

# Populism: Introduction

## Concepts and Definitions I

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# Why do we compare? Alexis de Tocqueville (1835)

implicit comparison - French system

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- Tocqueville taught us that the only way we can fully understand our own political system is by comparing it to others.
- Comparing our experience with that of other countries deepens our understanding of our own politics and permits us to see a wider range of alternatives.
- It illuminates the virtues and shortcomings of our own political life. By taking us beyond our familiar arrangements and assumptions, comparative analysis helps expand our awareness of the potentials, for better or worse, of politics.

populism isnt a neg thing everywhere in the world

# How we proceed:

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- Description: What is...
- Explanation: Why it is...
- Prediction: What is the likely consequence...

# Brainstorming: What is Populism?

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- Please take no more than **2 minutes** and write down up to **5 terms** that you associate with **populism**

fake news

strong opinion, nazi-like phrases and then apologizing afterwards

xenophobia, nationalism, simplification,

not only simple solutions, blaming another group: elites, establishment,

anti-media, gatekeeping

# Result of Brainstorming 18/04

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# Were/Are these people Populists?

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- Mao Tse Dong
- Franz Josef Strauss
- Fidel Castro
- Martin Schulz
- Peron
- Indira Gandhi
- Ronald Reagan
- Jospeh McCarthy and George Wallace
- Hugo Chavez
- Donald Trump

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- Pim Fortuyn
  - Jesse Ventura
  - José Bové
  - Peter Gauweiler
  - Oskar Lafontaine
  - Viktor Orbán
  - Beppe Grillo
  - Jeremy Corbyn
  - Alexis Tsipras

# What is Populism?

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## Basic Concept?

- Authority
- Consensus
- Legitimacy
- Order
- Power
- Sovereignty
- State

## Ideology?

- Anarchism
- Communism/Socialism
- Communitarianism
- Conservatism
- Facism
- Femininism
- Liberalism
- Marxism
- Radicalism



# What is P....

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## **Approach?**

- Behaviouralism
- Empiricism
- Historical Materialism
- Idealism
- Institutionalism
- Positivism
- Postmodernism
- Realism
- Systems theory

## **Value?**

- Accountability
- Democracy
- Equality
- Freedom
- Justice
- Property
- Representation
- Toleration
- Welfare

# Here it is!

## Systems (organisation of political power)

- Absolutism
- Capitalism
- Dictatorship
- Liberal Democracy
- Pluralism
- **Populism**
- Presidential Government
- Totalitarianism

## Structures

- Bicameralism
- Cabinet
- Comittee
- Election
- Executive
- Judiciary
- Market
- Opposition

# Was ist Populismus?

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- Eine Bewegung?
  - Eine Ideologie?
  - Politische Interaktionsweisen?
  - Emotionalisierung und Personalisierung von Politik?
  - Agitationstechniken?
  - Charismatische Führungsfiguren?
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- Können „rechts“ oder „links“ sein?

# Earlier Brainstormings

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- Begriff war zu 85% negativ besetzt
  - Fremdenfeindlichkeit
  - Ausländerhass
  - Unsolidarischer Egoismus
  - Denken in vereinfachenden Kategorien
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- Generelles Misstrauen gegen Populismus als politische Formation/Haltung

# Ziele des Seminars / Goals

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- To explain, why populism emerges
- Populism's main characteristics and manifestations (movements, parties, rebellions, insurgencies)
- Relationship to democracy
- Populism as a strategy to achieve political power and to govern rather than a coherent political ideology
- A discourse/narrative that represents politics as a black and white struggle between the mythical 'people' and evil elites
- No 'one-size-fits-all' definition, but: different approaches to understand the ambiguities of populism

# Textbook Definition

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- Populism (from the Latin *populus*, meaning the people) has been used to describe both a particular tradition of political thought and distinctive political movements and forms of rule.
- As a political tradition, populism reflects the belief that the instincts and wishes of the people provide the principal legitimate guide to political action.

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- Movements or parties described as populist have therefore been characterized by their claim to support the common people in the face of ,corrupt‘ economic or political elites.
  - Populist politicians make a direct appeal to the people and claim to give expression to their deepest hopes and fears, all intermediary institutions being distrusted
  - Andrew Heywood: Key Concepts in Politics, Palgrave, 2000, p.178.

# Probleme bei der Definition

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- Dehnbar, schwammig, inhaltsleer
- Unscharf, wissenschaftlich nicht tragfähig
- Ungenau / not very precise
- Schillernd /
- Impressionistic
- Diffus
- Nebelwolke



# Oder? Populismus hat...

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- Eine genau lokalisierbare soziale Basis
  - Konkrete Gesellschaftsvorstellungen
  - Spezifisches Verständnis von der Rolle des Staates
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- Karin Priester (Uni Münster), 2007:13

# A 1st attempt at definition

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- Focus on „common people“, not on elites, classes, strata, interest groups, professions
- Anti-elitism, anti-establishment
- Anti-intellectualism (even the „brains“ of the movement pose in an non-intellectual way)
- Often anti-urban orientation
- Moral engagement vs. Policy-and detail oriented

# Populism as Ideology

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- Sometimes great resonance, sometimes inconsequential
- Conceptual slipperiness
- Belief systems are diffuse
- Inconsistent