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Flank attacks: Populism and left-right radicalism in Western Europe

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Matthijs Rooduijn and Tjitske Akkerman
Department of Political Science, University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Abstract
How is populism distributed over the political spectrum? Are right-wing parties more populist than left-wing parties? Based on the analysis of 32 parties in five Western European countries between 1989 and 2008, we show that radical parties on *both* the left and the right are inclined to employ a populist discourse. This is a striking finding, because populism in Western Europe has typically been associated with the radical right; only *some particular* radical left parties have been labeled populist as well. This article suggests that the contemporary radical left in Western Europe is generally populist. Our explanation is that many contemporary radical left parties are not traditionally communist or socialist (anymore). They do not focus on the 'proletariat', but glorify a more general category: the 'good people'. Moreover, they do not reject the system of liberal democracy as such, but only criticize the political and/or economic elites within that system.

Keywords
Populism, radical left, radical right, Western Europe

Introduction

In the last decade, many studies have focused on the rise of populist parties in Western Europe. In studies that assess the causes of this populist upsurge (see Arzheimer, 2009; Bélanger and Aarts, 2006; Hakhverdian and Koop, 2007; Ivarsflaten, 2008; Lubbers et al., 2002; Mudde, 2004; Pauwels, 2014; Van der Brug et al., 2000, 2005) or the consequences of their successes (see Akkerman, 2012; Akkerman and De Lange, 2012; Albertazzi and McDonnell, 2010; Albertazzi et al., 2011; Zaslove, 2011), it is generally assumed that populism is a dichotomous category: parties are *either* populist *or* not populist. Recent studies, however, have argued and demonstrated that populism might better be conceived of as a scale: parties can be *more* or *less* populist (Deegan-Krause and Haughton, 2009; Hawkins, 2009, 2010; Jagers and Walgrave, 2007; Pauwels, 2011; Rooduijn and Pauwels, 2011; Rooduijn et al., 2014; Ruzza and Fella, 2011). This raises an important question that has not been investigated so far: How is populism distributed over the political spectrum?

On the one hand, it might be expected that parties further to the right side of the political spectrum are more inclined to be populist. After all, populism in Western Europe has mainly been associated with the radical right party family (see Mudde, 2007). In this case the general left-right position of a party would affect its degree of populism. On the other hand, populism has also been associated with some radical left parties – e.g. *Die Linke* in Germany, the Scottish Socialist Party (SSP) and the *Socialistische Partij* (SP) in the Netherlands (see March, 2011). It might therefore be the case that both the radical right *and* the radical left are inclined to employ a populist discourse. In this case it would not be a party's general left-right position that affects its degree of populism, but its left-right *radicalism*.

This study shows that whether a party is left or right does not affect its degree of populism; it is its radicalness that determines how populist the party is. Hence, both radical right parties and radical left parties are inclined to employ a populist discourse. This is a striking finding, because – although populism in Western Europe has typically been associated with the radical right – only *some particular* radical left parties have been labeled populist as well (March, 2007; March and Mudde, 2005). Many

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Corresponding author:
Matthijs Rooduijn, Department of Political Science, University of Amsterdam, Nieuwe Achtergracht 166, 1018 WV Amsterdam, The Netherlands.
Email: M.Rooduijn@uva.nl

radical left parties – such as, for instance, the French *Parti communiste français* (PCF) and the Italian *Partito della Rifondazione Comunista* (PRC) – have not been labeled as populist in the literature. Moreover, the extent to which such parties are populist has never been investigated empirically and in a comparative setting. This article takes on this analytical task and suggests that it is not just *some* radical left parties that tend to be populist; instead, radical left parties *in general* are likely to be populist.

The analysis is based on a comparison of the election manifestos of 32 parties in five Western European countries: France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. Our analysis focuses on the recent relationship between populism and radicalism; the manifestos have been selected over the period between 1989 and 2008. Results of a content analysis of the degree of populism of the manifestos of these parties (Rooduijn et al., 2014; Rooduijn and Pauwels, 2011) are combined with information about the ideological position of these parties, coming from the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) (Hooghe et al., 2010; Steenbergen and Marks, 2007) and the Comparative Manifestos Project (CMP) (Volkens et al., 2012). The ideological position of a party is operationalized by both a continuous 'matter of degrees' approach and a categorical 'party family' approach.

The article proceeds as follows. In the next section we focus on the concept of populism. Although there is increasing agreement on how to define the term (Hawkins et al., 2012), populism can still be seen as a highly contested concept, which makes it of essential importance to pay critical attention to its definition (Canovan, 2004; Mudde, 2004; Taggart, 2000). In the subsequent section we focus on the question of how populism is distributed over the political spectrum. Why would radical parties be more inclined to be populist? In the following section we present our case selection, the measurement of the main variables and the methods of analysis. The main findings of this study can be encountered in the next paragraph. The concluding section discusses these findings within a more general framework and offers some suggestions for future research.

Populism

Populism is one of those concepts that scholars find extremely difficult to define. Already since the late 1960s, various scholars have aimed at defining the term (Ionescu and Gellner, 1969). Populism has been defined has a form of organization, as a style, as a discourse, as a strategy and as an ideology (Hawkins, 2009; Jagers and Walgrave, 2007; Laclau, 2005; Mudde, 2004; Taggart, 1995; Weyland, 2001). Luckily, scholars have become more concordant within the last few years. Increasingly, they agree that populism should be defined as a set of ideas (Hawkins et al., 2012). Some scholars refer to this set of ideas as a 'discourse' (Hawkins, 2010; Laclau, 2005), whereas others have employed the term 'ideology' (Canovan, 2002; Mudde, 2004; Stanley, 2008). They all agree, however, that the central component of this set of ideas is that the Good people are exploited by the Evil elite. The particular definition that is most often employed is that of Mudde (2004: 543): populism is

> a [thin-centered] ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, "the pure people" versus "the corrupt elite", and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people.

According to this definition, populism consists minimally of two main elements: people-centrism and anti-elitism. Moreover, populists endorse a central role for the people in the political process. That populism is a 'thin-centered' ideology means that it differs from full ideologies such as liberalism, socialism and conservatism in that it does not offer an all-inclusive worldview, but only focuses on specific elements of the relationship between the people and the elite (Canovan, 2002; Freeden, 1998; Mudde, 2004).

People-centrism refers to the emphasis populists lay on the central position of the people (Mény and Surel, 2002). Populists argue that the practice of political decision-making has become detached from what ordinary people deem important (Canovan, 2002). This is regarded as a serious failure, because according to the populist worldview popular sovereignty is the single most important democratic principle (Pasquino, 2008). The ultimate goal of politics is to listen to the people and to translate what they find important to policy. What populists consider to be the people differs from case to case and is often rather unclear. Some populists focus on the nation, while others focus on the electorate, 'hardworking people' or 'ordinary' citizens.[1]

According to the populist message, one particular group is responsible for the detachment of political decision-making from the interests of the people: the elite. The elite is said to be incompetent, selfish, unresponsive and corrupt (Barr, 2009). What exactly the elite looks like differs from case to case. Sometimes the accused elite is a cultural elite (writers, intellectuals, artists), sometimes it is an economic elite (big business, 'the rich'), sometimes it is a media elite (journalists), but most often the accusations are directed at a political elite (parties and politicians) (Jagers and Walgrave, 2007). The antagonistic relationship between the people and the elite is at the core of the populist worldview (Laclau, 2005; Panizza, 2005). This relationship is conceived mainly in Manichean terms: the world is divided into Good and Evil, where the Good side is represented by the people and the Evil side by the elite (Hawkins, 2010).

That populism is defined here as a set of ideas implies that populism is not so much a characteristic of a specific

political actor such as a party or a politician. Instead, populism could better be conceived of as a characteristic of the *message* of such an actor (Rooduijn et al., 2014). Because political actors can endorse the populist set of ideas to a greater or lesser extent, populism then becomes a matter of degree. Actors that send out many populist messages are more populist than actors that send out only a few such messages. Contrary to studies that employ a dichotomous classification system when it comes to categorizing political parties – parties are *either* populist *or* not populist – we make use of a more fine-grained approach and conceive of parties as *more* or *less* populist (Deegan-Krause and Haughton, 2009; Hawkins, 2009, 2010; Jagers and Walgrave, 2007; Pauwels, 2011; Rooduijn and Pauwels, 2011).

Populism and the ideological spectrum

How, then, is the populist set of ideas distributed over the political spectrum? Are right-wing parties more inclined to be populist than left-wing parties? Below we argue that contemporary Western European radical right and radical left parties have in common that they combine an ardent glorification of the people with fierce critique towards political and economic elites.[2] Although this 'winning formula' differs between the radical left and right when it comes to how exactly the glorification of the people and the critique towards elites take shape, the commonalities between both radical sides of the political spectrum are striking. We argue that they come from the ideologies these parties stem from combined with their peripheral positions vis-à-vis 'their' party systems. Although we show that these commonalities can best be understood by looking at how the current radical left and right ideologies have come into being, the main empirical goal of this article is not to assess these changes over time, but to assess today's situation (i.e. post-1989).

Although it has often been argued that the political space consists of more than one attitudinal dimension (Kitschelt and McGann, 1995; Kriesi et al., 2008), in this study we focus on the general left-right ideology of parties. The reason is twofold. First, various studies have demonstrated that the positions of parties are mainly structured by the general left-right dimension (see Van der Brug and Van Spanje, 2009; Van der Brug et al., 2000). And, second, as we will see below, populism has mainly been associated with positions on this classical left-right dimension. Western European populism has been predominantly associated with radical right parties such as the *Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs* in Austria, the *Dansk Folkeparti* in Denmark and the *Front National* in France. In fact, when it comes to contemporary Western Europe, scholars have convincingly argued that almost all radical right parties also employ a populist discourse (see Mudde, 2007). More moderate right-wing parties have also often been associated with populism. Examples are *Forza Italia* in Italy, the *Lijst Pim Fortuyn* in the Netherlands and *Lijst Dedecker* in Belgium.

Although populism in Western Europe is thus often associated with radical parties on the right, we should not conclude that the left-right position of a party explains its inclination to employ populism. First, populism has also been associated with the radical left. Yet a distinction is still being made between more traditional communist parties (e.g. the PCF in France and the PRC in Italy) and the 'new' populists of the left (e.g. the SP in the Netherlands and Die Linke in Germany) (see March, 2011; Zaslove, 2008). Only the latter category is usually labeled populist. Second, if the left-right position of a party would explain its inclination to be populist, we should expect that the a-symmetry between left- and right-wing parties would also be apparent among mainstream parties. A study by Rooduijn et al. (2014) shows, however, that Western European mainstream parties on the left and the right sides of the political spectrum are equally very moderately populist. This might indicate that populism is not so much related to the left-right position of a party, but to its left-right *radicalism*.

Why, then, would radical parties – including the traditional communist parties – be inclined to be populist? First of all, these parties are peripheral vis-à-vis their party systems. Embracing a populist message can help them "to position themselves outside the cartel of dominant parties" (Taggart, 1998: 384). In other words: both radicalism and populism involve a structural challenge to the (political) establishment. However, a peripheral position is not enough. Such a position might just as well lead to an extremist stance and an outright rejection of the system of liberal democracy and/or a strongly elitist approach. Extremist and elitist positions are irreconcilable with populism – a message that is intrinsically democratic.

To understand why populism has become an increasingly attractive alternative for Western European parties that challenge the political and social status quo from the right as well as the left side of the political spectrum, there are two general developments that need to be kept in mind. First, anti-democratic or extremist parties have not fared well after World War II. A minimal condition for electoral success in Western European countries is that parties gain legitimacy and are not associated with extremism (Bos et al., 2011; Ivarsflaten, 2006; Van Heerden, 2014). Second, populism became a significant alternative for radical parties since the 1970s. Beginning with anti-tax populist parties in Scandinavia, it became clear that there was a political space for populist parties. This emerging populist demand has been linked to several factors, such as globalization and declining trust among voters (Mény and Surel, 2002; Zaslove, 2008). In the 1980s, far right parties like the FN made clear that the stigma of being associated with fascism or Nazism could be overcome by adopting a 'new master frame' that combined nativism (a xenophobic type

of nationalism) with populism (Mudde, 2007; Rydgren, 2005). The diffusion of this new model to other countries marked the birth of a new, radical right party family. Contemporary radical right parties in Western Europe supplement a focus on a specific, culturally loaded perception of 'the nation' with a broader and more general understanding of 'the people'. Although these parties differ from each other in many respects (for instance when it comes to foreign policy or ethical issues), they all emphasize that 'ordinary' people should form the point of departure within the political decision-making process (again).

Western European radical left parties have also wrestled to find new, more respectable profiles, especially after 1989. Except for 'Stalinist holdouts', communist parties adopted new names, dissolved into new parties or sometimes underwent a process of permanent split-ups and refoundations (March, 2011). The core ideology of radical left parties of course differs substantially from that of radical right parties. Traditionally, they do not focus on protecting the nation from dangerous others, but, instead, aim at protecting the proletariat from capitalist exploitation or from neo-liberal markets. Marxism-Leninism has been discarded by most far left parties since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. The focus on the exploitation of the proletariat has been in some cases supplemented or replaced by a pluralist view of social interests (March and Mudde, 2005). Environmentalists, feminists, libertarians and other groups have gained foot in radical left parties. The Italian PRC, for instance, incorporated these new left groups in 1991, and became a role model for the wider European radical left (March, 2011: 57). This reform process implied that some communist parties, such as the Italian PCI and the French PCF, discarded their elitist Leninism and 'democratic centralism'. Currently they embrace bottom-up and people-centrist views of democratic organization.

The radical right and the radical left in Western Europe also hold fairly moderate positions regarding the 'establishment'. Traditionally, extreme right and extreme left parties were opposed to liberal democracy. However, current radical right and left parties are fairly moderate in this respect. Radical parties do not focus so much on the allegedly corrupted *system* in its entirety but, instead, focus on the political and/or economic elite*s* within that system. This does not mean that systemic critique is completely absent. Many radical left parties, for instance, still criticize global capitalism and neo-liberalism to some extent. However, after the collapse of the USSR these parties have shifted their focus to the national arena. As a result, their international systemic critique has become much less relevant. The main critique is that elites neglect the interests of the people (Hobsbawm, 1990).

Of course, the specific form of anti-elitism differs between radical right parties and radical left parties. Radical right parties link their anti-elitist message to themes concerning immigrants. They associate the elites with a *culturally* consensus-driven establishment that supports the influx of non-native elements (see Mudde, 2007). According to March (2007), the key characteristic of anti-elitist radical left parties is that they combine their anti-elitism not so much with cultural themes, but with economic topics. Left-wing populist parties argue that the political and economic elites are responsible for existing economic and political inequalities (March and Mudde, 2005). However, despite the different ways in which the radical right and radical left color their anti-elitism, the general message is the same: corrupt elites neglect the interests of ordinary people. Note that this claim about the shared anti-establishment attitudes of the radical right and the radical left has also been proposed by scholars that focus on Euroscepticism (De Vries and Edwards, 2009; Halikiopoulou et al., 2012; Hooghe et al., 2002; Taggart, 1998) – although a distinction might be made between *soft* Euroscepticism among radical left parties and *hard* Euroscepticism among radical right parties.

Hence, we have good reasons to suppose that radical parties are inclined to be both people-centrist and anti-elitist. Yet we still lack systematic research to assess whether both the radical right and the radical left are indeed inclined to be populist nowadays, and whether populism has spread out as much to the left as to the right ends of the political spectrum.

Case selection, data and method

This study focuses on Western Europe, because "the main area of sustained populist growth and success over the last fifteen years in established democracies has been in Western Europe" (Albertazzi and McDonnell, 2008: 1). We focus on five specific countries: France Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. In four of those countries radical right parties have been successful and in four countries radical left parties have celebrated successes (success is defined by having won seats in their national parliament or in the European Parliament). Radical left parties are those parties which have been categorized as communist parties by the Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP) and radical right parties are those parties which have been labeled nationalist parties by the CMP (Budge et al., 2001; Klingemann et al., 2006; Volkens et al., 2012). The radical right parties are: the *Front national* (FN) in France; the *Lega Nord* (LN) and the *Alleanza Nazionale* (AN) in Italy; the *Centrum Democraten* (CD), the *Lijst Pim Fortuyn* (LPF) and the *Partij voor de Vrijheid* (PVV) in the Netherlands; and the *British National Party* (BNP) and the *United Kingdom Independence Party* (UKIP) in the United Kingdom. The radical left-wing parties are: the *Parti communiste français* (PCF) in France; *Die Linke* in Germany; the *Socialistische Partij* (SP) in the Netherlands; and the *Partito Democratico della Sinistra* (PDS) and the *Partito della Rifondazione Comunista* (PRC)

Table 1. Selected parties.

	France	Germany	Italy	Netherlands	UK
Radical					
Radical left	PC	Die Linke	PDS, PRC	SP	–
Radical right	FN	–	LN, AN	CD, LPF, PVV	UKIP, BNP
Mainstream					
Liberal	UDF	FDP	–	VVD, D66	LibDems
Social democratic	PS	SPD	Ulivo / PD	PvdA	Labour
Conservative / Christian democratic	UMP, RPR	CDU	DC, FI, CdL	CDA	Conservatives

in Italy. In each country the main mainstream parties (i.e. Christian democratic, conservative, liberal and social democratic parties) have been included in the analysis as well. For an overview see Table 1. We focus on the time period 1989–2008 because we expect that radical parties will be inclined to be populist at least since the fall of the wall. In each country, we selected two elections in the 1980s or 1990s and two elections in the 2000s. Because we focus on the present-day relationship between populism and radicalism, and are not so much interested in changes over time, we do not compare radical left parties before 1989 with radical left parties after 1989.

The dependent variable in our study is the degree of populism of a party. To measure it we employed data that are collected by means of a content analysis of election manifestos (Rooduijn et al., 2014). The manifestos have been analyzed by extensively trained coders who determined for each paragraph whether it contained indications of people-centrism and anti-elitism.[3] People-centrism was measured with the following question: "Do the authors of the manifesto refer to the people?" The coders were instructed to take into account every reference to the people, and were provided with a list of words that *could* refer to people-centrism (think of words such as 'all of us', 'our country', 'the society', 'the nation', 'the people', etc.).[4] Coders were explicitly instructed to take into account the context when deciding whether the party was indeed referring to the people in a populist way. Anti-elitism was measured by means of the question: "Do the authors of the manifesto criticize elites?" Criticism towards elites had to concern elites in *general*. When a party criticized a specific target, such as a single political party or politician, or a specific government coalition, the critique was conceived of as being not general enough, and in such cases anti-elitism was therefore not coded.[5] The dependent variable, i.e. the populism score, is measured on a scale that ranges from 0 to 100. This scale was constructed by first classifying every paragraph in which anti-establishment critique was combined with a reference to the people as a populist paragraph. After all, our definition of populism implies that both are necessary elements of the populist set of ideas. Populism is, in other words, the *combination* of both people-centrism and anti-elitism.[6] For every manifesto, the percentage of populist paragraphs was computed. Rooduijn and Pauwels (2011) have shown that this measure of populism yields both valid and reliable results.

The actual range of the populism variable goes from 0 to 23. Only seven manifestos (of a total of 85 manifestos under analysis) have populism scores higher than 15. Three of these manifestos come from radical left parties (PRC1992, PRC1994 and SP1994) and four of them from radical right parties (AN1992, BNP1992, FN1997 and PVV2006). To assess whether these extreme cases bias our findings, we have checked whether our results changed after dropping these extreme cases one by one. This turns out not to be the case. Moreover, even excluding all these seven cases at the same time does not lead to substantially different findings.[7]

The main independent variables in this study are variables measuring the ideological position of a party. The ideological position of a party – be it a party's left-right position or a party's radicalism – can be conceived of in two ways. The first one is the party family approach (Mair and Mudde, 1998). According to this approach, parties can be categorized within a certain family, such as the liberal family, the social-democratic family, the radical left family or the radical right family. Of course, these party families can also be regrouped into broader categories so that we end up with a radical family and a mainstream family. The second approach is the 'matter of degrees' approach. According to this approach, it makes more sense to conceive of a party as being more or less right-wing or more or less radical than to categorize a party in either the one category or the other. Because scholars disagree on which of these two approaches is more appropriate for categorizing political parties, we have decided to employ both.[8]

Regarding the matter of degrees approach, we measured the left-right position of a party with the general left-right scores from the Chapel Hill Expert Surveys (CHES) (Hooghe et al., 2010; Steenbergen and Marks, 2007). The scores range from –5 (extreme left) to 5 (extreme right). We measured how radical a party is by squaring this variable. This led to a radicalism variable ranging from 0 (not radical at all) to 25 (very radical). When it comes to the party family approach, we have employed the Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP) categorization and labeled the communist parties as radical left parties and the nationalist parties as radical right parties. Other parties (Christian

democratic, conservative, liberal and social-democratic parties) have been categorized as mainstream parties (Volkens et al., 2012).

There might also be other determinants of the degree of populism than a party's left-right position and its left-right radicalism, so we have included various control variables in our models. The attitude on the cultural attitudinal dimension (immigration, European unification) of a party might have an effect on the party's degree of populism as well. To measure this position we used the so-called GAL-TAN scores (green, alternative and libertarian versus traditionalist, authoritarian and nationalist) from the CHES (–5 = GAL, 5 = TAN). In addition to this GAL-TAN position we could also expect that the degree of radicalism on this ideological dimension exerts an effect on the degree of populism of a party. We have therefore also squared this variable so that it ranges from 0 (not radical at all) to 25 (very radical). Further, it could be expected that parties in opposition are more populist than parties in government. After all, it would make much more sense for opposition parties than for governmental parties to express the message that the Good people is betrayed by the Evil elite. An opposition dummy measures whether a party is a member of the opposition (1) or the government (0). It might also be the case that parties that lose seats will change their political programs (Harmel and Janda, 1994), because they might hope that appealing to the Good people and criticizing the Evil elite is a remedy to electoral decline. The extent of electoral losses is assessed by focusing on the percentage of seats that parties won or lost during the previous elections. Finally, if we find a significant effect of radicalism, this effect might be due not so much to the party's degree of radicalism but only because of its size (radical parties are often much smaller than mainstream parties). We therefore have to control for the effect of size in our analyses as well. The size of the party is measured by means of the percentage of seats the party holds in the national parliament.

The unit of analysis is the party-year combination (N = 85). We have clustered these party-year combinations by parties and estimated OLS regression models. To control for country differences we have included country dummies.

We executed three types of robustness check. First, we used the left-right position of a party as measured by the CMP (instead of the CHES), and recoded it so that it ranged from –5 (extreme left) to 5 (extreme right) as well. To measure the degree of radicalism, we squared this variable. As a second robustness check we replaced the general left-right position of a party and its radicalism with its *economic* left-right position. We employed the CHES economic left-right variable (an active role for the state versus privatization, lower taxes, etc.), ranging from –5 (extreme left) to 5 (extreme right), and also squared this variable to measure economic left-right radicalism. Finally, we estimated a negative binomial regression model as well because our dependent variable (the populism score) is highly skewed to the right – it is strongly inflated by zeros. In the main analysis we present OLS regression models because, technically, our dependent variable is not a count variable.

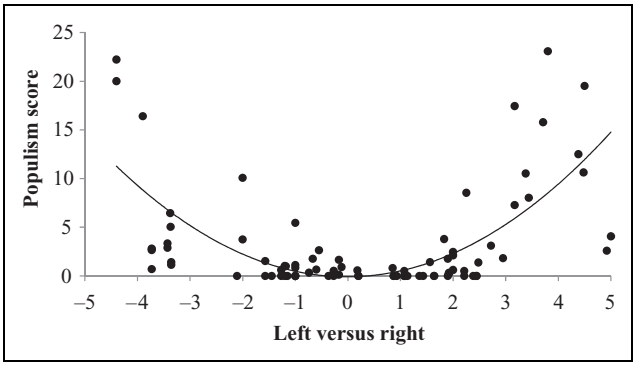

Figure 1. The relationship between the populism score (Y-axis) and the general left-right attitude (X-axis).

Results

Figure 1 displays the relationship between a party's general left-right score and its degree of populism (the matter of degrees approach). The figure clearly indicates that left-right position and populism are not linearly related to each other. Instead, a clear U-curve can be distinguished. The most populist parties turn out to be the parties on the far left of the political spectrum and the parties on the far right of the political spectrum. Parties in the ideological center turn out to have only very low populism scores. Figure 1 shows that, although right-wing parties are slightly more inclined to be populist than left-wing parties, we can conclude that both the radical left and the radical right are likely to employ a populist discourse.[9]

In Figure 2 we look at the data from the party family approach. The figure displays the mean populism scores of mainstream parties, radical left parties and radical right parties (according to the CMP). The results suggest that mainstream parties differ from radical parties. The mean of the radical left parties (M = 7.06) is much higher than the mean of the mainstream parties (M = 0.65). Moreover, the confidence intervals do not overlap, which indicates that the differences between the two types of party are significant. The radical right parties turn out to have an even higher mean populism score than the radical left parties (M = 10.33). However, the scores of both types of radical parties are strongly spread out as a result of which the confidence intervals overlap and, hence, the difference between these two types of party is not statistically significant. The mean populism score of the radical right parties does differ significantly from the mean populism score of the mainstream parties, however. Hence, the findings based on both the matter of degrees approach and the party family approach suggest that a party's radicalism affects its degree of populism.

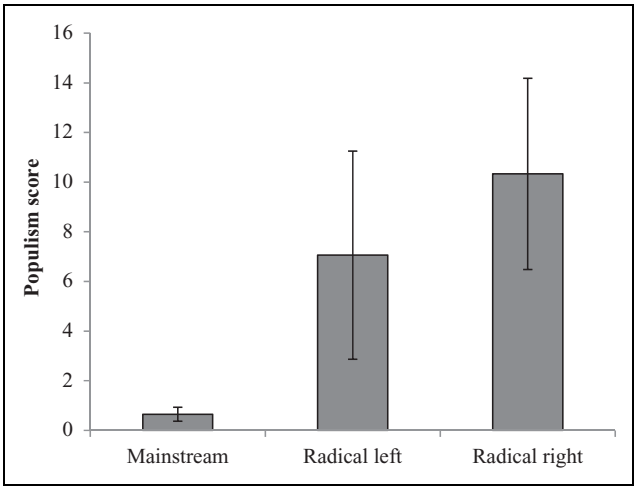

Figure 2. Mean populism scores (and 95% confidence intervals) of mainstream parties, radical left parties and radical right parties.

A more systematic test of our expectation that radical parties are more inclined to be populist is presented in Table 2. In Model 1 the dependent variable (the populism score) is regressed on the main independent variables – the left-right score and left-right radicalism (according to the matter of degrees approach). As expected, the regression coefficient of the left-right score turns out to be insignificant, indicating that right-wing parties are not more inclined to be populist than left-wing parties. The coefficient of left-right radicalism, however, is positive and highly significant ($b = 0.60$, significant at $p < 0.01$): the more radical a party is, the more this party expresses a populist message. The explained variance is exceptionally high: 53 percent of the variance in the degree of populism is explained by left-right radicalism. This indicates that left-right radicalism is a very good predictor of the degree of populism of a party.

In Model 2 we have included the GAL-TAN score and the GAL-TAN radicalism score as independent variables in the regression equation. None of these two variables exerts a significant effect on the degree of populism. Left-right radicalism remains significant after including these variables, however. The reason that GAL-TAN does not have an effect on populism is, most likely, that many radical left parties are strongly GAL whereas most radical right parties are strongly TAN. The most probable reason that GAL-TAN radicalism has no effect on populism is that green parties and some mainstream parties are rather GAL as well.

In Model 3 we have included three additional explanatory variables: the size of a party; an opposition dummy; and a variable which measures the electoral loss of a party during previous elections. None of these variables turns out to significantly affect the dependent variable. In Model 4 we have estimated the effect of radicalism based on the party family approach. The dummy in Model 4 is based on the CMP classification (1 = either radical left or radical right, 0 = mainstream party) and turns out to have a positive and highly significant effect: radical parties are more populist than mainstream parties ($b = 6.52$, significant at $p < 0.01$).[10]

Table 2. The effect of radicalism on the degree of populism.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Intercept	–2.46**	–2.37**	–0.93	–0.37
	(0.86)	(0.79)	(1.85)	(1.10)
General left-right	–0.05	0.20	0.14	0.08
	(0.28)	(0.49)	(0.49)	(0.59)
General left-right radicalism	0.60**	0.67**	0.57**	
	(0.12)	(0.19)	(0.22)	
Radical dummy				6.52**
				(1.92)
GAL-TAN		–0.30	–0.05	0.05
		(0.39)	(0.47)	(0.34)
GAL-TAN radicalism		–0.07	–0.09	–0.11
		(0.18)	(0.18)	(0.18)
Size			–0.05	–0.03
			(0.04)	(0.02)
Opposition			0.24	0.26
			(0.74)	(0.47)
Electoral loss			0.01	0.00
			(0.01)	(0.00)
N	85	85	85	85
Adjusted R-squared	0.53	0.53	0.53	0.49

Country dummies included. Observations are clustered by parties so significance tests are based on clustered robust standard errors.
*p < 0.05; **p < 0.01 (one-tailed).

Robustness checks

Table 3 presents the results of three robustness checks. Model 1 is similar to Model 3 from Table 2. The only difference is that we used the general left-right scores of the CMP instead of the data of the CHES. This does not affect the main result: left-right radicalism still significantly affects the degree of populism of a party ($b = 1.25$, significant at $p < 0.05$). In addition, however, the size of a party and its electoral success during previous elections turn out to affect the degree of populism as well: larger parties turn out to be less populist ($b = –0.10$, significant at $p < 0.01$), and parties that have suffered an electoral loss are more populist ($b = 0.01$, significant at $p < 0.05$).

In Model 2 we have replaced the general left-right score and the general left-right radicalism score with the *economic* left-right score and the *economic* radicalism score of a party. This leads to similar results: the degree of radicalism regarding the economic left-right position has a positive and significant effect on the degree of populism as well: $b = 0.35$, significant at $p < 0.05$. This is not a strange result as the correlation coefficient

Table 3. Robustness checks.

	Model 1 *Left-Right CMP*	Model 2 *Economic Left-Right*	Model 3 *Negative Binomial*
Intercept	2.07	–0.24	–0.01
	(1.41)	(1.69)	(0.29)
General left-right			–0.02
			(0.07)
General left-right radicalism			1.73**
			(0.28)
General left-right (CMP)	–0.19		
	(0.96)		
General left-right radicalism (CMP)	1.25*		
	(0.65)		
Economic left-right		–0.31	
		(0.36)	
Economic left-right radicalism		0.35*	
		(0.14)	
GAL-TAN	0.20	0.43	–0.01
	(0.33)	(0.33)	(0.07)
GAL-TAN radicalism	–0.00	0.20	0.01
	(0.15)	(0.13)	(0.03)
Size	–0.10**	–0.06	–0.04**
	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.01)
Opposition	0.59	0.44	0.01
	(0.94)	(0.81)	(0.26)
Electoral loss	0.01*	0.01	–0.00
	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.00)
N	81	85	85
Adjusted R-squared	0.34	0.46	

Country dummies included. Observations are clustered by parties so significance tests are based on clustered robust standard errors.
*p < 0.05; **p < 0.01 (one-tailed).

between the general left-right score and the economic left-right score is 0.91. This is most probably due to the fact that until 2010 radical right parties were still widely conceived of as being economically right-wing (at least by the CHES experts in the time period under investigation).[11]

Finally, we have also estimated a negative binomial regression model, in order to deal with the fact that the distribution of the populism score is highly skewed to the right. This alternative estimation technique leads to the same substantive result: general left-right radicalism positively affects the degree of populism of a party (b = 1.73, significant at p < 0.01). According to this analysis, party size exerts a negative effect on the degree of populism as well (b = –0.04, significant at p < 0.01).

How are radical left and radical right parties being populist?

From the quantitative analysis presented above it has become clear that both radical left and radical right parties are likely to employ a populist discourse. But *how* exactly are these radical parties being populist? A more qualitative reading of the election manifestos of radical right parties shows that these parties combine populist claims with nativist arguments. In other words, they criticize the established order for not dealing with the alleged problems posed by the presence of 'dangerous others'. In its 1992 manifesto, the BNP writes: "Our struggle against the old parties is [. . .] perfectly expressed in a call to the British people to 'fight back' – against the politicians and parties that have betrayed them for so long." According to the BNP, the "other parties" have betrayed the people because "they seek to destroy Britain's national identity". In 2007 the FN argued that France fell victim to various external and internal threats, one of them being "the suicidal politics of immigration without restraint and the ill-considered opening of borders". In its 2006 manifesto the Dutch PVV argues that the "political elite systematically ignores the interests and problems of the citizen". One of the most pressing problems is, according to the party, that "the number of immigrants coming to the Netherlands is excessively high".

Where radical right parties substantiate their political anti-elitism with the argument that established parties have failed to solve the problems posed by immigration, radical left parties connect their political anti-elitism to economic anti-elitism and the argument that hardworking, ordinary citizens are betrayed by the political-economic power elite. In its 1997 election manifesto, the French PCF argues: "France needs fresh air. It needs politicians that prioritize human beings instead of financial cost-effectiveness and the enrichment of those who already have everything." The PRC in Italy is worried about citizens' rights and the corruption of politicians. These problems are, according to its 1992 manifesto, the result of "the submission of politicians to economic interests, pushed by large corporations". The party argues that "the establishment has concentrated power in the hands of the few, suffocates parliament and thereby silences democratic participation". The PRC emphasizes that their message is not only directed to the proletariat, but to "all citizens". A highly similar discourse can be found among the Dutch SP and Die Linke in Germany. Both parties emphasize the problems that result from the, according to them, close connections between the financial and political realms. The main victims are "citizens" in general or "the people". According to the SP (1994 manifesto): "Neoliberal thinking floods Western Europe and has also in our country seriously infected left- and right-wing political parties. Politics has become sick, practically disabled."

This analysis has shown that although both the radical right and the radical left are employing populism, the way in which they color in their people-centrism and anti-elitism is strongly related to their core radical right- and left-wing ideologies.

Conclusion

Although populism is increasingly conceived of as a set of ideas that can be endorsed to a larger or lesser extent and that parties can thus be more or less populist (Deegan-Krause and Haughton, 2009; Hawkins, 2009, 2010; Jagers and Walgrave, 2007; Pauwels, 2011; Rooduijn and Pauwels, 2011; Rooduijn et al., 2014; Ruzza and Fella, 2011), scholars have not yet answered the question of how this populist set of ideas is distributed over the political spectrum. Are right-wing parties more populist than left-wing parties? We found that it is not so much the left-right position of a party that determines how populist it is, but its degree of left-right *radicalism*. This is a striking finding because, although the radical right has been frequently connected to populism, only some *particular* radical left parties have been associated with populism as well. Communist parties such as, for instance, the French PCF and the Italian PRC are generally conceived of as non-populist. This analysis has shown that these parties employ a highly populist discourse too – just as their populist classified cousins SP and Die Linke. This suggests that *all* radical left parties, and not just some of them, endorse the populist set of ideas to a certain extent.

We think that this inclination of both the radical left and the radical right to employ a populist discourse is due to the changes that these parties have gone through within the last 25 years. Since the late 1980s, parties on both the radical left and the radical right have adjusted their ideas to a large extent. The extreme right was marginalized due to the association with Nazism and fascism after 1945. When the FN began to explore the combination of nativism and populism in the course of the 1980s, this formula appeared to be successful and was adopted by several other radical right parties. The radical left focused almost exclusively on 'the proletariat' before 1989, but also began to explore broader appeals to the people after the break-up of the communist bloc. At the same time, the radical left and radical right parties replaced their attacks on the system of liberal democracy with a much more modest critique of the political establishment. Hence, they became both people-centrist and anti-elitist.

It needs to be emphasized that the goal of this study was not to actually *test* whether the radical left and the radical right have changed since the fall of the Berlin Wall. Instead, its aim was to assess how populism is distributed over the political spectrum. The mentioned changes of radical parties since the 1990 s only serve as an explanation for why radical parties might be more populist. To actually test whether the radical left and the radical right have indeed changed their positions since 1989, one would need to compare party positional information from before the fall of the Wall with their positions after the fall. This might be an interesting topic for further research.

Future studies might not only broaden the temporal scope of their analyses; they might also extend their case selection by focusing on more countries. It would, for example, be very interesting to also look at Eastern European parties. In this study we have very consciously left out parties from this part of the world because we believe that it might well be the case that other mechanisms are at work there. Most importantly, in Eastern Europe populism seems to be, much more so than in Western Europe, a message that is also employed by mainstream parties. Think only of Fidesz in Hungary or the Law and Justice party in Poland. As a result, the relationship between left-right radicalism and populism in Eastern Europe might be much less strong, or even absent.

It could also be worthwhile to broaden the scope in terms of party families under investigation. We have investigated the relationship between the radical left, the radical right and the mainstream, but other scholars might also include Green parties. The literature is not clear yet on whether Green parties would be more inclined to be populist than mainstream parties or not. Mudde (2004: 548) argues, for instance, that in the 1980 s the populist message could be encountered among Green and New Politics parties. However, it might also be stated that the focus on individual liberties of these parties is incompatible with the monolithic point of view of populism that, after all, focuses on *the* people and *the* elite.

Future studies might also focus more specifically on the commonalities and differences between the radical left and the radical right. Our analyses showed that radical left parties and radical right parties do not differ significantly from each other when it comes to their populism. However, this uniformity might well be the result of the limited number of cases under analysis.

These are all topics that might be investigated in future studies. For now, we have made one important step forward: we know that, at least in Western Europe, populism and radicalism often go hand in hand – both on the right *and* on the left.

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Notes

1. The literature suggests not to confuse the term 'proletariat' with the concept of 'the people'. Early scholars of populism have forcefully argued that populists blur class distinctions, and lump all people in one single homogeneous category. (McKenna, 1974) This means that populists conceive of 'the people' as a wider category than the category of the 'proletariat'. March (2007) argues that many post-1989 radical left parties focus on 'the people' instead of 'the proletariat' in order to appeal to a wider audience.
2. It is important to emphasize that this argument only holds when it comes to Western Europe. The way in which populism expresses itself is strongly dependent on the political

context in which it occurs. For example, in Latin America, populism is mainly associated with the radical left (see De la Torre, 2010)

3. The reason that we employ paragraphs instead of, for instance, (quasi-)sentences, 'statements' or 'appeals' as our units of measurement is that the populist ideology consists of a set of claims that are usually presented in multiple sentences. Because it has been shown that authors use paragraphs to mark thematic discontinuities in texts (Ji, 2008), it can be expected that breaks between paragraphs represent objectively traceable distinctions between arguments.
4. Note that references to the proletariat have not been included as references to 'the people' for reasons explained in note 1.
5. Examples of categories of elites that are general enough to be coded as anti-elitism are: 'politicians' (in general), 'the old parties', 'the establishment', 'the political order', 'intellectuals', 'bankers', etc. In the Netherlands a term that is often used to criticize the elite in general is 'regenten' (regents) So, a paragraph including a criticism of 'European technocrats' is coded as anti-elitist, whereas a critique on the ''European technocrat person X'' is not. Moreover, the critique should concern a group of people (imagined or real). So, a critique on the process of globalization or European unification is not anti-elitism, whereas an attack on 'the political establishment in Brussels' is.
6. This operationalization allows for a wide range of substantive interpretations. Populism could manifest itself, for instance, as the opposition of the ''powerless people'' against the ''established political order'', or as the antagonistic relationship between hardworking citizens on the one hand and an exploitative elite of bankers and other economic elites on the other hand. In other words: populism can come in different colors. Our focus on the abstract notions of people-centrism and anti-elitism makes it possible to incorporate all these varieties of populism in our analysis.
7. The results are available upon request.
8. For a debate on this matter see the literature on conceptualizing and measuring 'niche parties' (Meyer and Miller, 2015; Wagner, 2012).
9. Although we also see some radical parties that are not very populist, the figure makes clear that most radical parties employ the populist discourse to a much larger extent than the more mainstream parties.
10. If we include two dummies – one radical right dummy and one radical left – the results are comparable: both differ significantly from the reference category (the mainstream parties), but not from each other.
11. Although it has been argued that radical right parties have become increasingly centrist in socioeconomic terms, this is a rather recent phenomenon, and can, most likely, not be observed yet from the data under investigation.

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Author biographies

Matthijs Rooduijn is a Postdoctoral Researcher and lecturer at the University of Amsterdam. His research focuses on topics such as populism, radicalism, voting behaviour and public opinion. His work has been published in journals such as Electoral Studies, Government and Opposition, Party Politics, Political Studies and West European Politics.

Tjitske Akkerman is affiliated to the Department of Political Science, University of Amsterdam. Her research focuses on nationalism, populism, immigration policies and populist radical right parties. Recent publications have appeared among others in West European Politics, Party Politics, Political Studies, Government and Opposition and Patterns of Prejudice.