

How does Parliamentary Populism in Switzerland evolve over time?

Sophia Schlosser, Laurence Brandenberger
Chair of Systems Design, ETH Zürich

Project Planning

1 General Idea - Overview

Work done so far serves as a pretest for us, we can now take a step back and re-evaluate

- We want to show how **populism in the Swiss parliament evolved over time**.
- We want to create a **populism index** for Swiss MPs (over time)
- The identification of populism in speeches through **dictionaries** is possible (e.g., [Aslanidis \(2018\)](#), [Pauwels \(2011\)](#), [Rooduijn and Pauwels \(2011\)](#), [Bonikowski and Gidron \(2016\)](#), [Oliver and Rahn \(2016\)](#)). Previous research has identified a set of words (i.e., compiled a dictionary) that refer to populist elements in speeches. With simple word counts, they show that they can identify populist speakers.

From Literature, we can identify following critique points (e.g. [Pauwels \(2011\)](#), [Rooduijn and Pauwels \(2011\)](#)):

1. **Focusing on singular words:** Sometimes, singular words from dictionaries cannot be clearly associated with the same intended meaning. That means, the word 'Volk' is not uniquely associated with populist elements, depending on the context of the sentence.

Our solution: We solve the issue by using lists of **triplets**, and not singular word lists.

2. **Semantic shortcuts:** Missing way to allocate the true meaning of words like "We", "They". E.g., some examples of populism start with "we the people". Sometimes, not every reference to "we" is a reference to the people.

Our solution: We solve the issue of not being able to rightly allocate words like "we" or "they" by using **semantic role labeling** and **coreference resolution**

1.1 Definition of Populism

We define populism as consisting of two components:

1) people-centrism and **2) Anti-Elitism**. (Aslanidis (2018) Rooduijn and Pauwels (2011), Pauwels (2011)) "The fundamental importance is the centrality of "the people" ... "Populists are anti-elitist because elites stand in the way of the centrality of the people. Elites are portrayed as corrupt and are contrasted with the general will of the people" (Rooduijn and Pauwels (2011))

1.2 Boundary conditions

- We restrict ourselves to speeches of MPs **within the Parliament** → "**parliamentary populism**"
- Restrict to only **German** speeches of MPs
- We would like to submit the paper to a **political science journal** (e.g., SPSR (Swiss Political Science Review), Legislative Quarterly, or higher depending on the results).

2 Data

- Transcripts of **all German speeches of MPs** held in parliament **from 1891 to 2019** (35 complete legislative periods)
- Only speeches of singular MPs, not taking into account speeches of reporters (Berichterstat-ter der Kommission) or other roles, e.g., President

3 Method

3.1 General Approach

- Detecting **populist triplets** in the speeches of MPs (Aslanidis (2018), Pauwels (2011))
- **Dictionaries** of populist words (Aslanidis (2018), Oliver and Rahn (2016), Pauwels (2011), Rooduijn and Pauwels (2011))
- From previous dictionaries in the literature as well as our own exploratory work, we create our own list of triplets
- We want to create an **index** of populism for Swiss MPs. This index will span from 0 (not populist) to 1 (strongly populist). We will look at the "simple" percentage (probably pro 1000 (or more) triplets)

3.2 Checking the validity of our populist index:

- We will check the validity of our model by identifying Swiss populist and non-populist MPs from literature as well as voting data and smartvote right-left indices, and run our model on their speeches. MPs with high incidences of populist elements in their speeches should align in extreme positions on the left-right scale (?).
- Identifying populists through voting records: We know from the literature, that some legislative proposals were polarizing (?) - we could check the voting records on said proposals to identify populists.
- Identifying populists through the literature: Laurent Bernhard worked extensively on Swiss populism. "Third, this examination reveals that the strong oppositional figures of the three populist parties from the radical right (i.e. Christoph Blocher, Giuliano Bignasca, and Eric Stauffer) tend to excel in terms of populist communication." (?).

3.3 Complete our Dataset:

Given that most research on Populism is relatively recent we need to expand our dataset to cover all Legislatures until 2019 . The speeches from 1995 onwards are available through the Website of the Swiss parliamentary Services. Daria would need to extract the speeches from the online database - for this we will give her Anna's scraping tool/code for it.

3.4 Results we want to show:

- "Populism Index": we will look at the "simple" percentage (probably pro 1000 (or more) triplets)
- We will show the evolution of populism in the swiss parliament over time
- we will show example(s) of MPs that seemed to have become increasingly populist over time
- Given the restraints of not being able to yet(!) retrieve the associated "Bills" from the online database, we will not yet show the analysis of the more "populist bills" -> this could be done in a future step (follow up paper perhaps?), as it is surely still interesting to (swiss) political scientists.

3.5 Contribution from Daria and Luis:

- Complete the dataset, in order for it to span until 2019: scraping from Online DB
- create complete list of triplets (for the optional time-varying lists of words) (once she receives our hand labeled sentences)
- Delivers randomly selected sets of triplets, for the last 10 years (2009-2019)

- Analysis of the results of our hand labeled compiled lists of populist triplets → adjustment of the list of populist triplets over time (optional)
- Creation of populist index for MPs
- Further output of analysis (e.g., aggregation over parties)

3.6 Contribution from SS und LB:

- Create Time-plan for Frank
- Literature review on research on populism and Swiss political landscape (partially done)
- Creation of list of populist words from literature (partially done, see Table)
- Hand-labeling of populist triplets we receive from Daria
- Identification of Swiss populist and non-populist MPs from literature/data
- Interpretation and discussion of results

subsectionFeedback of Frank

- Frank wants a clear PROJECT PLAN / TIMEPLAN including the responsibility and tasks per person. He wants a clear listing of who starts when doing what (e.g. Daria starts on date X with task X etc.).
- He is not opposed to the project and the idea, but he wants to make sure that this project will actually get done
- We can make this a methods paper or a content paper for a polc.science journal
- Better to take the last 10 (tbd) years, and to then go from there

4 List of words to identify populism in political speeches

4.1 Rooduijn and Pauwels (2011)

DE: elit*, konsens*, undemokratisch*,referend*, korrupt*, propagand*, politiker*, täusch*, betrüg*, betrug*, *verrat*, scham*, schäm*, skandal*, wahrheit*, unfair*, unehrlich*, establishm*, *herrschaft*, lüge*

4.2 Pauwels (2011)

EN: *deceit*, *treason*, *betray*, absurd*, arrogant*, promis*, promise*, capitul*, corrupt*, direct, elite*, establishm*, ruling*, caste, class, mafia, freedom of expression, undemocratic, particrat*, politic*, propaganda, referend*, regime*, shameless, shame*, admit, tradition*, people

4.3 Bonikowski and Gidron (2016)

Note: nice overview of their Hypotheses

Unigrams: Bureaucrat, loophole, millionaire, baron, venal, crooked, unresponsive, uncaring, arrogant

Bigrams: Special interest, big government, Wall Street, Main Street, big corporations, ordinary taxpayer, your money, wealthy few, professional politician, big interest, old guard, big money, Washington elite, rich friend, power monger, power grabbing, power hungry, easy street, privileged few, forgotten Americans, too big, long nose

Trigrams: Top 1 percent, average American taxpayer

Four-grams + : Government is too big, government that forgets the people

4.4 Oliver and Rahn (2016)

Anti-elitism, Mistrust experts, National affiliation

They also look at **Language Simplicity:** Six-letter words (in %), Average words per sentence, "Variety" (calculated using Diction), Present concern (Calculated using Diction), Appeal to common sense (yes/no)

4.5 Aslanidis (2018)

We-Actors: We-generic, (The) people, Society, Citizens, Like you, The rest (against the few), Anonymous, Majority

They-Actors: Political class, a few, politicians, businessmen, bankers, a minority

5 Details

5.1 Rooduijn & Pauwels (2011)

APPENDIX B DICTIONARY OF THE COMPUTER-BASED CONTENT ANALYSIS				
	NL	UK	GE	IT
Core	elit*	elit*	elit*	elit*
	consensus*	consensus*	konsens*	consens*
	ondemocratisch*	undemocratic*	undemokratisch*	antidemocratic*
	ondemokratisch*			
	referend*	referend*	referend*	referend*
	corrupt*	corrupt*	korrupt*	corrot*
	propagand*	propagand*	propagand*	propagand*
	politici*	politici*	politiker*	politici*
	bedrog	*deceit*	täusch*	ingann*
	bedrieg	*deceiv*	betrüg*	
			betrug*	
	verraa	*betray*	*verrat*	tradi*
	verrad			
	schaam*	shame*	scham*	vergogn*
			schäm*	
	schand*	scandal*	skandal*	scandal*
	waarheid*	truth*	wahrheit*	verità
	oneerlijk*	dishonest*	unfair*	disonest*
			unehrlich*	
			establishm*	partitocrazia
Context	establishm*	establishm*	*herrschr*	
	heersend*	ruling*		
	capitul*			
	kapitul*			
	kaste*			
	leugen*		lüge*	menzogn*
	lieg*			mentir*

Figure 1: Rooduijn & Pauwels (2011)

5.2 Pauwels 2011

Table A2. Dictionary

Dictionary	Dutch words	Translation
Conservatism	christ*; geloof; gezin; kerk; normen; porn*; seks*; waarden	christ*; belief; family; church; norm; porn*; sex*; values
Environment	ecol*; groene*; klimaat*; milieu*; opwarming	ecol*; green*; climate*; environment*; heating
Immigration	marok*; turk; allocht*; asiel*; halal*; hoofddoek*; illega*; immigr*; islam*; koran; moslim*; vreemd*	moroc*; turk; allocht*; asylum*; halal*; scarf*; illega*; immigr*; islam*; koran; muslim*; foreign*
Law and order	*veilig*; criminal*; drug*; geweld*	*safe*; criminal* ; drug*; violence*
Liberalism	*belasting*; *korting*; bureaucrat*; concur*; dereg*; effici*; job*; taks*	*tax*; *reduction*; bureaucrat*; compet*; dereg*; effici*; job*; tax*
Neoliberalism	betut*; markt*; parasi*; pestbelast*; profit*; regeldr*; vlaktaks*; zwartwerk*	overcar*; market*; parasi*; bully tax*; profit*; rule exaggeration*; flat tax*; informal labour*
Populism	*bedrog*; *verraa*; *verrad*; absurd*; arrogant*; belof*; beloof*; belov*; capitul*; corrupt*; directe; elite*; establishm*; heersend*; kaste; klasse; maffia; meningsuit*; ondemocratisch*; particrat*; politic*; propaganda; referend*; regime*; schaamteloos; schand*; toegeven; traditio*; volk	*deceit*; *treason*; *betray*; absurd*; arrogant*; promis*; promise*; capitul*; corrupt*; direct; elite*; establishm*; ruling*; caste; class; mafia; freedom of expression; undemocratic; particrat*; politic*; propaganda; referend*; regime*; shameless; shame*; admit; tradition*; people
Progressive	individu*; progressief; recht; vrijheid; vrouw*; zelfbeschik*	individu*; progressive; right; freedom; woman; self-disposition
Social	*handicap*; armoed*; bescherming; eerlijk; gelijkheid*; onderwijs; pensioen*; sociaal*; zwak*	handicap*; povert*; protection; honest; equal*; education; pension*; social*; weak*
Flemish nationalism	onfhankel*; scheidi*; splits*; staatshervor*; vlaand*	independend*; separati*; state reform; Flanders

Figure 2: Pauwels (2011)

5.3 Oliver & Rahn (2016)

TABLE 1
Populist Language Scores among Seven Leading Presidential Candidates

	Anti-establishment						
	Carson	Clinton	Cruz	Kasich	Rubio	Sanders	Trump
Blame*	2.23	2.63	1.47	2.71	1.37	3.90	3.43
Political %	0.60	0.13	0.21	0.24	0.22	0.23	0.61
Economic %	0.00	0.45	0.04	0.00	0.27	0.99	0.05
People-centrism							
The American people or Americans #	2	23	7	2	9	16	0
Our country or nation #	6	11	0	3	4	5	10
We-they %	5.69	4.45	2.31	5.06	5.63	3.75	6.12
Foreign countries international threats %	0.00	0.13	0.38	0.02	0.22	0.20	1.15
Subnational social categories %	0.34	1.89	0.50	1.02	1.04	0.58	0.10
Language simplicity							
Six-letter words %	14.81	21.33	22.89	11.94	20.63	20.83	13.81
Average words per sentence	12.74	14.91	17.80	13.21	21.00	21.38	9.55
Variety*	0.24	0.28	0.32	0.22	0.34	0.29	0.17
Present concern*	15.48	17.66	12.7	13.26	13.12	13.66	17.81
Appeal to common sense	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes

NOTE: *Calculated using Diction.

Figure 3: Oliver & Rahn (2016)

TABLE 2
Loadings from Rotated Principle Components Analysis

Question	Anti-elitism	Mistrust experts	National affiliation
People like me don't have much say in what government does (Likert)	0.611		
Politics usually boils down to a struggle between the people and the powerful (Likert)	0.641		0.259
The system is stacked against people like me (Likert)	0.660		
It doesn't really matter who you vote for because the rich control both political parties (Likert)	0.686		
People at the top usually get there (because they have more talent and work harder / from some unfair advantage)	0.495		
I'd rather put my trust in the wisdom of ordinary people than the opinions of experts and intellectuals (Likert)		0.568	
When it comes to really important questions, scientific facts don't help very much (Likert)		0.712	
Ordinary people can really use the help of experts to understand complicated things like science and health (Likert)		0.696	
Politics is ultimately a struggle between good and evil (Likert)	0.386	0.474	
It would be unwise to trust the judgments of the American people for today's complicated political issues / I generally trust the collective judgments of the American people, even for complex political issues			0.614
I generally consider myself to be (different than most Americans / like most other Americans).			0.729
How important is being an American to who you are? (7-point scale)			0.692

Figure 4: Oliver & Rahn (2016)

5.4 Aslanidis (2018)

Table 7 We/they actors (people-centrism and anti-elitism) in the Spanish indignados

Indignados (Spain)			
We-actors (people)		They-actors (elites)	
Actor	Occur.	Actor	Occur.
We-generic	33	Political class	10
(The) people	12	A few	7
Society	2	Politicians	2
Citizens	1	Businessmen	2
Like you	1	Bankers	2
The rest [against the few]	1	A minority	2
Anonymous	1	Partidocratic dictatorship (PPSOE)	1
Majority	1		

Figure 5: Aslanidis (2018)

Examples of populist sentences identified:

Bürger, bewusstsein, konzentrieren, staatsbürger, Wie der Privatmann durch das Bewusstsein der ökonomischen Unabhängigkeit sich stärker und freier fühlt , so konzentriert sich dieses Bewusstsein beim Staatsbürger , der (staatsbürger) eventuell für die Freiheit des Vaterlandes eintreten muss M. Schaller .

volk, Keel Johann Joseph [418], sein überzeugen, volk,

Ich (Keel Johann Joseph [418]) glaube , daraus kann den eidgenössischen Kantonen kein Vorwurf gemacht werden , und ich (Keel Johann Joseph [418]) bin auch überzeugt , das Volk wird ihnen (eidgenössisch kantonen) keinen machen .

Der Staat braucht absolut kein Sozialstaat zu sein , er (staat) muss nur ein christlicher , ein humaner Staat , ein Rechtsstaat sein , um die Leute vor Vergiftung zu beschützen .

korrupt, partei, einsehen, korrption, Eine Besserung kann nur erfolgen , wenn einmal beide Parteien einsehen , dass die Wahlbestechung , dass diese Korruption verwerflich und eines republikanischen Volkes unwürdig ist .

volk, tessinischen partei, verfahren, volk, Wir müssen einmal den tessinischen Parteien allen Ernstes zeigen , dass sie (tessinischen partei) ihr (tessinischen partei) Volk nicht mehr verführen und missbrauchen dürfen .

volk, sie, sprechen, volk, Lassen Sie (sie) doch das Volk darüber sprechen !

6 Comparison of populist scores between the two extremes: the Swiss "left" and "right" parties over time

6.1 "Left" Parties

- Internationale Arbeiterassoziation (IAA) (from 1864)
- Schweizerischer Arbeiterbund (from 1873)
- SP (from 1888)
- Altkommunisten (1918)
- KPS (1921-1939)
- Soz. Föderation (1939-1944)
- PdA (Partei der Arbeit) (1944)
- SAP (Sozialistische Arbeiterpartei) (also called "RML" or
- "Revolutionäre Marxist. Liga" initially) (Sozialistische
- Arbeiterpartei) (1969-1990)
- SolidaritéS (from 1992)

6.2 "Right" Parties

- Nationale Front (1933-1940)
- Jungbauern (1934–1947)
- BGB (1936–1971)
- Nationale Aktion (also called "SD") (1961)
- "Republikaner (1971-1989)
- SVP (from 1971)
- EDU (from 1975)
- Autopartei (also called "FPS") (from 1985)
- Lega dei Ticinesi (from 1991)
- BDP (from 2008)

6.3 Stammbaum der Schweizer Parteien

Stammbaum der Schweizer Parteien

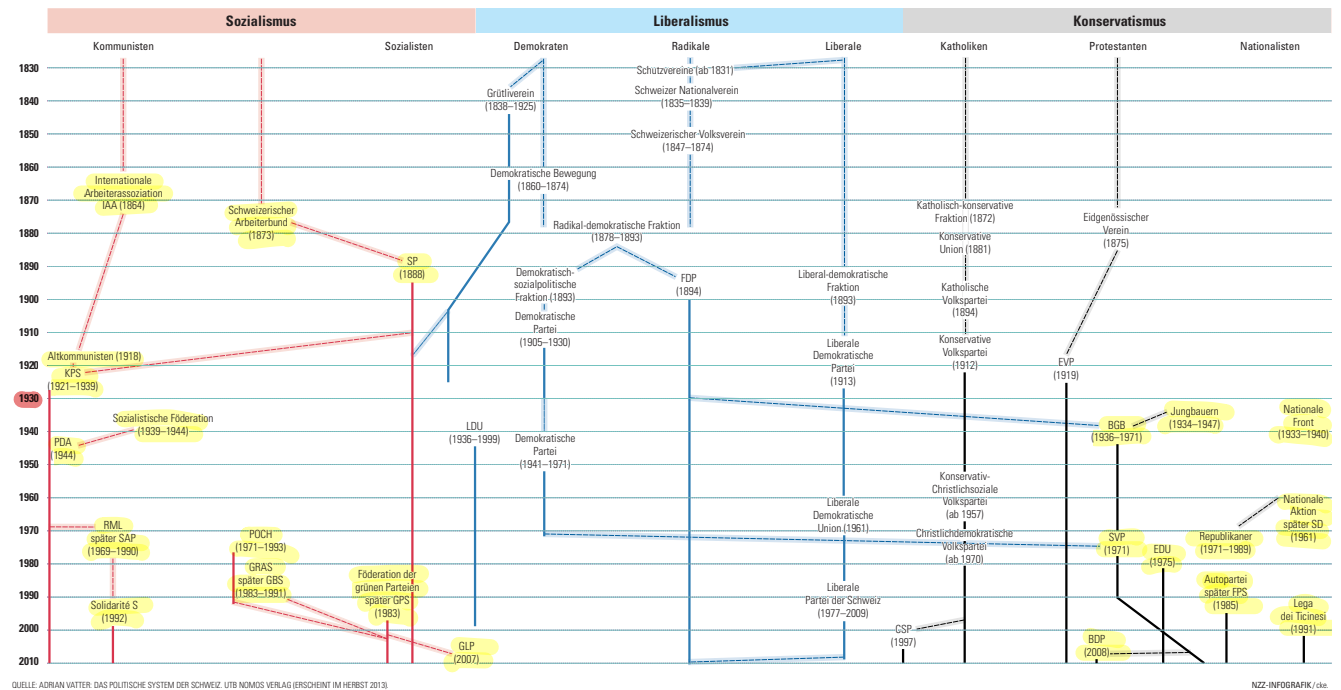


Figure 6: Der Stammbaum der Schweizer Parteien (Vatter (2018))

References

- Aslanidis, Paris. 2018. "Measuring populist discourse with semantic text analysis: an application on grassroots populist mobilization." *Quality & Quantity* 52(3):1241–1263.
- Bonikowski, Bart and Noam Gidron. 2016. "The populist style in American politics: Presidential campaign discourse, 1952–1996." *Social Forces* 94(4):1593–1621.
- Oliver, J Eric and Wendy M Rahn. 2016. "Rise of the Trumpenvolk: Populism in the 2016 Election." *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 667(1):189–206.
- Pauwels, Teun. 2011. "Measuring populism: A quantitative text analysis of party literature in Belgium." *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* 21(1):97–119.
- Rooduijn, Matthijs and Teun Pauwels. 2011. "Measuring populism: Comparing two methods of content analysis." *West European Politics* 34(6):1272–1283.
- Vatter, Adrian. 2018. *Das politische System der Schweiz*. 3 ed. Baden-Baden: Nomos.