what the connection between the Evangelical Christian discourse and the populist political movement in Finnish political life will be like?

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THE 'JYTKY' OF THE FINNS PARTY: OR, HOW TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF MASCULINITY IN POPULIST POLITICS

Urpo Kovala & Jyrki Pöysä

ABSTRACT

In this article the authors look at the way leading politicians of the Finns Party have appealed to masculine values. The exceptional rise of the populist party between 2003 and 2015 is seen as a major indicator of the overall rise of 'masculinist' values in Finnish politics. However, the question is not only of *more* masculinist politics, but also of a change in *styles* of masculinity – a shift towards a plurality of different political styles emphasizing masculine values. This does not preclude the ideological nature of the adherence to those values but sets new challenges to scholarship addressing what has been called backlash of traditional values in recent years in Europe and from 2016 onwards in the United States as well. The authors analyze the usages of two keywords, 'jätkä' (roughly meaning 'bloke' when referring to oneself) and 'jytky' (big bang, referring to the landslide victory of the party in 2011) by former party leader Timo Soini. From this analysis the authors proceed to show connections between the masculinity-related rhetorics of Finns party representatives and the central identity politics of the party.

Introduction

The exceptional rise of the Finnish populist party 'The Finns Party' (earlier 'True Finns', in Finnish 'Perussuomalaiset', literally 'basic Finns' or 'average Finns') between 2003 and 2015 is a major indicator of the rise of 'masculinist' values in Finnish politics. However, it is not only a question of *more* masculinist politics, but also of

a change in *styles* of masculinity. From a stiff, 'aristocratic' masculinity of the earlier period of political status quo (criticized by the Finns Party), there has been a shift towards a plurality of different political styles emphasizing masculine values. This does not preclude the ideological nature of the adherence to those values but sets new challenges to scholarship addressing what has been called a backlash of traditional values in recent years in Europe especially and recently (from 2016 onwards) in the United States as well. In this article we look at the way leading politicians of the Finns Party have appealed to masculinity and masculine values (about masculinity studies and different masculinities in Finnish politics, see Nieminen 2013). Here, masculinity is not any natural, noncontestable given. Rather, we refer to a culturally constructed and ideological phenomenon, dubbing it 'masculinism'.

From vikings to swing voters

In the 2003 parliamentary elections the success of the party was still mild in numbers (1.57 % of the votes) and was mostly based on the success of former athlete, show wrestler (known by the name *Ludvig Borga*), rude and ultra-masculine *Tony 'Viking' Halme*.

Halme's political career did not last for many years, as he died in 2010 of alcohol and drug abuse. However, Halme did offer a fresh channel for both political protest for less-well-to-do voters and political expressions leaning towards openly chauvinistic and rasistic politics. The famous self-ironical news comment attributed to Halme (the day after the 2003 elections) perhaps explains a little his provocative style: 'It seems like everything is possible in Finland. We have a lesbian president and me as MP.' Although the result of the party in the 2003 elections, three MPs, was not noted as a big success, the new party, established in 1995, did make space for the idea of the need of an alternative to the clean and polished consensus politics of the older parties.

Picture 1. Tony Halme, show wrestler and later MP of Finns Party

The male swing voters and non-voters would later on be even more important for the slowly rising success of the party in the 2007 parliamentary elections (5 MPs) and particularly in the 2011

and 2015 parliamentary elections, which totally changed the Finnish political map's status quo (the Finns Party managed to get 39 and 38 MPs, respectively, out of 200 deputies of the parliament, meaning that – due to other changes in the relative strengths between parties – in 2015 the Finns Party became the second biggest party of the parliament!). The victory was called 'jytky', an ancient Finnish word denoting the sound of a heavy thump, but being, according to Timo Soini, leader of the Finns Party (Soini 2014), his own innovation into political language, heard from the people's mouth 'at some market place' (see Kovala & Pöysä 2017, 257-259). Later on the term has been used for other kinds of political victories and non-victories as well, for example during the media coverage of the 2016 presidential elections of the USA. This could also been seen as indication of the transition of the Finns Party from a marginalized, ridiculed position into the centre of political publicity in Finland during the early 2010s.

Timo Soini, masculinity, and identity

Although the 2007 elections did not yet mean a great success for the Finns Party (with just 4.05 % of the votes), they did mean a great success for party leader Soini, who received the third biggest amount of voters in whole Finland (19 859 /+15 462). During the presidential elections in 2006 the personality of the long time political activist working already in the 1980s and 1990s for the former populist party, Finnish Rural Party [Suomen Maaseudun Puolue, SMP] had for the first time become well-known in Finland due to his personal media qualities and the populist message of the party. It is part of the definition of populism that populist political movements count on charismatic leaders. It seems that between 2003 and 2007 Soini had become one. While the star of Tony Halme as a political non-conformist was already on the decline, Soini as the leader of the party had risen to new spheres of celebrity, not the least for his fluent and skilful media presence and his average guy habitus –

Picture 2. Posters used in presidential (2006) and parliamentary (2007) elections

somewhat plump, but honest, sympathic, critical of the 'real' politicians and the consensus politics of his time. The following two pictures from Soini's campaign ad are republished in Soini's first book (2008). The caption shows a degree of self-irony: 'The invitation to dance by a district agrologist' -look worked well both for presidential and parliamentary elections.

How to turn personal success into the success of the party? This question probably kept the Finns Party activists busy after the 2007 elections. In 2008 Timo Soini published his autobiography entitled *Maisterisjätkä*.

A great part of the book consists of building a personal mythology of Soini's person as a political inheritor of the leader of the former Finnish Rural Party (SMP), legendary Veikko Vennamo. The title of the book is interesting as such. As an ad hoc coinage it combines the word 'maisteri' denoting a person with an academic

Master's degree and 'jätkä' denoting a non-educated ordinary guy ('lad', 'bloke', or 'dude'). Interestingly, Soini reveals in the book that also the Finnish name of the party, 'Perussuomalaiset', was based on his own, tentatively used, self-denoting attribute 'perussuomalainen mies' – 'ordinary Finnish man' (p. 88). The potential tension between the populist need for creating affinity with the ordinary people and Soini's background as academic M.Soc.Sc. (he actually wrote his Master's thesis about the history of populism, see Soini 1988), officially 'maisteri' (but expressed here in a somewhat old style, with the diminutive form 'maisteri-*s*') was resolved in this rhetorical oxymoron, which at the same time gave Soini a possibility to bring in masculine values into his political figure otherwise quite far from Halme's ultra masculinity. To call oneself a 'jätkä', whatever meanings it might have for the the addressee, is something totally different from calling oneself a politician (which he actually is). The following picture (3) probably crystallizes the habitus of Soini as a 'jätkä' of that time.

In his second autobiographical book entitled Peruspomo (2014) Soini gives himself a new oxymoronic attribute, 'basic boss'. As a folksy form for 'director' or 'leader', 'pomo' refers more explicitly to Soini's role as the head of the party, a kind of personification of the party. Although Soini's most important signs of ordinariness (plumpness, a somewhat scruffy appearance, relaxed posture, cheap looking glasses, Millwall scarf, conservative – Roman Catholic - family values, and place of residence in Espoo Iivisniemi, horse racing and football as his hobbies) are still there, he is also tuning his political personality all the time according to the social climate. Now as the present Finnish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Soini has travelled quite far from the ordinary people and from being an unknown party worker for a marginal political party.

How has Soini dealt with this contradiction as minister since 2015? It looks like he has left aside some of his 'trademarks', for instance the blue and white Millwall scarf. But there is also tension to be seen between his occasional attempt to use the same kind of somewhat provocative language and the requirements of his present

Picture 3. Blokeness of Timo Soini

high position as Minister. Besides the language, also the use of pictures for self expression is important to note as part of Soini's political image. At the same time, photographers and journalists are lured to take seriously the casual style of the populist leader. It is somewhat banal that the nasal hair of Soini became a kind of trademark of his relaxed masculinist politics (see the cover of the leading Finnish business journal *Kauppalehti's* monthly review on the next page). Within Soini's habitus hairiness could also be seen as a sign of experience (age) and of a hard working masculine guy with no time to take care of outer appearance. In official and public pictures these kinds of details are not there just by accident.

Identity politics as a carrier wave for the Finns Party

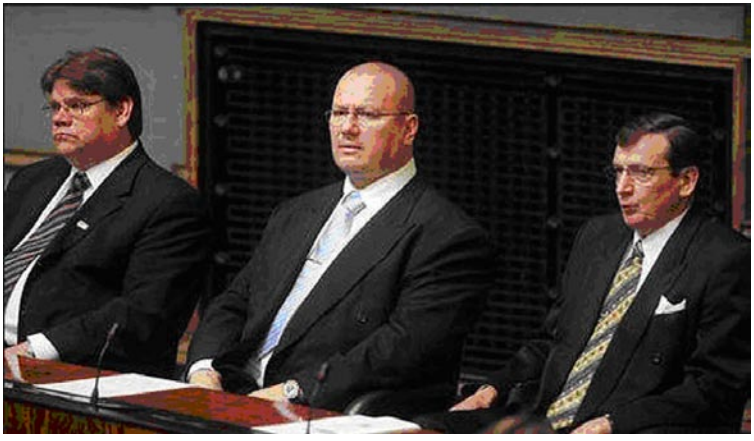
The rhetorical strategies used by Soini are manifestly dynamic and reflexive. Soini is ready to try out new coinages, react apparently spontaneously to situations, and shift strategies according to changing contexts of operation. But the identity politics that those strategies support is something more stable.

Much of the success of the Finns Party boils down to an identity politics where traditional gender roles and family values are in a

Picture 4. Cover picture of *Kauppalehti* monthly

salient position and which links with the value conservative undercurrent of the Finnish populist movement. This comes close to what Paul Taggart (2000) identifies as the core of populism – the nostalgia towards and effort to reachieve the 'heartland' – 'a version of the past that celebrates a hypothetical, uncomplicated and non-political territory of the imagination'. Soini's habitus is definitely a central part of the core identity politics in the Finns Party, which is often said to be part of a more general backlash towards a bygone state of culture and society where things were clear and simple – in brief, towards a heartland.

However, the identity politics associated with Soini has not been the only one among the leading politicians of the party. In a picture taken of three Finns Party MPs at the Finnish parliament somewhere around 2006 we see three different kinds of masculinities judged by their outer appearance and career history: Ostrobothnian policeman Raimo Vistbacka, show wrestler Tony Halme and populist party veteran Timo Soini.



Picture 5. Three Finns Party MPs (from right to left): Raimo Vistbacka, Tony Halme, and Timo Soini

It is indeed interesting to note that in today's Finns Party there is room for different kinds of masculinities. Tony Halme's aggressively non-conformist habitus was very different from Soini's although both are (were) known as good speakers. Vistbacka, then, was something different as well: dry, grey, decorous, fact oriented politician. Although Vistbacka was the sole MP of the party in the early years of the party, he has never attracted much media attention and has apparently not been so much as striving at high media visibility. In line with the popular image of a Finnish policeman he is a more matter-of-fact kind of politician than the other two shown in the photograph.

In contrast to Soini, Halme and Vistbacka, the public image of Jussi Halla-aho, leading figure of the anti-immigration fraction of the party, is a far cry from any bloke-like appearance. Although a populist politician in the strong sense of the term, he acts and looks like an academic. It would be hard to imagine him calling himself a 'jätkä' – or being called one. Rather, with the bike, helmet, and backpack, and overall learned habitus, he would easily go for a supporter of the Green Party. Halla-aho's political agenda is actually very narrow and boils down to just three topics: immigration

Picture 6. Jussi Halla-aho, MEP, leader of Finns Party since June 2017

and multiculturalism, the related danger of Islam, and the issue of gun control.

Jussi Halla-aho and Jussi Niinistö, Minister of Defence at the time this article is being written, are far from ordinary guys and are not trying to appear as ones, either. Both have a doctoral degree, the former in Slavic philology and the latter in historical studies. Neither would identify with or appeal to the people in their rhetoric or in their politics. Although the two and Soini are part of the same populist movement, they have both different agendas and different political styles (see Palonen 2017, 309). Nevertheless, all these politicians are in line as regards their relationship with the said traditional values and pull towards the same direction. They also share the anti-idealist and anti-cultural elite attitudes, although to different degrees.

Apart from the habituses of the leading Finns Party politicians, the very politics of the party shows strong masculinist features. The focus on issues of power (including the military) and the nationalist emphases, enhanced value conservativity and self-conscious anti-culture attitudes seem to be tendencies which have appealed to male voters much more than female ones (Ylä-Anttila 2014, 192). It must be remembered that Soini's occasional jokes about feminists and especially 'male feminists' are far from ambiguous: 'If a bloke declares himself a male feminist, I bend twice over and die of laughter.'

The 'immigration critical' rhetorics and policies of the party, in turn, connect more or less closely with forms of present-day racism and the exclusive nationalist ideologies of right-wing patriotic groups, whose influence in the party is bigger than the relatively small number of their active supporters would suggest. Part of the immigration-critical fraction of the party have had contacts with such radical groups and there has been some pressure against party leader Soini to the effect that he should explicitly forbid cooperation and any contacts with such groups. Failure to do so can be seen as an indication of the fact that there is some support basis there to be lost for the party.

It is evidence of the new political status of the Finns Party that it has managed to create new normalities to the political language and other practices. One example of the latter: representatives of the other two parties in the present cabinet – The Coalition party and the Centre party – have started showing signs of enhanced masculinity as well. The most famous of these was the 'fist bump' of representatives of the three parties – Jari Lindström (Minister of Justice and Minister of Labour), Juha Sipilä (Prime Minister), and Alexander Stubb (Minister of Finance) – in early March 2016, in connection with a success in pressing forward the 'competitivity boost' with the help of a 'historical' (forced) agreement between different sides of the labour market. It is possible to interpret the gesture as another sign of the spread of a new, 'boyish' populist style in Finnish top politics. The gesture was (not without justification) interpreted in Finland as a sign of a backlash, although in another context it could be seen as a mark for a new, relaxed political culture (see for

Picture 7. 'We made it!' Ministers' boyish fist bump to celebrate the agreement between different sides of the labour market.

example president Obama's fist bump with his wife and children). The latter was very probably the impression the politicians wanted to give to the public, but in the context of the weakening of the terms and conditions of employment of the low salary female workers the fist bump got a totally different meaning: 'we won!'

Is the Finns Party a 'male party'?

In this article we have shown how an apparently uniform political formation such as the Finns Party can incorporate very different political orientations. It seems that especially in times when a populist movement has air under its wings, it can take in different kinds of personal habituses, identity politics, and rhetorical strategies under those wings – which is very much in line with the Laclauan definition of populism.

It has often been noted that the Finns Party is not attractive to women – whether voters or striving politicians. This may be due to the fact that the issues taken up by Finns Party politicians or the worlds of justification evoked in that process (see Ylä-Anttila 2014, 206), are more distant for women than men. Another explanation, touched on in this article, is the polemical and often aggressive political style that the party is known for. However, one can also ask *why* the women who have voted for the party or are political actors in the party on various levels have done so. What is the 'affordance' of the movement and the party for them?

There may be pragmatic reasons for women to vote for or join the Finns Party – an aspiring politician may well find a new party, which is rising in popularity and is in need of candidates, attractive from the career perspective. And a populist movement, by definition, gathers together under a common banner both diverse causes and diverse supporters with various personal motivations. Another possible explanation would be the nostalgic lure of the 'heartland', a stable, traditional gender system with home-like qualities. For a somewhat stronger interpretation of the lure, however, we need to

go back to issues of identity dealt with above. Namely, identity politics is not only about gender, but also about social and cultural background. More precisely, it seems that at least for some representatives and supporters of the party, their solidarity to the party rests on a sense of belonging to a socio-cultural group (or groups) that considers itself neglected by the older parties. This solidarity may or may not override the problematic aspects of the party for many women. Although it is not paid much attention to in the media and political commentary, this kind of alienation, together with other explanatory factors, seems to us to be involved in the popularity of Finnish political populism for both men and women, although the 'affordance' of the party is undeniably more lucrative and more easily digestible for men.

Conclusions

In this article we have charted the masculinity-related rhetoric of Finns Party, starting with Timo Soini, former leader of Finns Party, and proceeding from there to deal with a number of other leading politicians of the party. Our goal was to account for the ways in which masculinity figures in the habituses, rhetorics, and policies of those politicians. Much of the success of Finns Party rests on an identity politics emphasizing traditional gender roles and family values , which links with the value conservative undercurrent of the Finnish populist movement and forms much of the core of the 'heartland' of the movement.

The article reveals that there are both different masculinities and related identity politics manifested by leading politicians of Finns Party. Timo Soini's habitus is distinct from those of Jussi Hallaaho, Jussi Niinistö or the late Tony Halme. Nevertheless, the principle of equivalence, here too, prevails over differences. All these politicians are basically in line as regards their relationship with the said traditional values and pull towards the same direction. They

also share the anti-idealist and anti-elite attitudes, although to different degrees.

Apart from the habituses of the leading Finns Party politicians, the very politics of the party shows strong masculinist features. The focus on issues of power and the nationalist emphasis, enhanced value conservativity, and self-conscious anti-culture attitudes seem to be tendencies which have appealed to male voters much more than female ones. The latter, although the party has often been dubbed a masculine party, shared some of the other reasons for their support for the party. In sum, much of the success of the party and its central politicians rested on appeals to masculinist values, with which populism got entangled.

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GENDER POPULISM: THREE CASES OF FINNS PARTY ACTORS' TRADITIONALIST ANTI-FEMINISM

Tuija Saresma

ABSTRACT

Gender has been marginalized in the study on populism (Mulinari & Neergard 2012; Akkerman 2015; de Lange & Mügge 2015). Ruth Wodak (2015) states that gendered discourses in the rhetoric of right-wing populist parties have been neglected and remain under-researched. Although we seem to be witnessing an upsurge in the focus on gender issues in research on populism (see e.g. the thematic issue of *Patterns of Prejudice,* ed. by Spierings et al. 2015), with especially the amount of analyses of the so-called gender gap in voting patterns increasing lately, the analysis of performing gender and a certain gender order in the wider political discourse is still mostly missing.

In this chapter, I will look at the ways gender is performed in three cases that include active Finns Party members, namely an interview of the party secretary Riikka Slunga-Poutsalo, published in the main newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat*; a 'gender campaign' by the Finns Party Youth organised mainly in the Internet, and the book *A Non-Neutral Book on Gender*, published by the think tank near to Finns Party.

My hypothesis is that in these cases, gender is performed in a conservative, even traditionalist way, manifesting the strict and insurmountable gender roles for men and women. For my analysis, I have developed the concept of 'gender populism' that refers to a simplifying understanding of gender as a 'natural', essential dichotomous order, based on positioning men and women in hierarchical locations in terms of power (Saresma 2014). By introducing this concept, I wish to bring gender into the research on populism, which as a phenomenon is often believed to be gender-blind, and to

broaden the understanding of populist logic (both populist rhetoric and populism as a mobilising force) also outside party politics.

Introduction

Gender has often been marginalised, when it has not been totally absent, in research on populism (Mulinari & Neergard 2012; Akkerman 2015; de Lange & Mügge 2015). Ruth Wodak (2015) states that gendered discourses in the rhetoric of right-wing populist parties have been neglected and remain under-researched. Although we seem to be witnessing an upsurge in the focus on gender issues in research on populism (see e.g. the thematic issue of *Patterns of Prejudice,* ed. by Spierings et al. 2015), with especially the amount of analyses of the so-called gender gap in voting patterns increasing lately, the analysis of performing gender and a certain gender order in the wider political discourse is still mostly missing.

Finns Party [Perussuomalaiset, formerly True Finns] is a populist party with a left-wing legacy: like its predecessor, Suomen Maaseudun Puolue SMP [Finnish Rural Party], it emphasises the rights of the farmers, small entrepreneurs, the unemployed, single mothers, and other groups of people with income smaller than the average. The popularity of the Finns Party among the voters has risen considerably during the last decade, however showing serious decrease in the opinion polls after the party entered the government in the Spring of 2015 (Palonen & Saresma 2017; Pekonen 2016). Side by side with the Finns Party Youth Organisation activists occupying many of the leading positions in the party, the emphasis has shifted to more right-wing populist values such as anti-immigration minded, xenophobic opinions and a certain conservatism, manifested in traditionalist views that are strongly against abortion, gender-neutral marriage, feminism, and LGBTI rights (Norocel et al., forthcoming).

In this chapter, I will look at the ways gender is performed in three cases that include active Finns Party members, namely an in-

terview of the party secretary Riikka Slunga-Poutsalo, published in the main newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat*; a 'gender campaign' by the Finns Party Youth organised mainly in the Internet, and the book *A Non-Neutral Book on Gender*, published by the think tank near to Finns Party. In what follows, I will analyse the abovementioned cases, published during the last couple of years, all of which, in their own way, encapsulate something essential about the heated debate around gender.

My hypothesis is that in these cases, gender is performed in a conservative, even traditionalist way, manifesting the strict and insurmountable gender roles for men and women. This rigidness is in strong opposition to the academic understanding of gender as not a biological 'fact' based on an essentially binary order, dividing people into two separate homogeneous groups based on reproduction, but something more variable, like a continuum on which people may position themselves (see e.g. Koivunen & Liljeström 1996; Saresma et al. 2010). Thus, following Judith Butler (1990), gender is often understood in academic gender studies as a culturally constructed and repetitively performed trait, although essential for one's self-understanding. Even the 'roles' of various genders are not a biological given in this understanding, but something constantly negotiated (Rossi 2010).

This negotiation manifests itself in the discursive struggles over genders and in the way people are hierarchically positioned within the gender system (Julkunen 2010). Here, I prefer to use the concept of 'gender order' to refer to a more flexible way to socially organise the activities and experiences of various genders. Gender orders vary according to the socio-cultural context, some emphasising the diversity and flexibility of genders, others denying it and deafening the negotiations of multiple understandings of gender and the existence of a variety of gender orders.

The negotiations over the ruling gender order are loud in the contemporary society, where the traditionalist and more progressive opinions struggle. For many sociologists and historians, including Ulrich Beck, Manuel Castells, Göran Therborn, and Eric

Hobsbawm, the new arrangements in the relationship of the genders is one of the most ground-breaking social changes of our time (Julkunen 2010, 9). A lot of emotional capital is invested in the gender order, and defining it is fundamentally a question of power. It is therefore no wonder that gender and, more broadly, the gender order have become central sites of negotiation in the contemporary affective media landscape and in political discussions. (Saresma 2014a.) Several debates on gender and the negotiation of the gender order are ongoing in the contemporary political and societal discussion. The gender debates in the Finnish media deal with e.g. abortion rights, anti-feminism, day-care versus housewives, quotas for women in politics, and gender-neutral marriage. Loud disputes are often based on entrenched positions, straightforward argumentation, and affective allegations, and are thus based on populist rhetoric. (Saresma, forthcoming.)

I analyse this relatively new phenomenon that juxtaposes academic gender studies and feminist movement against the folksy, traditionalist understanding of gender through the lens of *gender populism* (Saresma 2014b). Populism, for me, is an ambivalent phenomenon that aims at popularity among the people by fuelling distrust and directing hostility towards the political elite (Wiberg 2011, 14). The populist rhetoric is based on simplification, polarisation, and stereotypes, thereby aiming at creating the (more or less imaginary) 'other' that is set against (simultaneously imaginary) 'us'. The creation of these opposing groups is based on the utilisation of black-and-white rhetoric and vague expressions (Wiberg 2011, 15–16). The tone of populist rhetoric is often affective (Lähdesmäki & Saresma 2014). Constructing and perceiving enemies and adversaries and creating scapegoats (Wodak 2015) are essential elements of populist othering.

With gender populism as my conceptual contrivance, I refer to the vernacular speech about gender that is oversimplified and consciously separates itself from analytical approaches to gender, such as those found in academic gender studies. In this discourse, gender is perceived to be a given and people are grouped as either women

or men on the basis of a simplistic, 'natural' bi-polar system. Women and men are understood as forming opposite groups that consist of individuals distinguishable by their biological traits, looks, and behaviour (Saresma 2014b, 46). It is characteristic of gender populist discourse to take 'man' as a monolithic, universal category, and to consider maleness, heterosexuality and middle-class status as normative for being human (Koivunen & Liljeström 1996). These properties simultaneously serve as unmarked categories of power (Choo & Marx Ferree 2010).

Thus, the concept of gender populism refers to a simplifying understanding of gender as a 'natural', essentially dichotomous order, based on positioning both women and men in hierarchical locations in terms of power (Saresma 2014b). By introducing this concept, I wish to bring gender into the research on populism, which as a phenomenon is often believed to be gender-blind, and to broaden the understanding of populist logic (both populist rhetoric and populism as a mobilising force) also outside party politics.

Gender conservatism on the rise

Ruth Wodak (2015) has noted that conservative family values, homophobia, and anti-abortion campaigns have become part and parcel of the ideologies of some of the right-wing populist movements in Central Europe, the former Eastern-Bloc countries and the US Tea Party. In the right-wing traditionalist imaginaries, as she continues, gender-relations are changing in a significant way, patriarchy is threatened, and the world as 'we' know it no longer exists.

These currents and attempts to restore the nostalgic (yet imagined) traditional gender order can be seen in the texts of the internationally networked and mobilised Men's Rights Movement, which is mainly internet-based (Saresma 2012; 2014a; 2017; 2018). Here, however, I ask whether there is a tendency by the mainstream party politics to adopt these anti-feminist currents. The hypothesis is

that gender populism is strengthened by the more general populist atmosphere in the society and that it has to do with the general rise of gender conservatism, sometimes named backlash (Faludi 1994). Based on these assumptions, the main question of my chapter is, how gender is performed in the contemporary political sphere, especially in the discursive realm of the Finns Party. This question is explored in light of three recent cases that can be interpreted as gender populism and that caused media fuss, if not panic. I have selected the cases based on their topicality – all of them were published within the last couple of years – and their influence and authority in the constantly ongoing negotiations of the ruling gender order, and thus, their impact on the general opinion.

Case 1: Interview with Party Secretary Riikka Slunga-Poutsalo

I start with an interview, published in the Sunday supplement of the leading Finnish newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat* in 2014, with the newly elected party secretary of the Finns Party, Riikka Slunga-Poutsalo. The Finns Party, like its predecessor, has a reputation of being a men's party: as many as 67 percent of its voters are men (Yle 2009), and of a total of 38 MPs elected in 2015, no less than 22 (58 %) were men (Suomen Uutiset 2015). This inequality has been noticed, and there has been an effort to agitate female candidates in the elections (Norocel et al., forthcoming). It is thus remarkable that the party secretary is a woman. In the interview, the subject of gender is touched upon, however in a tone that would be easy to be interpreted as misogynous.

The article by Hanna Mahlamäki (2014) published in the main Finnish newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat,* includes a provocative quote, where the newly elected Party secretary Riikka Slunga-Poutsalo asserts: 'In Finland women are so equal that they even look like men.' This quote emphasises the unnaturalness of 'equality gone mad', familiar from the masculinist discussion forums and

blogs (Saresma 2012; 2014a; 2014b). In the interview, the female party secretary of the Finns Party opens up about her understanding of gender roles and feminism. In her view, men and women are comprehended as two distinguishably different groups of people. Women and men can be separated by their biology and looks (at least they could be before!), and they have different roles in the family and the society. In Slunga-Poutsalo's view, they complement each other by forming a heterosexual couple, the basic unit of Finnish society.

This traditional view of separate gender roles that Slunga-Poutsalo so eagerly promotes is the basis of a patriarchal gender system. It is supported by many Finns, and especially those supporting the conservative Finns Party, the Christian Democrats, and the Centre Party. In Finland, feminism or the f-word is a dirty word, unlike in Sweden, where the Feminist Initiative received more than 3 percent of the votes in the 2014 general election and became the most popular party outside the parliament. In Finland, it is more common to say, 'I am rather a male chauvinist than a feminist', as Slunga-Poutsalo actually declared after she was elected the party secretary in 2013.

The interview does not explicitly focus on gender issues, but the interviewer gives a lot of room for Slunga-Poutsalo's traditionalist opinions on them. I quote the part on gender in its entirety:

> She is attracted to the Finns Party because of their value conservatism. Grown up in Lapland, Slunga-Poutsalo supports traditional gender roles.
>
> "I am a woman, and I have my strengths and weaknesses as a woman. Likewise my husband, he's a man, and he has these things between his legs, and he has his own strengths and weaknesses."
>
> She grimaces at the word feminism.
>
> "There is a strong negative tone to feminism. Today, it does not mean that you stand for equality. In everyday speech, there is the tone that you want more for women at the expense of men. – – They are proud to be women. They have tits, they have rolls of fat around their waist. They try to be equal with men, or even a bit more equal. This makes me want to poke my fingers into my ears."

The interview with Slunga-Poutsalo roused a critical discussion in print and social media. It is, according to my interpretation, an excellent representative of political gender populism. It also manifests well the tendency of anti-feminist ideology and sheer misogyny to transgress the bi-polar gender system: both men and women can subscribe to these ideologies. The gender of the speaker is far less important than the gendered discourse she or he is promoting.

Case 2: Gender Campaign #Girl_boy

Let me then turn to an even more blatant example of gender populism. Here, it is actually used to mobilise people in favour of the traditional gender order. The phenomenon in question is the internet campaign by the Finns Party Youth.

The slogan of the Finns Party Youth declares that it is 'the most nationalistic and democratic political youth and student organisation'. In the organisation's website, there is the picture of the national personification of Finland, the Maiden of Finland, with her blonde hair and traditional hair-do (see picture 1).

Picture 1.

News about the Finns Party youth organisation's Gender campaign, titled #Girl_boy [#Tyttö_poika], were released on 25 February 2016. The text of the press release asserts that a gender revolution is needed to fight the feminist aim to question the existence of only two genders. I quote:

> Instead of denying oneself, one should be proud of what s/he is. The idea of a gender neutral society is based on the lie that there are no differences between genders and that girls and boys should be interested in the same things. – – The gender differences in orientation are demolished in working life and politics by setting quotas for women. We are in favour of binning all the quotas. – – The gender differences are visible in education as well. If we openly admit the existence of the differences, we could create a diverse learning environment that would better acknowledge also the needs of boys. (Press release 25 Feb 2017.)

The press release ends with a remark on the baffling effects of questioning the existence of (two) genders and the suggestion that educators and parents abstain from using their kids as guinea pigs of these 'trendy currents'.

The campaign thus explicitly condemns feminism and the idea of gender-neutral education and makes a clear stand on defending the traditional gender roles. The campaign is paradoxical in its need to deny the gender quotas that favour women, yet simultaneously demanding acknowledging the specificity of boys at schools.

In the campaign photograph, there are young people wearing caps that pronounce each one's gender: Boy, Boy, Girl, Girl, Girl (see picture 2). The essential message of this campaign – the need for boys to be boys and girls to be girls – was spread and disseminated mainly through social media, especially via Twitter, where the hashtag #girl_boy was launched. It did not however gain much positive attention in the social media. Instead, it was ridiculed in the social media, and it was criticised ardently both in Twitter and Facebook for being very simplifying.

In the traditional media, the campaign gained some media coverage. In an interview after the campaign was launched, the chair of the youth organisation of the party, Sebastian Tynkkynen, explicitly stated that it was directed against feminism and more broadly

Picture 2.

'against the propaganda of Women's Studies that is quite strongly fed to us' (Lehto 2016). The campaign is directed 'against a gender-neutral society', as Tynkkynen claims. 'We are afraid that the societal discussion is narrowing down too fast. It is a bit like just a while ago when it was forbidden to discuss immigration with a negative tone, and you were labelled if you tried to discuss. Now we have this other issue.' (Ibid.)

The issue of anti-feminism and defending biological understanding of two sexes as well as traditional gender roles were not always taken seriously by the media. In the interview referred to above, the journalist poses a question to Tynkkynen, asking why five of the young people in the campaign photo wear a cap stating clearly 'girl' or 'boy', but we cannot read that in the sixth person's cap. Tynkkynen's huffy answer is: 'It must be his position, nothing else. You can surely see that it says "boy".'

The campaign seems to be put up in a hurry. It is an example of how the traditional values and ideas about the dichotomous gender

order and inciting adversarial opinions are used to attract publicity, so vital for political organisations.

Case 3: Non-neutral Book on Gender

The third example of mainstreaming gender populism in the political domain continues the promoting of conservative ideology and the simplifying of the understanding of genders, while aiming at restoring the pre-feminist gender order with (supposedly) clear-cut gender roles. It is a book called Non-Neutral Book on Gender – Notes on Gender Issues [as translated from the Finnish title *Epäneutraali sukupuolikirja – Puheenvuoroja sukupuolikysymyksistä*]. The title refers to the torrid debate surrounding the legislation of the gender-neutral marriage bill and the demands for gender-neutral education from early childhood to grammar school. It is published by The Foundation of Finland [Suomen Perusta], a think tank affiliated with the Finns Party, and edited by Simo Grönroos, the executive manager of the think tank and a Finns Party member, active in municipal politics as a councillor. He is also a member of the nationalist far-right organisation, The Grit of Finland [Suomen Sisu], which is openly against multiculturalism and immigration.

The executive committee of Suomen Perusta comprises Finns Party politicians: the Speaker of the Finnish Parliament Maria Lohela, the Minister of Social Affairs and Health Pirkko Mattila, MP Simon Elo, MP Juho Eerola, MP Laura Huhtasaari, and MP Ville Vähämäki, many of whom are renowned members of Suomen Sisu. The chair of the committee is the historian Arto Luukkanen, whose research specialises in Russia. In the 2015 parliamentary election, Luukkanen ran as a member of the Finns Party.

Suomen Perusta has published several pamphlets and reports. These publications criticise the bilingualism of Finland and the 'coercion' to study Swedish; the EU and euro; multiculturalism, immigration and the 'migration crisis'; and the mainstream media journalists living inside the 'red-and-green bubble', espousing a (too)

tolerant worldview. A recurring theme is Russia as a threat to the Finnish nation. The Non-neutral gender book continues the traditionalist themes of the publication series in the sense that it promotes conservative values and is explicitly against liberal ideas about multiculturalism, gender-neutral marriage, and women's rights.

The aim of the book is made clear from the beginning: 'Gender neutrality and feminism are, together with multiculturalism, buzzwords of our time', as the editor Grönroos puts it. He claims that the 'problems of the equality of men' (a concept the men's rights activist Henry Laasanen has promoted and endlessly discussed in his blog, see Saresma 2012; 2014a; 2014b; 2017) have been forgotten because of feminism while the meaning of traditional gender roles has been overshadowed by the over-emphasis on gender-neutrality. The book aims to raise consciousness about men's problems. The writers of the Non-Neutral Gender Book are renown anti-feminists, such as the aforementioned Henry Laasanen and the essayist and the chief editor of a right-wing traditionalist web publication, Timo Hännikäinen, whose misogynous essays I have analysed earlier (Saresma 2016). In his two chapters in the Non-neutral Book, Laasanen discusses the inequality white men have to deal with in the contemporary feminist-governed Finland and the faults of Gender Studies. Hännikäinen continues promoting traditional marriage and tackles the questions of heterosexual love and gender roles.

The other writers include the Finns Party member Juho Eerola, who writes about men's position in custody disputes; the MP candidate and Finns Party Youth member Tiina Ahva, who 'is critical about feminism', discusses the need for gender quotas; and the conservative journalist and author Marko Hamilo, known for his articles on the science pages of *Helsingin Sanomat* and in *Perussuomalainen*, the official organ of the Finns Party. In this publication, he argues that it is dangerous to deny biology in discussing gender, and that the conservative view on gender roles is based on biology and evolution psychology and is thus factual. The pseudonym Black Orchid [Musta Orkidea], herself a trans woman, defines herself as

'critical towards rainbow people'. In her pamphlet about the 'dangerous gender ideology', she refers to the LGBT movement and the supporters of trans-rights as being wrong to start with, since there are only two genders. In the final chapter, Jukka-Pekka Rahkonen, a Pentecostal Church activist and the organiser of the True Marriage campaign (against gender-neutral marriage), juxtaposes traditional marriage and gender-neutral marriage legislation, showing support for the former (see also Bellè & Poggio in this volume).

All the writers thus stand for traditional(ist) views on gender. They oppose feminism, gender studies, gay rights, gender-neutral education and other progressive ideas related to gender. Without going into more detail, it can be claimed that the argumentation, following the populist logic of reasoning, is weak throughout: it is based on black-and-white claims without grounds; references 'many media analyses' instead of academic research; and relies on simplifications and gut feeling instead of valid argumentation (Keisalo 2016). The chapters do not fill the requirements of a scientific publication, which the book of course does not even claim to be. Instead, it is targeted at an audience outside the academy, at the lay people already sympathetic to the traditionalist ideologies promoted by the populist think tank Suomen Perusta. However, certain strategies of persuasion and a striving for ostensible academic credibility are used, such as bibliographies and references to research and legislation.

Having said that, the credibility of the writers and the pseudo-scientific argumentation as well as the plausibility of the arguments, when published in a book instead of as separate claims, should not be belittled. Since the members of the publishing organ and many of the writers are near to the Finns Party and the nationalist organisation Suomen Sisu, and one of the members of the publishing organ, Laura Huhtasaari, runs as a candidate for presidency of Finland in the 2018 elections, the book has even more weight as the 'official' opinion of the party than the previously mentioned interview of the Party Secretary Riikka Slunga-Poutsalo or the Finns Party Youth gender campaign. The third case study shows even more explicitly

the intertwining of traditionalist understanding of gender with reactionary gender politics. The traditionalist view on gender and the understanding of man as the head of the family and nation is connected with the nationalistic opinions and 'keeping Finland to ourselves', that is, white heterosexuals (see also Saresma 2017).

Tenets of gender populism

There are some shared tenets of gender populism in the three cases introduced above. First, they all subscribe to the assumption that there are fundamental differences between women and men, femininity and masculinity. It is asserted repeatedly that the two genders are opposite and as such complementary, and insisted that the 'natural differences' between the two genders must be preserved with whatever cost. This leads to the belief that evening up gender differences is wrong, and to the conviction that gender neutrality is dangerous.

These tenets are all laden with heteronormativity in the form of a belief that the categories of two complementary genders are intertwined with the 'naturalness' of heterosexuality; often this belief is linked to homophobia and heterosexism (Lovaas & Jenkins 2008) that are more or less explicitly demonstrated in the cases analysed above. Another shared ideology in gender populism is strong anti-intellectualism, which is very much intertwined with the general anti-elite argumentation often found in populist argumentation. Here, it is inextricably linked with anti-feminism.

The understanding of genders as complementary and the emphasis of the fundamental differences between the two genders is bolstered up by repetition. A good example of a recurring theme is the idea of characteristics that are claimed to be typical for either women or men. Another is the commenting on the behaviour and looks of 'opposite genders'. These ideologies are preached by their advocates using populist rhetoric, defending 'us, the people' against the badness of the others, be they homosexuals, members of

the academic feminist elite, or foreigners that do not share the western values or do not belong to the nationalistic Finland.

The above-mentioned three cases prove on their part my earlier finding that although gender populism deals explicitly with the power relations of women and men, it is intersectional in the way it merges various reactionary and subordinating ideologies such as homophobia, xenophobia, and anti-feminism. It is also alarmingly linked to racial discrimination and the persecution of sexual and religious minorities.

It is possible to conclude, on the basis of these three examples, that gender populism relies on a specific understanding of gender as an essential category and on layman knowledge on gender, based on the personal experiences of individuals. It denies the complexity of gender(s) and the historicity of the prevalent gender order; rejects the (feminist) theoretical analysis of complex relations of gender and power; and ridicules academic gender studies as ideological humbug funded by the 'feminist elite'.

Gender populism also aims at hindering the internal diversity of the categories of women and men by invoking the alleged inner homogeneity of the groups and constructing them as binary and opposing. However, unlike this black-and-white rhetoric suggests, gender is always intertwined with other categories of difference and hierarchies of power and subordination: ethnicity; economic and class status; and age and religion. This means that individual women and individual men are positioned differently in the webs of power, not only according to their gender but also because of their ethnic background, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, education, bodily capabilities, geographical location, and so on. Acknowledging the intersecting differences (Crenshaw 1991; Karkulehto et al. 2012) enables problematising the dichotomous nature of gender found in the gender populist rhetoric, which opposes men as a group to women as a group and talks about 'the opposite sexes'. Intersectional approach also challenges heteronormativity by looking at sexuality beyond the normative assumption that heterosexuality is the prevalent mode of sexuality while homosex-

uality, if acknowledged at all, is always considered as subordinate to heterosexuality.

What gender populism?

Above, I have presented examples of a specific phenomenon in the broader field of populist rhetoric, namely gender populism. I suggest that using this concept as a sub category of the more general populist rhetoric, it is possible to analyse in more subtle ways how gender is performed and how the gender order is negotiated in the contemporary political climate that bursts with populist expressions. Gender populism helps to focus on one of the axes of power, namely gender, more specifically masculinity and femininity, or, in this discourse, masculinity or femininity as opposing, yet complementary categories.

Gender populism as a phenomenon, I suggest, is gaining ground in the contemporary media discussions, because it hits the target that is simultaneously perceived as a very personal experience – 'it is my gender, I know what is right, I am the specialist of gender issues', as the argument goes (Saresma 2010) – and a very powerful category that permeates the society from the (allegedly) basic unit of nuclear family to education, legislation, and religion.

I propose that gender populism as an analytic concept helps to discern the nuances of discussion by focusing on e.g. (1) whether gender is defined or not; (2) how gender is understood (e.g. as a dichotomous phenomenon based on two poles, or as a negotiation between femininity and masculinity, or something else); (3) what are the roles and restrictions reserved for the genders (e.g. should women stay at home taking care of kids? can men cook? who are the assumed political actors and legislators?); and (4) what is the gender order that is aimed at (e.g. traditionalist/liberal/utopian/queer)?

I claim that it is important to analyse the increasing and polarising gender speech in the media, as gender populism is emerging and strengthening in a political climate where populism in general

is gaining prominence. As I have shown elsewhere, it is an example of how populism functions in all fields of life and can mobilise people also outside party politics (Saresma 2017; Saresma, forthcoming). Gender populism is also an increasingly visible trait of the populist Finns Party, as the examples analysed above demonstrate.

Why Gender Populism?

What is it that various stakeholders aim at by harnessing gender in the populist power play? Above, I have shown that the traditionalist gender populism questions the previous shared understanding on the importance of gender equality in Finland (see also Lähdesmäki & Saresma 2014; Saresma 2014a; Saresma 2017). This is related to the wider backlash against the rights of women and especially against feminism that is taking place on all levels of the Finnish society, from top to bottom (van Wormer 2008). This can be seen in the demand for women to stay at home and take care of children, with the statistics showing a decrease in the employment rate of young mothers (Tilastokeskus 2013); in the gap between the wages of men and women that is actually increasing instead of decreasing (Saari 2016); and in the overrepresentation of men still in politics (Holli et al. 2007).

Western societies have traditionally leaned on male emperors on the state, church, community, and family levels. The contemporary power system with the white middle-class western man on top of the hierarchy is fracturing. Advances in modernisation and globalisation have provided education as well as economic independence and societal and political agency for formerly minoritized groups, such as women, the working class, and ethnic minorities as racialized others. This, naturally, has diminished the traditional privileges of white middle class men. (Saresma & Harjunen 2012.)

As always, societal turbulence, such as the ongoing economic recession, the rise of political populism and the growing amounts of immigrants arriving in Europe, invokes petitions to protect the

'natural' or 'genuine' gender order. This insistence on returning to the traditional gender order used to be performed on the internet, as has been argued elsewhere (Saresma 2014a; 2014b; Saresma 2017). However, the conservative claims for restoring the traditional roles of the (two) genders have become louder in the mainstream media as well, as I have shown above.

The increasing amount of gender populist discourse and the permeability of this discourse from the semi-public online discussion forums to mainstream media is, as I suggest, an attempt to restore the traditional gender order and to return the position of power or hegemony of white western middle-class heterosexual men in a situation where neoliberal economy, climate change, and other currents have brought about global mobility. It is a means for heterosexual white men to strengthen their own masculine identity by despising marginalised others, be they women, non-heterosexuals, or people of a different ethnic background. It is about the sense of entitlement, the feeling of deserving to be privileged, and the feelings of resentment and anger when the privileges are constricted, if not altogether taken away (Husu 2013; Saresma 2017).

Conclusions

Utilising the concept gender populism here emphasises how gender is used as a tool for politics: gender is utilised for influencing and for intervention. Implementing gender populism aims at certain goals that include the wish to change the current ('too modern', 'too equal') gender order. Gender populist rhetoric aims at convincing people that they are mistreated by the liberal, feminist 'elite'; it aims at mobilising people against this elite.

Using the concept of gender populism highlights the populist rhetoric utilised in discussing gender in contemporary culture: these include black-and-white arguments, dividing people into 'us' and 'others', dichotomisation of people based on (assumed) essential, biological and psychological gender difference, and construct-

ing threats in describing how gender equality has 'gone too far' or how the advocates of gender neutrality are trying to take over. The aim is to control and to restore the traditional gender order, in which the white heterosexual men rule and the others – women, non-heterosexual, those advocating more liberal organising of genders and the right to live out their gender without the limits and restrictions of the rigid binary system – as subordinate or even silenced.

In her important book, *The Politics of Fear*, Ruth Wodak (2015) has talked about the *pseudo-emancipatory gender policies* that are extremely contradictory, such as the linking of feminist values to traditional family values. She maintains that in these policies, gender becomes instrumentalized and linked to a rhetoric of exclusion (e.g. the exclusion of the migrants). In my examples, the main aim is to turn back the clock and to restore the traditional gender order. What is noteworthy is that the negotiation of genders and their position in the society is never done in isolation. It is always intertwined with other power struggles and with the desire to dominate the others. Gender is politics.

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IV POPULISM AS A FLOATING SIGNIFIER?

THE CONCEPT OF POPULISM IN THE FINNISH NEWSPAPER *HELSINGIN SANOMAT*

Tuula Vaarakallio

ABSTRACT

The concept of populism is ambiguous and controversial and has a wide variety of academic, political and other interpretations. Taken as a given that concepts have no self-evident definitions or fixed meanings, the paper will focus on the concept of populism in its use in the daily Finnish newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat*. The starting point for the paper is the Wittgensteinian idea according to which the meaning of a word is its use in the language. The approach is not philosophical, but conceptual, as I examine the concept of populism through the lens of conceptual history. The conceptual approach emphasises how the concept is used within context and how it is defined and constructed in it. Primary sources of the research are editorials, columns and letters from public in *Helsingin Sanomat* during parliamentary election years of 2003, 2007, 2011 and 2015. The views on populism of the *HS* can be seen as a modest 'representative anecdote' (Kenneth Burke) about how populism was perceived and changed in the Finnish print media discussion – in the context where the populist Finns party became Finland's third largest party in 2011.

Introduction

My aim in this paper is to examine the concept of populism through the lens of conceptual history. The starting point of the conceptual historical approach (Hyvärinen et al. 2003; Koselleck 2004; Skinner 1996) is to understand that concepts are historically and linguistically constructed. This is to say that concepts are always polemi-

cal and controversial and there is neither a fixed nor single meaning nor a self-evident definition for a particular concept. In this sense, the concept of populism is a case in point because it is ambiguous and has a variety of interpretations. The idea of conceptual historical approach is indeed to examine diverse interpretations and usages of the concept within a specific context, in my case in the daily *Helsingin Sanomat*, the leading print media in Finland. Therefore my primary question was: how is 'populism' defined and constructed on the pages of *Helsingin Sanomat*?

My primary sources in this research have been editorials, columns and letters to the editor in *Helsingin Sanomat* during parliamentary election years of 2003, 2007, 2011 and 2015. The most important event characterising the political context during these years was the sudden rise of the populist party, Perussuomalaiset (the Finns Party) in the parliamentary elections of 2011. In that year the party gained a historically large electoral victory (19 %, 39 seats) and became all at once the third largest party in Finland.

This contextual shift naturally meant that the topic of populism was suddenly on everyone's lips. In this sense the discussions in HS, which is a leading newspaper in Finland, can be seen as a 'representative anecdote' (Burke 1945) about how populism was perceived at the time in the Finnish print media discussion, how it was changed along with the rise and mainstreaming of Finnish populism.

My findings that I will here present are preliminary remarks. My analysis in detail concerning the newspaper material is still in progress. Therefore my observations here are mainly ones that stand out from the data and appear most frequently in the texts. In addition, I will here concentrate mainly on the material surrounding the year 2011 because it was the year of the Finns Party's electoral victory and will therefore represent the general discussion on populism in this short presentation.

Populism as a foreign phenomenon and a special rhetorical style

Before proceeding, I will bring out some general remarks from the period before 2011. Generally speaking, and concerning the timeline from the year 2003 to 2015, it was interesting to notice that in 2003 and 2007 populism was referred to and regarded as a completely foreign phenomenon which does not affect Finland and which had no 'general political significance' in the Finnish context because 'populism as a political force hasn't played any political role in Finland since Veikko Vennamo's Rural Party' (the party was a forerunner for the contemporary Finns Party in the 70's and 80's). (HS 4.3.2007, Erkki Pennanen's editorial.) One editorial, for example, stated that 'politicians in Finland avoid cheap populism' (10.6.2003) and another one said about the concept of populism that 'it is better to avoid using the concept of populism as a commonplace in political language because [populism] is not reality in Finland as it is elsewhere in Europe' (HS 20.1.2003, editorial by Erkki Pennanen).

This editorial referred to the fact that populism was tackled and analysed within the columns of HS quite often – as it was. But before 2011 the concept was discussed either relating it to contemporary populist movements in Europe (e.g. France, Scandinavia, Russia, Netherlands) or with connection to populist rhetoric. Most often it was defined as a special type of rhetorical style used by any political agent whatsoever. In this respect, rhetorical populism was more connected with any political movement and not necessarily limited to certain movements or parties labelled as populist. At that time, it must be noted, the True Finns party hadn't yet got any substantial electoral success even though the party was founded already in 1995.

When perceived as a rhetorical style, populism was commonly regarded as a means to an end, a means to appeal to the people, to the masses and to the electorate. One editorial, for example, pointed out that populism as a commonplace implies all rhetoric that woos

or courts the people. At that point the writer, Erkki Pennanen, also asked a relevant question: if populism is about appealing to the people, how does it then differ from any other kinds of political rhetoric? (HS 20.1.2003.)

Populist style of rhetoric and the means of this particular style were generally described in HS as fishing for votes - i.e. as a means to get support for the party. The populist type of rhetoric was often labelled as 'cheap populism' which uses the usual arsenal of populist rhetorical tools. The tools or strategies characterising populist rhetoric were seen in a variety of ways. It was, for example, identified as a rhetoric that gives empty political promises before elections that nobody remembers afterwards. It was also featured as using theatrical or circus style rhetorical tricks – most often with regard to political opposition. It was also recognised as a rhetoric simplifying complicated issues into demagogic slogans. By simplifying issues, populism narrows down the room for political alternatives and therefore populists easily stick to one-sided political worldviews. (HS 2003, 2007 passim.)

Besides these features populist rhetoric as a means of populist politics was opposed to a 'serious' form of politics allegedly free from 'easy populism'. In the same vein, populist rhetoric was linked with anti-intellectualism and it was also compared to irrational verbal acts which lean on vague images instead of facts (and here one point of reference was the Finns Party's Tony Halme who was one of the first celebrity MP's in the Finnish parliament with very populist and thin political views). Populism was also interpreted as 'a political word of abuse', as a pejorative notion with which to label one's political opponents.

As one can see, *Helsingin sanomat* characterises populist rhetoric with rather banal and not very original features. These qualities could have been taken from any textbook that defines populist rhetoric. Many academics have previously analysed and theorised these rhetorical features more thoroughly (e.g. Taguieff 2002.) It is also significant that the writers of *Helsingin Sanomat* while referring to the populist rhetoric, were commonly interpreting it as a more or

less negative rhetoric. The populist rhetoric was therefore to be despised, not worth cherishing.

Electoral success of populism and its link to the crisis discourse

Just before the parliamentary elections in April 2011, speaking of populism in *Helsingin Sanomat* became more frequent. While in 2003 the word populis* occurred in HS editorials and opinion pieces 37 times and in 2007 47 times, in 2011 the word populis* was mentioned 118 times. In 2015 the talk about populism was again less frequent and the concept appeared 75 times.

But if the talk of populism increased in frequency in 2011, also the construction and interpretation of populism in the newspaper changed. The political atmosphere based on different opinion polls before parliamentary elections anticipated a change in the Finnish party system. There was fear that the Finns Party could even try to achieve the post of the prime minister and therefore many writers worried about the populism of the Finns Party and its links to the anti-immigration agenda. In editorials and columns, there emerged a direct link with the anti-immigration thematic and the Finns Party and some writers also expressed their concern about the mainstreaming of the Finns Party populism and spreading of the anti-immigration theme to other parties' discourse as well. Of course the theme of mainstreaming populism was much more visible after the 2011 elections when the True Finns left out of the government. Not to mention the situation after 2015 elections when the party finally entered the government.

But back to the year 2011. Simultaneously as populism was adopted as a concept now belonging to the Finnish political context, it also started to appear as a concept connected to the crisis speech.

On the pages of *Helsingin Sanomat* populism was seen as a symptom of various crises and as a reaction towards disparate phe-

nomena. Among such phenomena were, for example, market economy based on constant economic growth, overall commercialisation, EU's integration and common currency, financial crisis and EU's austerity politics, globalisation and the so-called crisis of democracy.

Overall this reaction can be crystallised in a one word: insecurity, be it social, political or general uncertainty [in Finnish *yleinen epävarmuus*]. Various articles, whether editorials or pieces from the public, tried to analyse and discuss such social or political 'reasons' behind the rise of populism.

For sure, such rhetorical, sometimes even causal relationship between populism and different sorts of political, social or economic crises is, too, a very common and historically old way (*topos*) both to legitimate populist politics (by populists themselves) and also to discuss and analyse its success (by others). By no doubt, this discussion in *Helsingin Sanomat* was associated with the wider public debate prevailing at the same time in Finnish society – the debate that dealt with Finnish style of consensual politics or with the sense of crisis concerning party system and democracy at large.

The national daily also discussed populism as a phenomenon that echoes popular discontent in the context of various on-going crises. Populism was hence interpreted as a negative political protest towards the proclaimed state of crises and various dysfunctions within it. But at the same time, the reaction of the people, the people who give their protest votes to populist parties was, in some articles, regarded also as a healthy way to channel the popular discontent.

Related to these comments, it was interesting to see whose concept populism in this connection was – to whom it was related?

If populism is based on the axiom about a basic distinction between the elite and the people, then both the elite and the people are normally presented – in the populist discourse at least – as homogenous, monolithic and undefined entities. The newspaper gave however quite a lot of space to views where the people was interpreted as a marginalised part of the people (*plebs*) which in 2011 elections

finally had a political voice in a form of a vote given to the Finns Party. (Cf. e.g. Taguieff 2013, 1359–1365.) In this connection, the electoral rise of the Finns Party was interpreted as a victory for Finnish democracy in terms to voter turnout and in terms to the fact that the Finns Party has had courage to highlight difficult questions surrounding the EU and immigration – questions that other parties tend to avoid.

In the letters to the editor section the HS published many analyses, mostly from university professors (eg. Tapio Raunio, HS 29.6.2011), who found it positive to have some political dissensus and various political standpoints within the traditionally very consensual Finnish political system. Hence, the rise of populism to the fore was considered not only as a threat to democracy but also as a corrective to democracy. The populist political force was then seen as a re-politicizing power that brings to the fore issues that were otherwise forgotten or avoided. At the same time, this agenda highlighted the status of the marginalised people at the society. In my personal view, these writings indicated that the HS was able to tackle problematic issues at that time in quite a balanced way.

If the HS considered populism as a somewhat re-politicizing concept and phenomenon before and during the year 2011, the focus was moved after 2011 from populism's relations to democracy clearly to the relationship between populism and immigration. (For example in 2003 xenophobic attitudes were not associated with populism at all.)

The central question since then was rather how populism creates and intensifies dichotomies between various groups: nationalities, genders, generations – or between people with different sexual orientation or social classes. 'Populism' then became also more or less reduced to the conflicting discussion surrounding immigration and anti-immigrant attitudes. In this connection populism as a concept was represented more in a moral register: for example a clear division was made between the 'bad' populists and the 'good' intelligentsia – and this division was also debated and challenged in

the newspaper. (E.g. Pasi Sillanpää, HS 19.2.2011; Vesa Kanniainen, HS 28.2.2011.)

Conclusions

At this point, in conclusion, I am ready to claim that populism in HS was constructed and discussed quite traditionally - without major surprises. The most interesting thing, in my view, was to notice the slight conceptual shift in the interpretation of populism which took place around 2011 and was naturally contextually connected to the Finns Party's electoral victory. Before 2011 populism was merely seen as a general rhetorical style in the Finnish political context linked mostly to the former Finnish populist history and to the Finnish Rural Party's tradition. At that time, contemporary populism was also seen more as a foreign phenomenon that concerned other European countries but not contemporary Finland.

Just before and after the 2011 Parliamentary elections, the interpretation surrounding the concept changed and got more nuanced. 'Populism' was discussed in relation with wider social and political contexts and its significance as a political phenomenon was weighted in terms of democracy, for example. Furthermore, its links to the issue of immigration later on complicated the understanding of the concept and opened up the antagonisms incorporated within it. From the electoral year 2011 onwards populism was seen in *Helsingin Sanomat* as a force that intensifies social and political dichotomies and represents more a threat than a constructive force to the prevailing political society.

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TRACING THE CONCEPT OF HATE SPEECH IN FINLAND

Maria Ruotsalainen

ABSTRACT

Hate speech, while historically not a new phenomenon in Finland nor elsewhere, has as a term become widely used in Finland only in the past ten years. The term has evolved alongside with political, cultural and societal changes. This paper examines the use and the formation of the concept of hate speech in Finnish public discourses. The focus is particularly on how the concept of hate speech is used by the members of the Finnish populist party The Finns Party (Perussuomalaiset), as well as in relation to them. In order to trace this, the use of the concept of hate speech is analyzed in the largest Finnish newspaper, *Helsingin Sanomat,* in the party journal of The Finns Party, *Perusuomalainen,* and in the parliamentary plenary sitting discussing about the hate acts and racism. Based on the analysis it is argued that hate speech as a concept works as a 'floating signifier' (Laclau 2005) which meaning is constantly contested and negotiated.

Introduction

Together with the widespread digitalization and establishment of new media forms and venues of commentary, hate speech and freedom of speech have become central themes in multiple discussions and locations. It is seen that the social media, online publications and newspapers as well their commentary areas – not to forget the different kinds of discussion forums – offer a ground for hate speech to nourish and to spread (Kuntsman 2009; Suler 2004). Also the questions about online anonymity (Suler 2004) and those

of international and national legislations are entangled with the debates about hate speech (Pöyhtäri, Haara & Raittila 2013). Finally, lately it has been argued that we live in the society of 'post-truth', where the ideas and imaginaries spread by populist speech and hate speech are beginning, due to their affective appeal, to hold a more important position than 'truth' grounded on facts and well-grounded argumentation (Suiter 2016).

Simultaneously with the increasing growth of hate speech as well discussions about it, we have seen the rise of the 21th century populism. Populist rhetoric has been observed to utilize the kind of speech in its argumentation that can be articulated as hate speech . Moreover, populist rhetoric often aims at creating categories of 'us' versus 'them', which further facilitate aggressive and hateful forms of speech, often directed towards the minorities or what is considered by the populists as the 'elite' (Wodak 2015).

In addition to being a 'hot' topic of discussion, hate speech is also a somewhat muddy concept in itself – or at least can appear to be so in the public debate. Indeed, the way it is used in the public debates and everyday discussions is not always in line with the academic, political, nor with the legal understandings of the concept, but it changes and spawns new lines of articulation (Ruotsalainen 2017; Pöyhtäri, Haara & Raittila 2013). This further complicates the understanding of hate speech and its relationship to what is often in the everyday discussions articulated as its contrasting pole, freedom of speech. In short, by having porous boundaries, hate speech allows multiple, sometimes even contrasting definitions and usages.

Given the various ways the concept of hate speech is used in the everyday discussions and its intimate linkage to populism, my aim in this paper is to examine to use of the concept of hate speech in the Finnish public discourses, focusing particularly on how it is used by and in relation to the Finnish populist party, Perussuomalaiset, the Finns Party. Throughout the analysis my focus is twofold: On the one hand I examine the way the concept hate speech is used, to what it is connected and how, and in this manner what kind

of usages the concept itself allows; on the other hand, I pay attention to how it is used by the members of the Finns Party and how these uses are related or vary from the other uses of the concept in public discussion.

To trace these articulations and usages of the concept of hate speech in Finland, I analyse editorial and opinion pieces from the years 2002–2015 from the most read newspaper in Finland, *Helsingin Sanomat,* the mentions of hate speech in the journal of the Finns Party, *Perussuomalaiset,* from the years 2004–2015, and a parliamentary plenary sitting about hate acts and racism, held in 14.10.2015.

Analysing hate speech as a concept

My approach to hate speech as a concept is mainly informed by cultural studies and this is visible throughout the analysis: my interest is on seeing to what larger discourses the concept of hate speech is attached to and what kinds of meanings and uses are assigned to it in the rhetoric of the Finns Party. As method of analysis I use thematic analysis and discourse analysis. By discourse I refer to the larger discursive frames which limit how the issues can be discussed and which are not particular to a speaker or driven by an individual agency. As such they are often covered and not explicit and produce power structures (Wodak 2011). In line with Tapio Nykänen (2016) and Sami Moisio (2003), I separate discourse from rhetoric: By rhetoric I refer to intentional use of language which, whilst being limited by the discursive frames, usually contains an intention, style and aim.

For the analysis I have used data gathered from three different sources. Firstly, for the examination of the concept of hate speech in public debate for a longer period of time (from 2002 up to 2015), I used the data gathered from *Helsingin Sanomat. Helsingin Sanomat* is the most widely read newspaper in Finland and it is read all across Finland. I examined all the opinion and editorial pieces from

Helsingin Sanomat from the years 2002–2015. In total there were 101 pieces mentioning hate speech. I discuss the concept of hate speech in the editorial and opinion pieces of the *Helsingin Sanomat* more thoroughly elsewhere (Ruotsalainen 2017), so here this data is discussed rather briefly and mainly serves to track the recent history of the concept in the public discussions and thus allows tracing it vertically in time.

Secondly, I examined the use of the concept hate speech in the party journal of the Finns Party, *Perussuomalainen,* from the years 2004-2015. The data has been gathered from the year 2004 onwards as this is the first year the journal was published. The journal is freely available online[1]. From *Perussuomalainen* a total of 18 mentions of hate speech were found.

Thirdly, I examined the concept of hate speech in the parliamentary plenary sitting held in 14.10.2015. The plenary sitting was titled racism and hate acts in Finland. The plenary sitting was aired live and is still accessible at the website of the Parliament.[2] For the analysis, I used the transcript of the plenary sitting and I paid special attention to how the concept of hate speech is used by the representatives of the Finns Party and positioned these uses on the framework of the recent history, as traced from the data gathered from the *Helsingin Sanomat,* and to an extent from *Perussuomalainen*, and on the wider discourses around the hate speech in Finland.

The Finns Party

The Finns Party is a political party, known for its antagonism towards the European Union, immigration, and the political 'elite' (Rahkonen, 2010). The Finns Party was founded in 1995 and it has been from the beginning lead by Timo Soini. Soini is currently the minister of Foreign Affairs in Finland and the Finns Party is currently a governmental party, having received 17.7 % of votes in the last elections, held in 2015. While this is the first time the Finns Party has become a governmental party, the popularity of the Finns

Party has been in considerable rise in Finland since 2011 and it has grown from a rather small party to a large political influencer.[3]

The Finns Party is largely defined as a populist party (Nykänen 2016). Definitions and attempts to capture what populism actually is are multiple and varied: some equate populism with rhetoric or style (see Jagers & Walgrave 2006), while some argue it is a logic of social formation which constitutes a populist party or movement (see Laclau 2005). Moreover, it is to be noted that most, if not all, political parties use from time to time populist rhetoric and appeal (Wodak 2015). It is thus not easy to create a comprehensive definition of what populism is and what constitutes a populist party or populist politics. Here I endorse mainly Wodak's (2015) definition of populism. She argues that all populist parties do not only use populist style of rhetoric, but also the contents are of a particular kind. According to Wodak, typical of(right-wing) populist parties is evoking fear and constructing scapegoats, as well as the appeal to nationalism and creation of – material or immaterial – borders. [4]

In Finland in the public discussion hate speech is a topic quite often discussed in relation to The Finns Party and numerous members of the Finns Party have become known for their engagement in online environments with the kind of forms of speech which can be classified as hate speech[5]. Maybe the best known case in which a member of the Finns Party was connected to hate speech was in 2011 when Jussi Halla-aho was found guilty of both disturbing religious worship and of ethnic agitation by the Finnish high court, but this has not been the only case.[6] I will next examine in more detail the concept of hate speech in recent history and its uses and connections with the members of the Finns Party.

Hate speech in Finland

Hate speech really became a topic of discussion in Finland in 2011, but it is not a new phenomenon in itself. In Finland minorities such as the Roma people and the Sami have been historically subject-

ed to hate speech (Pöyhtäri, Haara & Raittila 2013). Despite hate speech being a phenomenon with historical roots in Finland, in the light of the data analysed here the concept of hate speech became part of public discussion in Finland rather late. In the editorial and opinion pieces of *Helsingin Sanomat* the first mention of hate speech (in the data I examined from 2002 onwards) was found as late as in 2007 and it is only from 2011 that the concept starts to be drawn on increasingly. It is most likely no coincidence that the concept was most used in the election years 2011 and 2015: in 2011 it appears 33 times and 2015 29 times, while before 2011 there were only few mentions of it per year.

From the beginning, hate speech is discussed in *Helsingin Sanomat* mainly in two ways: first of all, hate speech is discussed as a malicious and harmful speech directed towards minorities. As such, it is perceived as being similar to racism, but with an accent on that it refers to a form of speech, rather than to an act – even though it is often pointed out that from speech it is short way to acts. Secondly, it is discussed as a phenomenon related to political debates and as a style used in these debates. In these pieces hate speech is characterized by its aggressivity, by the unwillingness of the speakers to engage in a mutually respectful dialogue and by the way those practicing hate speech tend to overlook facts in the debates (see also Ruotsalainen 2017).Thematically hate speech is frequently discussed in relation to immigration, the extreme right, fascism, multiculturalism, political correctness, and borders. In addition, especially in the later mentions (this tendency becomes particularly pronounced in the year 2015), hate speech becomes intimately linked with the web and the online environments. It is seen that they both facilitate and help the spreading of hate speech. Moreover, it is not only an extreme which is assigned as producer or as a part of the hate speech, but there is also discussion about two extremes between which hate speech is seen to happen. Broadly these are articulated as those ‘against’ and ‘for’ immigration. As such, hate speech and its production become increasingly characterized by a lack of communication and the rise of hate speech becomes to

be seen as connected to fear and in this manner also psychologized, which in turn tends to privatize it.

While the two ways of understanding hate speech – hate speech as a malicious speech directed towards minorities and hate speech as a form or a style of communicating – are rather distinct in the first mentions of the hate speech, they become increasingly more entangled by 2011 and the topic of the freedom of speech becomes central to the hate speech discussions. It is discussed in what ways we should limit malicious speech, what consequences this has for freedom of speech, and finally through this it is asked what then actually is hate speech. In a similar manner, by the 2011 the question who can be a target of the hate speech arises. Here the Finns Party is very central to the discussion, as it is a member of the Finns Party who suggested that it is the members of the Finns party who are subjected to the hate speech – instead of being ones producing it as had been argued until that in the hate speech debates.

The Finns Party and hate speech

The members of the Finns Party and the party itself are a visible part of the hate speech discussions in *Helsingin Sanomat*. They are mentioned frequently and a few pieces written by the members of the Finns Party were also found in *Helsingin Sanomat*. When examining the opinion and editorial pieces from *Helsingin Sanomat,* I found in total 101 mentions of hate speech. In these 101 mentions, the Finns Party or a politician connected to the Finns Party was mentioned 27 times - while other political parties were mentioned only occasionally. The Finns Party appears in these discussions both as those who are perceived as producing hate speech and as those who are perceived (and perceive themselves) to be the targets of the hate speech.

Thematically, these discussions linger around different topics, but one case stands out. In 2011 the discussions circle around *Hommaforum* and term 'Immigration criticism'[7]. *Hommaforum* is a dis-

cussion forum on the internet, started in the 2008. In the data I examined from *Helsingin Sanomat*, *Hommaforum* is frequently connected to the Finns Party, together with term 'immigration criticism', which is seen to be used by both members of *Hommaforum* as well as the members of the Finns Party (Ojutkangas 2011; Oja 2011, Soininen 2011). In the editorial and opinion pieces of *Helsingin Sanomat* 'immigration criticism' is directly connected to a derogatory way of speaking about Islam and immigrants, seen spread especially through *Hommaforum* but also through the blog of Jussi Halla-Aho, *Scripta* (Ojutkangas 2011; Oja 2011). It is also asked why Timo Soini, leader of the Finns Party, claims that 'immigration criticism' is not a form of racism (Oja 2011) and it is demanded that Soini as the leader of the Party take more responsibility around the actions and the speech of the party members of the Finns Party (Oja 2011; Soininen 2011).

While in 2011 The Finns Party and its members receive criticism for using the kind of speech that can be classified as hate speech, there are also those who defend Soini and the Finns Party. It is suggested that instead of condemning all the members of the Finns Party, there is need for more fine-tuned distinctions between the members of the party, as well as for communication and cooperation (Komsi 2011). Moreover, it is pointed out that the Finns Party should not alone be accused for unsavoury opinions, but it is actually members of other political parties (referring to members of the Left Alliance and the Green Party) who most easily use the 'stamp of racist' on members of the Finns Party (Räsänen 2011). Finally it is also claimed that it is the members of the Finns Party who are targets of hate speech. The representative of the Finns Party Maria Tolppanen writes: 'EU and immigration criticism does not mean hate towards foreigners or fascism… Immigration criticism means taking responsibility of the people who come to this country. For each of them it is necessary to be able to provide language, reading and writing skills, as well as vocational education and work. Placing immigrants into reception centres or to suburbs without work does not amount to humane life. Hate speeches and writings need

to be absolutely condemned. At all levels. Hate speech is now targeted towards the Finns Party.' (Tolppanen, 2015.)[8]

Traditionally hate speech is seen to be targeted towards ethnic, linguistic, religious and sexual minorities. By positioning a political party as the target of the hate speech, the concept is effectively emptied oft he idea that hate speech is malicious speech directed at these minorities and it is furthermore decoupled from racism (see also Ruotsalainen 2017). Instead, it becomes argued in the public discussions that a political party can alike be a target of hate speech. In the data examined from P*erussuomalainen* this tendency is visible as well.

The Finns party and hate speech in the Perussuomalainen

To further examine how hate speech is discussed amongst the members of the Finns Party and how these discussions tie together with public debates around the hate speech, I examined the use of the concept in the party journal of the Finns party, *Perussuomalainen.* While hate speech rather often becomes equated with the Finns Party in the data gathered from the *Helsingin Sanomat,* it is not discussed as much in the *Perussuomalainen*. I examined all the issues from the year 2004 onwards up to 2015 and found in total of 18 pieces of mentioning the term hate speech, first from the year 2008.

In these 18 mentions of hate speech in *Perussuomalainen,* it is rather often asked what hate speech is. For instance, Ahonen writes: 'What is hate speech? Is it bringing out defects? Or is it defending the frail citizens of your own nation and own municipality? For some reason hate media wants to elevate as heroes those who ridicule those who care the most about the matters of their own nation and its real well-being.' (Ahonen 2012.) Here, in addition to questioning what hate speech is, also the articulation of us versus them

is clear, as well as the idea of bordered nations – both landmarks of a populist party (Wodak, 2105).

Also a more precise definition for hate speech is asked for as 'according to current practice every defiant word or a written word is labelled as hate speech' (Hyry, 2015). Through this questioning, the victim of the hate speech is often redefined - to be the Finns Party or its member. This can be seen, for example, in the article discussing about James Hirvisaari, a member of the Finns Party who was found guilty of ethnic agitation in the 2010, due to his blog post. In the article it is said: 'I do use colourful language, but I am never angry when I write. Demonization is a weapon used by a political opponent, which is used to label especially those who do not think that multiculturalism is wonderful. It is rather that the opponents produce hate speech towards the Finns Party, says Hirvisaari who has been labelled as hate speaker.'" (PS, 2010).

In this manner, similarly as in the data examined in *Helsingin Sanomat*, the Finns Party becomes (self-)defined as the victim of the hate speech. In *Perussuomalaiset,* we thus see the same rhetorical style as we saw emerging in *Helsingin Sanomat*. In this style, there is a double meaning assigned to the hate speech. On the one hand, it is questioned what hate speech actually is and it is claimed that it limits freedom of speech or what is articulated as telling the truth or telling the facts. On the other hand, the premises of hate speech are taken for granted and the members of the Finns party are articulated as victims of the hate speech themselves. These two meanings are constantly present and used when they are seen fitting for the context. In the parliamentary plenary sitting a similar tendency of questioning what hate speech actually is and henceforth who actually can be seen as target of it, continues and strengthens. I will next turn towards this.

Hate speech and the Parliamentary Plenary sitting

The Finnish parliament consists of a total of 200 seats and eight political groups, of which at that point of time in 2015 Centre Party (49 seats), Finns Party (39 sears) and National Coalition Party were part of the government. The Parliament holds parliamentary plenary sittings four times week. All the sittings are streamed and streams and transcripts are accessible to the wider public.

The topic of the parliamentary plenary sitting taking place on 14.10.2015 was hate acts and racism and it was initiated by Nasima Razmyar, member of the Social Democratic Party. Razmyar also held the opening speech of the plenary sitting. Already in the opening speech the term hate speech is introduced to the discussion. Razmyar calls out for zero tolerance of hate speech and racism 'as from them it is a short distance to acts themselves'. Hate speech is a pronounced part of the plenary sitting thereafter.

In what follows, I examine the rhetoric of the members of the Finnish Party and look at what discourses they are attached to and how the concept of hate speech here resonates with its other uses. Moreover, I trace the larger discourses which are connected to hate speech in the parliamentary discussion hour. While political interests are inexplicably part of the discussions, they are usually articulated through rhetorical means – while the discourses precede these rhetorical devices and as such also limit and frame them.

The major themes around hate speech in the plenary sitting are racism, immigration, asylum seekers, and the need (and therefore the lack of) communication: hate speech is often articulated as something that mainly exists in 'extremes' and is provoked by fear.* [9] It is thus seen that by establishing functioning communication and 'true encounters' hate speech could be lessened. In a similar manner, immigrants (who are framed as the other and those who

* In 2015 there were more than the usual amount of immigration and asylum seekers coming to Finland. This gathered considerable civil, media, and political attention.

evoke fear) are also, even if indirectly, assigned to be the cause of the hate speech. The Minister of internal affairs, Petteri Orpo, states: 'Increased immigration creates tensions, which have already resulted in hate crimes' (2015).

Together with this, the rhetoric of 'good' and 'bad' immigrant or asylum seeker is pronounced in the discussion (see also Lähdesmäki & Saresma 2014). Multiple times it is called out that the best form of integration is work and it is also seen as the way immigrants and asylum seekers can earn their place in a society. In a similar vein, fear is articulated as a prominent reason why people produce hate speech or are against immigration. Moreover, in the discussions immigrants are often objectified and discussed as them or the others – instead of as part of us.

The wider discourses surrounding hate speech are thus rather similar to those visible in the data gathered from the *Helsingin Sanomat*, with an accent on immigration and on the need of communication and encounters. Moreover, there is only a minimal amount (even though some) of discussion about the possibility of institutional discrimination or how hate speech, hate acts and racism could be tackled through institutional interventions. More often than not, the problem of hate speech is privatized and responsibility (not only of producing it, but also of containing it) is set on the individuals: multiple members of the parliament call for individual acts to compete against racism and hate speech as well as for the help of the volunteer organizations.

As good and constructive forms of communications are called out for as a solution, there are also concerns of the 'stamp of the racist' being used too easily. The members of the Finns Party are not the only ones bringing this up, but this discourse is visible across all the governmental parties, while the tendency of accusing others of applying 'the stamp of racist' does become especially prominent in the statements of the members of the Finns Party. For instance, Juho Eerola from the Finns Party states: '[--]. Of course we are all against racism, but the problem is that when one criticizes for instance immigration policies or its shortcomings, then one receives

a stamp of a racist, and this is what it is many times about'. And Veera Ruoho, from the Finns Party, on her turn: 'ndeed, the law protects from racism and hate speech. What then is hate speech and racism, surely not bringing up the facts? For instance already years ago the Finns Party brought up the issues with our integration policies. What happened? The politicians of the Finns Party were labelled as racists, only because we brought forward the public facts that can be seen from the statistics.' And Mika Niikko, from the Finns Party: 'At the same time, as it is important to condemn hate speech, it is as important to accept different opinions. That means also freedom of speech and accepting different opinion than those that are one's own. And in that sense we have to be really careful when we condemn racism, so that we do not condemn a person who worriedly shows his own disposition or opinion, and that we have room for that as well in this society'. There is also a tendency to victimize the Finns Party. Juho Eerola from the Finns Party states: 'Hate speech and racism are wrong, and according to European Social Survey Finland is one of the least racist countries - we can per se even congratulate ourselves. Racism is often connected to multiculturalism....In addition to racism, I condemn all violence directed towards political activities, no matter if it is done with the right or the left hand, and especially I want bring out the attacks carried out against the Helsinki regional office of the Finns Party.'

The rhetorical style of turning hate speech to be something that is directed towards those who are accused of being ones who produce it – and that we have by now become familiar with in the context of the Finns Party – thus continues in the parliamentary plenary sitting.

Framing hate speech

The hate speech discussions are often framed and coupled with different forms of freedom of speech discussions. As so they also attach themselves to a larger discussion about Western values as con-

trasted with the values of the 'others'– those perceived or constructed as not us. The most common other is the immigrant or the asylum seeker. Nevertheless, this other is not the one discussed or communicated with and he remains merely as an object. The discussion instead becomes framed as it would happen between two (political) extremes: a larger discursive frame of two extremes which became prominent in 2015. This creates the possibility of the idea that the problems related to hate speech can and should be solved through encounters, negotiations and communications. This frame was particularly visible in the parliamentary plenary sitting and not maintained mainly by the representatives of the Finns Party.

While hate speech has historically been connected to malicious and aggressive speech towards ethnic, sexual, linguistic, and religious minorities, this connotation becomes loosened and effectively hate speech as concept becomes 'emptied' from its history and its connotation with racism and or even becomes, in terms of Laclau (2005), a floating signifier, which avoids strict definition and rather works as a line where the 'borderwork' is done. As such it also becomes a rhetorical trope and a tool (especially in political and politicized contexts) which further obscures the matter discussed and moves the line of what is considered as racism – as when moved under hate speech, these matters can be set against the notion of freedom of speech and it can be questioned what kind of limitations we then ought to have for the spoken or written word. Moreover, the way the concept of hate speech is used, mainly but not only, by the representatives of the Finns Party, enables it becoming a double threat: either the limits of hate speech are malleable and negotiable or a political party and its members can be read as the target of hate speech and they can accuse that the 'stamp of racist' is used against them when they use the kind of rhetoric that border on hate speech and racism.

Conclusions

In this chapter, I examined the concept of hate speech in the public discussions in Finland. I focused especially on how it has been used by the members of the Finns Party. Through this examination, two ways of using the concept by the members of The Finns party become of interest: the first is the way hate speech is redefined by the members of the Party. The second, connected to the first, is the way members of the Finns Party tend to victimize the Finns Party and its members as the target of hate speech. Both of these ways of using hate speech appeared frequently and in different platforms. I furthermore argued that this is a rhetorical move on the part of the Finns Party, made possible by larger discourses of freedom of speech, two extremes and the need for communication and encounters.

NOTES

[1] The archive can be found at: https://www.suomenuutiset.fi/lehtiarkisto//

[2] https://www.eduskunta.fi/FI/vaski/PoytakirjaAsiakohta/Documents/PTK_50+2015+2.pdf

[3] In the 2011 parliamentary elections the party already received 19.1 percent of the votes.

[4] It is good to note that the politics of the Finns Party tend to traditionally lean more towards left than right with regard to the support of the public sector and the welfare state (Rahkonen 2010).

[5] While there are no laws in Finland which would define and furthermore prohibit hate speech per se, there are laws against ethnic agitation and disturbance of religious worship (Pöyhtäri, Haara & Raittila 2013)

[6] The first conviction was assigned in 2009 when Halla-aho was found guilty for disturbing religious worship by the Helsinki district court. Halla-aho filed a complaint about the conviction and the case was taken to the high court, where Halla-aho was convicted for both for ethnic agitation and disturbing religious worship.

[7] Nykänen (2016) connects 'immigration criticism' to the anti-immigrant wing of the Finns Party and describes it as a way of thinking where nationalism, economic concerns, dislike of Islam and criticism towards immigration come together.

[8] This commentary, as the other comments, commentaries, quotes, and statements from the data used in this paper, have been translated from Finnish into English by the author.

[9] A systematic distinction is seldom made between immigrants and asylum seekers in the discussions.

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CULTURAL POPULISM: THE CASE OF GUGGENHEIM HELSINKI

Emilia Palonen

Picture 1: *Janne Gallen-Kallela-Sirén, Tuula Haatainen, Richard Armstrong, Jussi Pajunen, Ari Wiseman.* (picture: City of Helsinki. http://www.hel.fi/www/helsinki/en/culture/culture/exhibitions/guggenheim-study-2014 accessed 22.10.2014)

ABSTRACT

In so far as populism is a mode of articulation, it exists also outside traditional party politics and gets entangled with other meaning making, affective ties, symbols and identifications. In this chapter the author shows, through the Guggenheim Helsinki case, how populist rhetoric and logic of articulation penetrated debates on cultural policy – or reactivated frontlines between us and them that had been there already. Looking at the articulations, who were the pop-

ulists? This time, it seems populism was the name of the game and frontlines were formed for and against the proposed Helsinki Guggenheim museum. The counter project Checkpoint Helsinki has become part of cultural mind map and the political memory of the Guggenheim debates in 2011–2016 is still present in Helsinki. This case cannot really be understood without recourse to these concepts developed by Jim McGuigan and Ernesto Laclau in very different contexts. Cultural populism leads to culture of populism, politicization and polarisation, entangled with colonisation and generation of counter-discourses.

Introduction

Picture it: Five happy people in suits, standing on the slushy pavement, ready to throw snowballs – to those behind the camera, even! In the middle, Richard Armstrong, on his right, the tall lady in red jacket, the social democratic vice-mayor of Helsinki Tuula Haatainen; on his left, the shortest of the lot, the conservative mayor of Helsinki, Jussi Pajunen. The most dynamic figure is the first one on the left, the director of the Helsinki Art Museum, Janne Gallen-Kallela-Sirén, and at the opposite edge stands Ari Wiseman, the Deputy Director of Solomon R. Guggenheim foundation. Why are they all smiling? What's with the snowballs? Whom are they throwing them at? Me? What's the battle? Who will get a hit?

This chapter does not discuss right-wing populism in Finland. It also does not discuss the relationship between the populist Finns Party, which at the time of publication of this volume has been for two years in the national coalition government of Juha Sipilä (Centre Party) and gets the portfolio of Minister of Culture. Rather, it theorizes and discusses cultural populism, the emergence of a political frontier around culture, through a global case in Finland. The Guggenheim Museum Helsinki project, first proposed in January 2011, in cooperation with the city of Helsinki and Finnish cultural elites, is still in the time of publication of this article in 2018 an

issue that sometimes emerges in the political debates. In November 2014, the architectural competition concludes and in 2015 the city of Helsinki is expected to make its decision on the Guggenheim project. Finally, by the end of 2016, the Guggenheim process came to an end, as the City Council voted against the Guggenheim Museum.

The original proposal combined arts, design and architecture, and maintained that the Museum would be 'a strategic investment for both Helsinki and Finland, raising the international profile of the entire region' (Guggenheim Helsinki 2013). The response to the proposal was an intense enthusiasm on one side of the political and cultural elite and an intensive dismissal from the part of the other. Checkpoint Helsinki emerged as the counter project to Guggenheim launched by the art elite, predominantly curators. It enjoyed a moment of independence with funding from different foundations before it was again coopted to the divisive politics, suggesting a competition for other uses of the same lot of land in Helsinki seashore where the Guggenheim architectural competition was based.

The dynamics of this phenomenon that is now in 2016 declared to be over and done with after the City Council rejected the second proposal by the Guggenheim Foundation, ought to be studied theoretically. The theoretical and methodological questions raised in this paper include the following: How to approach a situation in which cultural politics becomes thoroughly divisive, and seems to create two camps claiming to represent the people that cannot communicate with each other? How to theorize a situation where political and cultural elites seek to legitimate their art project through references to a common 'universal' value and the citizens as a whole? The answer here is through the concept of cultural populism and culture of populism. It is also related to the bipolar character that evolves in political debates when 'us' and 'them' become the most significant form of contestation, and debate polarises on a particular line (c.f. Palonen 2009).

The proposal of Guggenheim Helsinki emerged in 2011 to the City Council. In January 2012 a feasibility study Guggenheim Stu-

dy (GS) funded by two Finnish cultural foundations was published. The City Council rejected the plan in May 2012, but the proposal re-emerged in 2013. Finally, a no-strings-attached style open architectural competition was held in 2014, with six finalist chosen. The works were presented at a gallery and online. The winner of the competition Moreau Kusunoki Architects was announced in June 2015. Finally the Helsinki city council rejected the plan in December 2016, five months before the local elections in April 2017 – that could provide enough time for healing after the politicized debate. This article looks at the early stages of the Guggenheim Museum process, the articulation of it in the feasibility plan and the ways in which the criticism was faced during the crucial phases of the project. It also looks at the Checkpoint Helsinki counter project.

The Guggenheim Helsinki is a special case in a polity with a state-bound cultural policy, where legitimation has to be achieved from the people. Some private funding for the project was found but the target of the Guggenheim Foundation were always the public funds that were behind democratic control. The concepts of the public and the people were present in the debate. Although the Guggenheim project appears to be over, it is not an isolated case of politics of culture, but increasingly tied to global politicizations, and even spread of dichotomous political rhetoric in cultural populism of the elite. The polarization and different perspectives on Guggenheim have been discovered recently (Wang 2016, Javanainen 2016, and for the 2012 debate Aura 2014) – also internationally, but here we focus on theorization. Considering the Guggenheim Helsinki process and its politicization, the exact research questions in this paper are: What kind of lines of differentiation and figures of 'people' do the parties in the discussion form? Through what methods, and why can they be seen as populist?

Populism and poststructuralist discourse theory

Populism is a logic of articulating the people on a dichotomous frontier. Rather than a reference to the extreme right or peasant rural political movements, following political theorist Ernesto Laclau (2006), populism is a logic of articulation, a tool for understanding certain processes. Populism is a political articulation which extends under a common heading a 'chain of equivalence', a signifying chain, and rejects what it is not. Laclau diverts our attention from the naming of the 'other' typical of xenophobia, to the production of 'the people' – even when this is done through an antagonistic relationship to what is not 'us'. For Laclau, populism implies a process where, through articulation, an empty signifier emerges as the symbol of unity, produces a political frontier and dichotomizes the discursive field. Populism is intimately tied to antagonism, and, thus, to the political. It is vital for any political movement. To clarify his point, Laclau (2005) uses the distinction between populist identities and 'institutional' identities to explain the distinction between articulated identifications and essentialist identities. Articulation implies that the identities are not institution-bound or given, but rather the result of a process of articulation on an uneven terrain. Populism offers an illusion of the fullness of identity.

Articulation and fixing meanings through empty signifiers sounds like the theory of hegemony by Laclau and Mouffe (1985), for whom hegemony emerges as articulating relations – even though temporal ones – on a field crisscrossed with antagonisms. The equation of populism with hegemony entails a problem (Arditi 2010). Theory of hegemony is presented as a general theory of identification, but not every political identity is a populist one. At the same time, Laclau argues that populism is necessary for political parties in the contemporary world – all parties need populism, but not all parties are thoroughly populist. We need to make a distinction between hegemony as a process and populism. For Laclau and Mouffe, hegemony is not the state of domination. Hegemonic articulations extending the chains and fixing the meanings, on the

field crisscrossed with antagonism. Hegemony is a process between unity/fixity and fragmentation, not the mere fixation of meanings. Populism draws from hegemonic articulations, and seeks to fix a certain understanding of us/them relations.

The solution is to investigate the *extent* and *kind* of populism. We need to ask to what extent is a movement or a party populist? Is it slightly populist or populist through and through? Or in other words, is the articulation dominated by the logic of populism? All populism is political, though not in the party-political sense. Is populism a spice or is it the main ingredient, a steak *au naturel*? Does not pure populism lose its touch to democracy? We also need to consider, what kind of populism are we experiencing. Where is the dichotomy? There are moments, even reappearing and long-lasting moments, when meanings are fixed so that the situation appears as bipolar. Then we talk about 'polarization' or bipolar or bipolarized hegemony. In polarization, antagonisms appear *as if frozen to a single frontier.* This is a special moment in the process of hegemony, which is dynamic rather than static – in the same way as society or the discursive field is filled with articulations. There are moves to contest the existing meanings and their relations and those who seek to decontest or unfix those. But what if the struggle becomes about mere antagonism, mere identification?

The theory has studied little the perspective of the persistence of populism in contrast to the emergence of populism. The focus has been on the political, the investment on the populist identification, the articulation of the disparate elements, rather than the maintenance of those relations. Perhaps because the assumption with Laclau and to some extent Mouffe, too, is that the empty space of power is left open. Perhaps because politically, for a long time, for Laclau the political forces to criticize were those fostering institutional identities, and those emergent populist forces offered a solution. But what happens when the populists are in power, are the elites? And what if with populism instead of racist extreme-right fringe populism of the suburbs we are dealing with something else? What if we deal with 'cultural populism'?

Cultural populism

Above, I suggested we could discuss kinds of populism. One suggestion is cultural populism and the culture of populism. *Culture of populism*, which produces constant, widespread frontier-building that seeks to constitute the people – often around a frontier of polarization. Polarization itself becomes hegemonic, a language game (Laclau 2014). Although these two are not interchangeable, cultural populism may coexist with culture of populism.

Cultural populism could be read as a contradiction in terms: populism refers to the people – and quite often the masses, antipode to the elite. In the early 1990s, Jim McGuigan (1992) used the term cultural populism to refer to the focus of cultural theorists on culture outside the high culture: sports, TV, films for mass consumption. McGuigan sought to demonstrate that the favouring of popular culture over high culture had already turned into a widespread praxis, a routine. 'In the academic context, discussed here, 'cultural populism' refers to *diffuse political sentiments associated routinely* with certain analytical *protocols* rather than the kind of *dispassionate* scientificity claimed by a 'paradigm',' McGuigan argues, contrasting passions and routines in his critique of his colleagues (McGuigan 1992, 2, my emph.).

Although this notion, developed in the 1980s, does not encapsulate the notion of 'cultural populism' employed here, two things remain of it: the dichotomous frontier and the routine. This understanding resonates with Laclau's theory of hegemony especially as it has been rearticulated by Glynos and Howarth (2007) to tackle social and political explanation. They refer to the fantasmatic logics that lies behind social logics, practices. Centrally for this understanding, Jason Glynos (2001), a Lacanian theorist, has discussed the 'grip of ideology' on the subject.

This has quite something to do with hegemony, the emergence of a certain frame of reference as the dominant and simultaneously hiding references to another. In fact, McGuigan studies hegemony in his work, even without always acknowledging it. He obser-

ved how his colleagues moved from one dominant perspective to another: from high culture to popular culture as an object of analysis (McGuigan 1992). Later, he observed how neoliberalism in the guise of cool capitalism emerged to different parts of cultural or social life (McGuigan 2009).

McGuigan's thesis also emerges on a field of antagonisms. Defending the 'elite culture' from the populists, challenging the status quo in art studies to study what the mainstream is interested in. He also is one of the sound leftists exploring the spread of capitalism. The case at hand in Finnish politics of culture witnesses the two streams in McGuigan's work coming together – in an inverted format: the elites are mainstreaming high culture to the masses, with economic arguments.

Cultural populism has become part of the elite's rhetoric: it is an attack on the art for art's sake, and tied to the logics of global capitalism, global tastes and local profit. Its 'enemy' is the backward, lazy state-bound art institutions, and inward-looking 'localist' artists, who cannot see how culture is a key to success: art sells and provides for both the local and the global economy. Cultural populism, as depicted here, has inherited from the Florida movement, the creative class in globally networked cities. Culture has instrumental value – and potentiality for generating a surplus.

> In addition to offering contemplative spaces to engage with art, one another, and the panoramic natural landscape, the Guggenheim Helsinki would also present outstanding gastronomic experiences, places for socializing, and unique retail opportunities. (Guggenheim Study, GS, 74)

Cultural populism has become a tool for the elites to reach fulfillment.

In this logic, the appeal of the Guggenheim also generates the mass-consuming 'people', rather than the other way around. In the Finnish case it generates voters, in the polity where cultural policy is predominantly state-bound. As we can recall, what is at stake in populism is the identification as people rather than institutional articulation. And the people is often articulated through the symbol of

the threatening other. Even though populism is not the same as hegemony, it is neither just the populist moment of coming together that we should focus on, but the past and the future, too – early articulations and sedimentation.

This research proposes that the conceptual baggage of the notion of 'the people' is problematic from an anti-essentialist perspective: people is not the essence of populism – it is its target. In cultural studies, cultural populism has been seen as the systematic and unreflected attempt by researchers to focus on popular culture rather than the arts (McGuigan 1992). Equally, the researchers have been reaching towards the popular rather than the elite: articulating the people. It is time to reappropriate this concept for another use, looking at the contemporary politics of culture and the arts.

The notion of 'cultural populism of the elites' clarifies what is going on in cases like the Helsinki Guggenheim museum, where the elites are having to appeal to the masses, to a universalizing rationality of contemporary capitalism and a dichotomous frontier between the pro- and contra-Guggenheim camps, to legitimate their project. It includes the carnivalisation and popularisation (or neoliberalisation in the eyes of the critics) of high culture.

Furthermore, it operates on a dichotomous logic that contests the past practices. Perhaps unintendedly, it embarks on existing lines of polarisation that is related to the space where the new building was originally envisioned. The for and against camps were divided on strong set of assumptions and stereotypes of the other.

Interestingly, in the current condition, the elites have to appeal to the people in the name of some universal to legitimate the course of action on the domain other than the arts or administration, the pro-Guggenheim camp moved towards cultural populism, articulating 'the people' through their proposal. This happens also on the contesting side.

Populism is layered with affects: it is the antidote of rational objective politics of interests or structural positions. 'The people' is not a structural position. In our postmodern politics, no political party can rely on institutional positions: e.g. the Socialists rep-

resenting the working class, or the elite being the bourgeoisie with set habits and tastes. The relations of power we may experience as given are in fact contingent.

Helsinki as site of festivalised cultural policy – and polarisation

In Finland, the debate was never just a debate about a museum or a simple monetary investment. The investment was a more emotional, political one. The Mayor of Helsinki Jussi Pajunen, the Director of the Helsinki Art Museum Gallen-Kallela-Sirén and the director of the Swedish Cultural Foundation, Berndt Arell and others aimed high. For them Guggenheim Effect was not an abstract concept of an arts in the service of city-marketing. They wanted a carbon copy of Bilbao – not just any art project and clearly not a mere participatory plan for the Helsinki seashore. Guggenheim Bilbao was synonymous with success. Helsinki's name would become associated with success too.

Not unlike their colleagues elsewhere, the city leadership seek to make concrete the idealised post-Fordist urban 'brandscape' (c.f. Thompson & Arsel 2004) with signature architecture, argued by planners and politicians alike, as the 'rational' choice (see Flyvbjerg 1998).

Helsinki actively promotes itself as an 'event city' or 'city of festivals'; the Helsinki Festival Weeks started in 1968 (Silvanto 2007). The city's leadership has taken event-led planning and city-branding seriously. Helsinki had held the title of European Capital of Culture (ECC) among eight others in year 2000. Since then, the team at the event management has remained the same and the city has sought to brand itself through big events. Their vision dominated the field. For example, in 2007, Helsinki was happy to host the Eurovision Song Contest (Keskinen 2008), which it saw as a marketing opportunity, although an analysis of media coverage shows that expecting more than some references to the locality in the con-

test is unreasonable (Pelkonen 2008). In 2012 Helsinki held the title for World Design Capital, after winning a competition and paying a participation fee to the organizing body International Council for Societies of Industrial Design.

In many ways, Helsinki's cultural marketing strategy has been tied to festivals rather than long-term developments. More solid landmarks were in the 1980s the National Opera House and in the 1990s the new urban symbol, Kiasma Museum of Modern Art. Kiasma's building was downscaled. The plan and location next to the parliament and the statue of Mannerheim evoked a lively public discussion (Tommila 2007). Its effect on the environment was further diminished by the neighbouring glass-walled building of the leading national daily's (*Helsingin Sanomat*, HS) media corporation that matched the size of the Museum. During the first four years of its existence it was the most popular museum in Finland and best known Finnish museum abroad and brought modern art to the public debates and made it available for people also through a educational programmes (Limnell 2007). The Museum was already fixed in the physical and cultural landscape – it did not provide the event flair. Neoliberal architecture is short spanned like events: consumed soon after their unveiling, and in the need of constant reproduction.

There was an earlier plan of a wow architecture building in the Helsinki seashore by the starchitect bureau of Herzog & deMeuron in 2008. The Design Hotel was nevertheless voted down in the City Council. (Palonen 2011) The Guggenheim Museum was first proposed to be built in the exact, already politicized location. It is a case in point to understand how the debate may not have spread beyond the cabinets, or the fora of arts professionals, had it not fallen on the fertile ground (quite concretely) of a particular lot of land in Helsinki, where the memory of earlier debates had politicized the location. The way in which the populist frontier emerged, carries the memory of an earlier polarization, earlier traumas and earlier nation-building.

The Guggenheim proposal was announced with short notice in 2011, with expectations of an immediate 'wow' effect: the vision immediately gripped much of the elite – others rejected it fiercely. It was voted down by the City Board in 2013, partly due to its cabinet planning character (alike the Design Hotel in the City Council, c.f. Palonen 2012). In 2014, Guggenheim brought up a new proposal, moving from the Design Hotel site, across the harbor. An open architectural competition is being held in fall 2014. For the second round 6 entries out of 1715 submissions would be selected. The public is also allowed to suggest their favourite 6 and share their choices online.

In the pro-GH camp, the chain of equivalence was articulated from arts to economics, and a strong dichotomy presented towards anything or anybody seeking to contest or in any way criticize the plan. The case of Guggenheim became so sedimented that it overshadows any other possible coalitions or proposals related to Finland, Helsinki, art and culture, or simply state funding.

For example, the Checkpoint Helsinki modern art project was formed against the Guggenheim, and must struggle to build an identity of its own. It is decidedly an unlocated project, 'a lightly structured and flexible organisation and without a permanent exhibition space' (Checkpoint Helsinki 2014). In 2012 it still dreamt of 'new building will strengthen Helsinki's brand association with pioneering visions of art' (Checkpoint Helsinki 2012). In 2014, it restored the anti-Guggenheim element in its identity, by holding a competition to find new uses for the same site where the architectural competition for the Guggenheim Museum Helsinki is being held.

The proposal seemed to be ignorant of the earlier politisations of the location. It responded to some of the criticism made during the Design Hotel debate but ignored the *resentment* revoked when an otherwise similar proposal was introduced through the similar decision-making mechanism on an already contested site. Had the same location with the same political process and the same neoliberal fantasy of wow architecture not been involved, the debate could have toned down. Public funding was the bonus, which mobilized

part of the elite and the art worlds (Becker 1982) against the project. The city leadership and the Solomon R. Guggenheim foundation faced a critical public – unprepared.

Logic of cultural politics in Finland: the funding elites

The Guggenheim project divides both the art and political elites. Typically, the Finnish cultural elite's power lies in their treasury's position. They do not manage their own existing properties or land, but are used to distributing other people's money: state funding or the funds of the Finnish foundations. Their prestige emerges from the delivery of the funding. Unlike the industrialists – in Finland the Serlachius family from Mänttä, near Tampere (where a new art museum was built in 2014), or the Kone elevator company owners particularly with their Kone foundation – the cultural elites in Helsinki could not act as patrons for art in their own right. When the cultural elite's activity is confined to the sphere of art that receives regular contributions from the state and the city, they have relative autonomy. But in the case of Guggenheim, it was not confined to the cabinets of the cultural elite, tied to the budget of the local art museums. The project would involve significant funding both from the city and the state as well as the Finnish cultural foundations. It also required public planning permits, including the change in the master plan. In other words, it was subjected to popular debates.

The unquestioning admiration for the Guggenheim plan was manifested by its primus motor Janne Gallen-Kallela-Sirén, great grandchild of Akseli Gallen-Kallela, national painter and illustrator of Kalevala, the Finnish national epic. The internationally trained art museum director took initial contact with the Guggenheim Foundation in 2009 and after a long debate it was determined that he was biased in the Guggenheim case (REF). Subsequently, he found a position in an American art museum and left the scene during the first phase. His case shows the lack of self-criticism among the Guggenheim supporters.

Another example of the seemingly decontested nature of the proposal was visible in national daily's (*Helsingin Sanomat*) opening sentence on the issue: 'Finnish cultural history was perhaps in the making in the Ball Room of the Helsinki City Hall, when the director of the Municipal Museum of Art declared under chandeliers to a large group of journalists that the City of Helsinki will undertake cooperation with the Guggenheim Foundation' (Heinänen & Uimonen 2011). The journalists were excited, told the HS, and questions were made mainly about the shape of the building: architecture was the main issue. In the end of the story the cost was mentioned: 'The investigation costs two million euros. Of the sum 500.000 will be covered by the Finnish Cultural Foundation, 250.000 Swedish Cultural Fund. The rest will be the city's responsibility.' It was the costs and the rationale of the museum project that were debated.

Furthermore, a day after the campaign launch, nine stories were published in *Helsingin Sanomat* (HS). Criticism was voiced in only one of the invited comments about the project in the journalistic content: a comment by a journalist of the public radio – perhaps to highlight the positive attitude of the national daily (HS 19.1.2011), and in a summary of the public discussion on the newspaper's website. On the second day there were five published pieces. This trend continues throughout the Guggenheim campaign, where the national daily became the fiercest proponent of the Guggenheim museum.

Nevertheless, we learn from the reporting that already in the early stages, before any public debate, there had been significant input by the two Finnish foundations. They had agreed to co-fund with the City of Helsinki the Concept and Development Study. The City of Helsinki was in the forefront of the funding, as restructuring the City Art Museum would lead some financing to the Guggenheim Museum. There would be yearly fees to the Guggenheim Foundation and the lot of land with infrastructure that were envisioned as investment. Furthermore, the project relied on some financial support from the state as saving on the expenses of Helsinki City Museum would not produce enough funds.

Yet, the government was divided upon the plan: Minister of Culture, Paavo Arhinmäki of the Left Alliance did not support the plan – as the austerity measures in Finland had already included deep budget cuts to the museum sector. He refused to extend financial support to the project, stressing that the funds for this 'large gallery' should be found elsewhere: 'It's worth asking why Finnish tax payers should finance a right multinational foundation [rather than distribute money through the cultural elite, one might add].' (Arhinmäki 2012) In contrast, the Ministry of Employment and Economy would support the architectural competition with 0.8 million euro, if the building would be crafted with wood – giving Finland a possibility to showcase its architectural expertise, resources and craftsmanship.

With the criticism, and lack of state financing, it became clear that the Guggenheim Museum Helsinki was not going to be immediately voted through in the City Council. The elites needed to convince the politicians on their side, and for that they had two strategies: they needed to argue that this was the rational action to take, and they needed to convince that it was for the good of the people.

Geopolitics of worthiness

The task for 2011 was to investigate whether or not Helsinki was a worthy site for a Guggenheim museum and what kind of a concept would fit to the site. In the investigation financed by the Finnish foundations and the City of Helsinki, it was discovered that Helsinki was indeed worthy of a Guggenheim museum. Richard Armstrong argued in the 'Director's foreword' for the *Concept and Development study for a Guggenheim Helsinki* (GS, 2012):

> Helsinki is a remarkable city, with a high quality of life, an exceptional educational system, and a wide range of important cultural institutions. Most impressively, Helsinki's residents are unwilling to rest on their laurels; they continue to seek out ways to transform life for the better. In recent years, Helsinki has completed numerous major under-

> takings, including an impressive new concert hall, the relocation of its historic port facilities to create space in the city center for future development, and, currently, an Open International Ideas Competition for the continued redevelopment of the South Harbor. Obviously, Helsinki thinks big, and the Guggenheim Foundation shares the city's vision of what is possible to achieve in the coming years. For the Guggenheim, collaborating with Helsinki brings the rare opportunity to think about the future and to explore the evolving roles and functions of an art museum in the coming decades. A deep engagement with Helsinki could also bring the Guggenheim into closer contact with Finland's virtually unparalleled legacy of architecture and design, benefiting the Guggenheim global network as a whole. (p. 4)

The Concept and Development Study demonstrated how the logic of the project was deep in cultural populism in McGuigan's sense – abandoning the emphasis on high arts. In the signifying chain of equivalences were included educational system (PISA results), cultural institutions, active citizenry, active city leadership in terms of development (e.g. South Harbour plans in Katajanokka area), Finnish architecture and design (no mention to art world), food and climate.

> A deep engagement with Helsinki could also bring the Guggenheim into closer contact with Finland's virtually unparalleled legacy of architecture and design, benefiting the Guggenheim global network as a whole (p. 4).

The GH would be about improving Helsinki's status on the global map. The Guggenheim Museum proposal managed to argue a place for Finland in Europe – or the globe. Especially after the Cold War the country has tried to find its own identity, with active membership in the EU, and negotiate its connection to the Eastern neighbours. The vision of global (cultural) economics (Throsby 2008) resonated with some Finns. The Guggenheim Helsinki would offer fulfillment to the lacking identity of the Finns. It would be the symbol of progress and West, for those who suffered from the closeness of the Iron Curtain. It offered a fullness of identity against the threat of a weak position in the periphery. Nevertheless, identification,

the vision of the people and the future for Finland did not appeal to everyone – even in the cultural elite.

After appraisals of transparency of governance (p. 4), appropriate in the proposal that was brought in without transparency, the Study sought to define Finnish achievements and conditions. In the eyes of the study, Helsinki would be a suitable location for both Russia and Asia.

> The Finnish Consulate in St. Petersburg already provides an astounding one million visas annually to Russians wanting to travel to or through Finland. Furthermore, Helsinki's northern location makes it the European city with the shortest flights to Asia, and many Russian, European, and Asian residents use the city as their entry point to another continent—direct flights connect Helsinki to eleven cities in Asia. (P. 19.)

Russian art institutions are not included in the regional review that focuses on Finland and the Scandinavian countries, the St. Petersburg art scene is treated in a different section with less specific data under the heading 'The Russian audience', referring to the visitors from these areas rather than comparability of institutions (pp. 68-70). The 'Baltic Region and Central Europe' noted in half a page (p. 71). The market for the Museum beyond the local population is well defined as is the competition for the art-thirsty audience.

Finland was a promising, innovative periphery:

> Perhaps life in the periphery, in a gray zone of national security, actually propels innovation, problem solving and openness to ideas, enabling a nation such as Finland to successfully cultivate its culture, economy, and civil society even in circumstances that have occasionally been adverse (p. 23).

Answering affirmatively the question of 'are we worthy of it', tickling many Finns' minds, the study defined the Finns as a homogeneous, moderately exotic, deserving people. They could be proud of hosting such a global project, interested in the Finns, and the Arctic connection.

> Geopolitically well situated and boasting impressive intellectual, natural, and financial resources, Finland is a nation that has truly come into

> its own over the last decades. The country's rich and complex history, coupled with its demonstrated capacity for innovation, offer a compelling portrait of how a country can transform perceived geographic and political challenges into assets and use them to become leaders on the world stage. (P. 28.)

A study that confirmed stereotypes was exactly what was required for the effect of the global cultural institution, as a 'big Other' ratifying the Finns self-image, making appeal to the people and creating an affective relationship. In other words, it contained a populist logic also in Laclau's sense. It was about 'naming the people', with an underlying antagonism of those who would reject the rationale.

Rhetoric is constitutive (Laclau 2014). Hence, worthiness itself is a rhetorical figure for articulating the people, and the Guggenheim discussion included a lot of arguments on this.

Post-colonialism of the perfect plan and 'typical bad questions!'

Exploring the proposal of a Guggenheim Museum in Helsinki – and the debate on whether it would receive start-up and regular public funding and a lot on the seashore at the very core of the capital city - it would be easy to dismiss the whole debate as one between the masses and the elites. But there are no objective identifications. We can see the elite was quite divided in this case. Even the art world was divided.

The Guggenheim Study's emphasis was on the innovative Finns finding out what the new process-focused non-traditional museum elements would be (education, open access space, where art would be only one aspect).

> In addition to offering contemplative spaces to engage with art, one another, and the panoramic natural landscape, the Guggenheim Helsinki would also present outstanding gastronomic experiences, places for socializing, and unique retail opportunities (p. 74).

Curiously all that open space, green areas, skateboarding teenagers, restaurants and retail can already be found around Kiasma, the Museum for Modern Art in Finland opened in 1998. It exists in the crossroads between the Railway and Coach stations, the Parliament and shopping-malls in the heart of Helsinki, next to the new Music Hall and Alvar Aalto's Finlandia House and almost a stone throw away from Töölönlahti Bay. Obviously, Katajanokka would be a waterfront development – which in the study is argued to highlight heliotropic qualities of Nordic light and seasonal conditions (p. 77). Curiously, the GS emphasizes how Kiasma is the place for under 50-year-olds, whereas the 50+ are not really interested. GH would include elements from Kiasma with a more expensive and aged brand: potential for success. This obviously was putting the existing cultural elites' temper on test. Some thought the existing institutions could propel growth in the cultural sector, others not.

As the debate was highly polarized, realising the limits of his strategy, Mayor of Helsinki, Jussi Pajunen worked hard to ensure participation in the final stages. This included a twitter and facebook chat where the Mayor's 20-person team answered questions of the public, in a matter-of-factly manner referring to the GS and ongoing investigations – leaving unanswered Lee Rosenbaum's question (Palonen 2012, c.f. Rosenbaum and Farhat 2015), and a local company featured question of 'yes' or 'no' for Guggenheim on their interactive screens on two locations in Helsinki. Interaction there was – did Mayor listen?

Prior to the Board's decision Mayor Pajunen engaged in live twitter and facebook discussion on 16 April 2012. Going over the debate, Pajunen's communication strategy was to answer questions rather than reflecting on his own views through the criticism he faced. The elite who knows advising the people.

The costs of the Guggenheim Museum for the City of Helsinki was estimated at 3.7 million euros plus the license fee 30 million dollars over 20 years (Guggenheim Helsinki 2012) and a further 52 million dollars in consultation fees (HS 2012). The Board of the City Council decided in 2012 in a tight vote (8-7) not to take

the proposal further – the mayor had divided the proposal into four parts, where the current phase would have been about architectural competition, whose costs to the city would be a mere 4 million euros. The Board ensured that the proposal did not go further to the City Council, nor could the Guggenheim plan progress.

In 2013, the Board of the City Council agreed that architectural competition for the Helsinki Guggenheim Museum could be organized – on a different lot of land and fully funded by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation. Many were surprised to hear of the second coming of the Guggenheim in 2013. There was a compromise: politicians agreed that an architectural competition could be organized fully financed by the Guggenheim foundation in 2014, and any decisions on the future of the project would be made only afterwards. The competition was open until September, when six of the anonymous designs were chosen for the second round of the competition that ended in November 2014.

Also, the Guggenheim Foundation hired a public relations company to lobby for their cause prior to their second coming. The new proposal's facebook pages show that their approach is not black-and-white: constructive criticism is being posted for discussion.

Despite all the investment in PR, the attitude of the Guggenheim did not change. On 4 June 2014, in a televised discussion by the national public TV broadcaster, YLE, Richard Armstrong, the director of the Solomon R. Guggenheim foundation walked away and refused to answer the question of what the foundation would do if the city and the state should not fund Guggenheim Helsinki. 'I don't know. I'm not liking this interview,' said Armstrong, getting up to leave, adding: 'These are typical bad questions.' But after a few words with the PR consultant, he returned to the interview. (Yle News 2014) The return appeared as unconditional.

From the perspective of polarisation and populist rhetoric on frontier, it would be typical to disengage the other and merely refer to the frontier. In cultural populism this works in a similar way. There is something beyond us that is not worth engaging.

Somehow the Guggenheim project did not consider what was outlined as one of the strengths of the location:

> Inspired by the admirable transparency at the heart of Finnish governance, we sought answers not just through internal discussions but also by engaging a cross section of Finnish society (GS, 4).

After the moment of the so called final vote on Guggenheim, it was concluded that respect for transparency was one of the aspects where Guggenheim failed (YLE 2016).

These two cases reveal a dominance of the 'planner who knows' attitude of the city of Helsinki leadership, who networks their way to new proposals. The Guggenheim Museum's value was argued for rationally and defining a norm in the global art or city-marketing world by the Guggenheim Foundation (abroad) and the Mayor (above). Perhaps it would be worth reflecting on the managed from top cultural colonialism in this case, even without any reference to potential Americanisms or neo-liberal commoditification of art that were present in and especially located in the ranks of the opposing camp.

Polarization: Checkpoint Helsinki as the (perpetual) counter-project

Main criticism towards Guggenheim rested on the argument of the expense to the City of Helsinki. The license fees and the potential costs of withdrawing from the plan were often argued to cover many large exhibitions at the already existing museums. A pile of coins features the place for Guggenheim Museum on the cover of the well-discussed pamphlet by Kaarin Taipale, local social democrat, former civil servant and recently an academic researcher. Because of the polarization, proponents did not take on board criticism but dubbed it commonly as anti-American rhetoric of the left or alternatively ignorant nativism. Taipale herself reflects on associating GH-criticism and populism of the right-wing Finns Party, who argued against postmodern art during the 2011 election cam-

paign, 'as a joke' as the leader Timo Soini later admitted. Furthermore, Taipale accounts for charges of inward-turning selfishness, in the face of sacrifices for a better future for the city and the nation. (Taipale 2012, esp. 36–43) Taipale compared licensed museum to franchised restaurants such as McDonald's, although perhaps Starbucks had been more apt (Thompson & Arsel 2004).

Even the Guggenheim Study recognized the worry of standardization of the art institution and the alienation from the local values:

> Many people in Helsinki's art community expressed concern that a Guggenheim Helsinki might be a carbon copy of other Guggenheim international partnerships, and it is imperative to avoid such a perception through a transparent and consultative process that considers the specific realities of Finland and embraces core Finnish values (GS, 65).

Perhaps this uncanniness of the proposal led several actors on the art scene to voice an alternative for Guggenheim only in 2012: a project by called Checkpoint Helsinki, an 'internationally renowned Helsinki Art Museum'. The signatories of the manifesto of Checkpoint Helsinki (CH) welcome the 3–5 million-euro investment on the field of visual arts but submit many recommendations.

Following this stake, the art scene voiced an alternative for Guggenheim in 2012: a project called Checkpoint Helsinki, an 'internationally renowned Helsinki Art Museum'. For it the building was not the starting point – diverting the discussion away from wooden architecture, it argues: 'By producing thoughtful works of art and engaging events, Checkpoint Helsinki can be the route to a new building.' The building would be a result of a process rather than a piece of commissioned or competed 'starchitecture'. The Checkpoint Helsinki does not shy away from the rhetoric emphasizing elements of the 'Bilbao Effect'. Rather it admits that 'Helsinki can become internationally distinguishable and attract foreign visitors through novelty'. Furthermore, it stresses the link between the art institution and place branding, including the emphasis on festivals.

In many ways, the Checkpoint Helsinki is a nativist response to the Guggenheim Helsinki. However, in a curious way, the argumentation is set in the manner where international and global networks and cultural ties are put to the fore with vigor. However, the project notes 'local art audience' and 'Finnish museum educational practices' without emphasizing them. It argues that the Checkpoint Helsinki would use local expertise already existing in many institutions named in the proposal. Without direct reference to Guggenheim, these 'unique resources' are considered equally important as the global Foundation with its links – and indeed 'unique'. It is clear, however, how the Checkpoint Helsinki manifesto includes many of the features of the Guggenheim Helsinki. Yet their emphasis on the local is argued differently, Guggenheim Helsinki with reference to Finnish trademark education, design and architecture, and Checkpoint Helsinki to local globally reaching networks.

The alternative plan sought to establish itself through the frontier of polarization, the rejection of the Guggenheim plan, the rejection of the threatening other that would offer identity and legitimation for us. The threat of Guggenheim – to state funding or independence of arts from capitalism – is the point that 'symbolizes the very possibility of [their] non-being' (Laclau 2014, xx).

The two proposals divided the art world into two taste groups: the market oriented and global one that fostered concrete walk-in-and-pay institutions, and the local-native that fostered curatorial projects. While in the art world, the key is to constantly rearticulate tastes and projects even within the institutions, the identity of the Checkpoint Helsinki is so tied to the Guggenheim that it is almost impossible to separate it from it.

For many in the (non-cultural) elite both projects were about arts and culture, but other dichotomies dominated argumentation. First, Guggenheim was contrasted both to the whole museum sector whose state funding was cut due to the recession, and to the Helsinki Art Museum, whose funding would be directed to it. Then it was the public transport, rail-links, social security and the Children's Hospital. Equally, on the critical side, it is difficult to take a perspective

that would support Guggenheim under different conditions, as there are always hospitals to fund or local art projects to support.

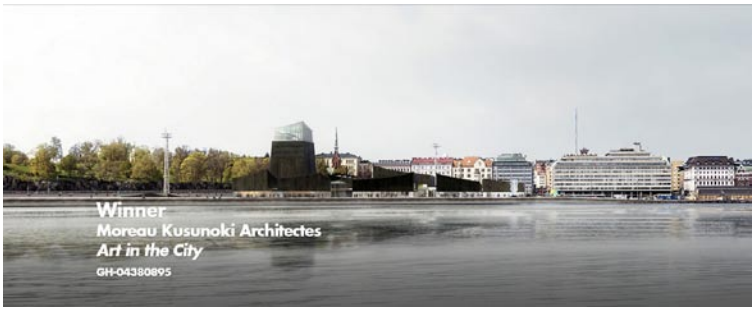
If one is against the Guggenheim project, one is also against culture and arts, and unpatriotic, because the Guggenheim Helsinki would promote Finnish art and culture, Finland and enhance the economy. If one is for the Guggenheim museum, one is neoliberal, against non-commodified culture and arts, and one is surely unpatriotic, trusting the Americans more than the homegrown artists, tourists rather than locals. These are the stereotypes, but the actual difference is produced in the articulation. Furthermore, the case of Guggenheim Helsinki is an interesting debate from the perspective of populism, because the dichotomous frontier is too strong for a *third way* to emerge.

City Council during and at the end of the story

Whether for or against the Guggenheim Museum project, the argument was made through bipolar oppositions, which fosters a culture of populism, as a culture of dichotomies and empty common signifiers. At stake here is 'cultural populism' of the elites, who cannot anymore rely on cabinet decision-making. They have sought to articulate their case through a strong chain of equivalences behind the common goal, Guggenheim Helsinki, rejecting anything that could be seen as against it. The people and the elite could be interpreted interchangeably, and both the grass-rootedness of art was discussed from two perspectives.

There was a clear proposal. Winner had been selected, although it did not fit quite the specifications given in this competition. Of the six finalists it was the tallest building, like a lighthouse in the Helsinki harbour. It was a bold landmark hard to miss, even though the narrative included the sympathetic approach to Helsinki nature and context (Picture 2).

Finally, it was because of this confrontation that for the second time the City Council voted against (53-32) the Guggenheim Mu-



Picture 2: screenshot from the official site http://designguggenheimhelsinki.org/en/finalists/winner Accessed in 29.1.2018.

seum after midnight on 1 December 2016. The plan was improved but still evoked similar comments as before. Facing local elections in spring 2017, the councillors were required to think in terms of their future support and, because of the secrecy of maneuvering the plan onto the table, its seemingly eternal return and polarized nature, it was only logical that it was rejected. Another paper could explore the Council debates, with this same framework.

Sometimes a scandal emerges. Silvanto (2007, 13) writes 'A festival is born out of enthusiastic makers and the local need to produce a specific kind of event in the location. – – Festivals do not emerge without international networks. They are based often on personal relations – – ' In this way, perhaps, Helsinki remains a true festival city, where the 'us' and the 'them' emerge through scandalisation (c.f. Palonen 2011).

Conclusions

This article shows how populist articulations have the constitutive power of rhetoric, and that dichotomies are made through proposals, rejections and counter-proposals. Each of them articulates

a ‘we the people’, also producing a dichotomous perspective of the society. They may be elevating the us through a rhetoric of worthiness (articulating Finland and Helsinki’s position globally against the other more backwards areas); elevating those on the know above those who ask typical bad questions (as the planners’ discourse had it); or producing a nativist-internationalist contrast to global-capitalist trends (as the counter project sought to present it).

For McGuigan cultural populism was something his colleagues engaged with when moving from the high arts to prioritizing popular culture as the legitimate object of analysis. For Laclau, articulations of people and the distinction of what they are not are at the core of politics. Neither of them argue that things should necessarily polarize – at least for a very long time. Somehow this happened in Helsinki in the period of 2011-2016 in the case of Guggenheim. And it was even premised on earlier polarizations (Palonen 2011).

The dichotomising language inherent in both can be detected as spreading in many forums of interaction. The emergence of political forces that simplify the political space through generating a dichotomy that sustains both sides of that formation (c.f. Palonen 2009), gains strength from the spread of dichotomising language in other areas, such as policy debates which become strifes of identity and community rather than ‘mere’ policy. Therefore from the cultural perspective study of populism should also include these markings of frontiers that take place outside the traditional cleavages in electoral politics. This is one dimension of mainstreaming populism – whether the nominally populist political movements or polarised political debates and culture – to be explored in the future.

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