

*is the party according to what definition populism?  
apply to our empirical cases  
to which extend to they apply to populism,*

# Populism: Concepts and Definitions

Dr. Martin Thunert

Heidelberg Center for American Studies, Universität Heidelberg

[mthunert@hca.uni-heidelberg.de](mailto:mthunert@hca.uni-heidelberg.de)

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# Charakteristika – allgemein (Lucardie und Taggart)

- Populismus ist ablehnend bis feindselig gegenüber repräsentativer Politik also many grassroots-movements  
populists have an uneasy relationship with politicians
- Populisten identifizieren sich mit einem imaginären und idealisierten „Heartland“, wo die „wahren/wahrhaftigen Menschen“ wohnen (Partei: Wahre Finnen) claim: that there are other things, country has to reinvent themselves,  
Le Pen: mobilizing countryside
- Populismus ist keine kohärente Ideologie wie Sozialismus, Liberalismus, Konservatismus etc. not a coherent ideology, like liberalism  
thin ideology, wandlungsfähig, lässt sich nicht mit einem klaren Wert darstellen
- Populismus tritt häufig als Reaktion auf tiefgreifende Krisen in Erscheinung
- Populismus ist von internen Dilemmata durchsetzt internal contradiction →
- Populismus adoptiert wie ein Chamäleon die Farben seiner Umwelt response to deep phenomenon of crisis, emergez, when ppl perceive that something changes their lives  
not a permanent phenomena  
adaptable, to local appearance,

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- Populismus ist ein von rechten wie linken Ideologien/Strömungen/Bewegungen nutzbares Instrument
  - Grund: Populismus besitzt keine Kernwerte
  - Es gibt als populistischen Konservatismus, populistischen Sozialismus, sogar populistischen Liberalismus
  - Populismus vermeidet die Strukturen der repräsentativen Demokratie und wird daher oft sehr kurzlebig

# The populist narrative

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Threats to „common people“:

- Large organizations and corporations
- Large banks, firms, trusts, factories
- Bureaucracies
- Party apparatus
- Parliaments and intermediary agencies

# The People / das Volk

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- Power to the people
- Purity of the people
- Homogenous body of the people
- Insurrection
- Legitimate owners of politics vs. Illegitimate appropriation

*who are the others:*

- External ,Others‘
  - Evil oligarchies
  - Illegal aliens
  - Appropriation of politics by elites
  - Corrupt politicians
  - Servants of imperial powers
  - Evil oligarchies

# The People

## Right wing populism

- all citizens NOT represented by organized special interests

*living in the countryside*

## Left-wing populism

- wage workers — 1st US-cases: 19th century
- Family farmers
- the poor
- occasionally the middle class
- (The 99%) = simple solutions

*do not differentiate the 99%*

*1% — 450.000 €*

# Elites

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## Right-wing populism

- state bureaucrats
- interventionist politicians
- "special interests" proposing more state intervention in social and economic life
- occasionally, financial interests

## Left-wing populism

- large capitalist firms
- Transnational corporations
- mainstream political parties

*advantage, go after state-bureaucrats, go after politicians, go against minorities*

# Populists usually prefer

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- Direct and immediate representation of the people
- Loosely organized movements instead of hierarchically organized party structures
- The little guy vs. the fat cats and the „system“  
*always loves the little guy*
- A clear enemy image (e.g. banks, elites)
- A view of history which is the history of conspiracies against the little guy
- To romanticize an non-urban and rather rural or authentic lifestyle

*hierarchy is not an ideal, but want ppl that do family businesses*



# Populist ideals

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- The small family farm
  - A small family business with few hierarchies
  - Genossenschaften / co-ops
  - Chinese people's communes
  - Kibbuzim *Israel Genossenschaft*
  - Exchange in kind rather than in money
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- Can be small-business capitalism
  - Communal anti-capitalism

# Ambiguous / Unclear

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- Populism and government /the state / der Staat
- A strong state to protect the little guy against big organized interests
- State should be not strictly organized, but invisible
- Authoritärian, anti-Semitic, hillbillies?

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- Movements with a mass base, which are not class-based (the 99%)
  - Low degree of organization
  - Change is desired, the direction of change seems clear, but the specific demands for change are unclear

# Different Currents of Research: Elites and Masses Relationship

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- Edward Shils – direct reaction to McCarthyism in 1950s
- 1960 and 1970s –a reaction to outbursts of right-wing populism: bigotry, backwardness and extremism
- 19th century populism was cast in a bad light
- Analysis extended to Asia and Africa: uprising of backward regions
- 1980s: comparisons between European and Latin American populism (e.g. Puhle, DiTella)
- „a temporary bi-product of processes of modernization“
- Reaction to industrialization and modernization

# Ghita Ionescu and Ernest Gellner (1967)

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- Is populism a united phenomenon at all?
- An ideology?
- Recurring mentality?
- Political psychology?
- an „anti-phenomenon“ (anti-urban, anti-capitalist, anti-Semitic)
- Pro-people phenomenon
- A mentality absorbed by major Isms.

# Populism

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- „An international political movement that advocates the rights of the „common man“ and social equality.“
- The Sage Glossary of the Social and Behavioral Sciences, 2009, p.393

# Academics respond to populism

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## Warning

- Threat of Authoritarianism
- Anti-pluralist understanding of politics
- Vagueness of the concept ,the people‘
- Alternative and contradictory meanings
- Nationalism
- Demagogues / Mobs (Pack)
- Only a discursive construct

## Encouragement

- A promise to regenerate democracy in ostracizing and exclusionary political systems
- Inherently virtuous people

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- Analyzing the challenges that populism poses to a mainstream understanding of liberal democracy
  - Looking at specific geographical areas:
  - Europe and the Americas



# Questions:

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- Is there something distinctive in the most recent, contemporary brand of populism in Europe and North America?
- Are „populisms“ in different countries converging or diverging?

# Historical Sources and Cases

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- Populist movement in the U.S. between ca. 1870 and 1910
- Russian narodniks in the 19th century: city intellectuals romanticize rural life
- Anti-representative democracy movements in Western Europe

# Contemporary Research on Populism: (Political) Sociology

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- Social Psychology: attitudes and prejudices
- Values and Value Change
- discourse pattern and rhetorical device
- evangelical religious fundamentalism
- Pathological symptom of politics

# Contemporary Research on Populism: Political Science /Comparative Politics

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## Europe

- Subdivision of party system research
- Politikstil/Political Strategy
- Right-wing populism/Extremism (alarmist)

## North America

- Populism and ideology
- Populism and democracy
- Populism and political culture

# Research Gaps

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- How populists appear, how they organize, but rarely what they actually have to say
  - Social basis of contemporary populism
  - Populist views of society
  - Populist views of the state and government

# Historical Background

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## Centralization / Decentralization

- Centralizing effects of the French Revolution
- Disempowerment of regional centers of power
- Unitaristisches Staatsmodell
- Marxismus, Arbeiterbewegung und selbst der sozialdemokratische Wohlfahrtsstaat machen sich dieses Modell zu eigen

# Anti-Etatismus

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- 19th century Anarchism
- Society as a web of concentric circles
- Community
- Pariser Kommune, Anarcho-Syndicalismus in Katalonien (Spanischer Bürgerkrieg 1938)
- Gemeinschaftsutopien des 19. Jahrhunderts entstehen Ende des 20. Jahrhunderts in Gestalt des „Communitarianism“ wieder auf.

# Anti-Etatistische Postulate

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- Dezentrierung
  - Vernetzung
  - Pluralisierung
  - Normative Anti-Staatlichkeit
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- Michel Fouccault
  - Zygmunt Bauman
  - Richard Rorty und der US-Pragmatismus



# Triumph des unitaristischen Etatismus?

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- Lokale Autonomie verlor gegen Zentralstaatlichkeit
- Frankreich: jakobinisch-zentralistisch
- Italien: Faschismus
- Deutschland: Bismarck, Faschismus, unitaristischer Sozialstaat
- Alle kommunistischen Staaten
- USA: New Deal, Great Society

# Populisten als Anwälte von...

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- Lokaler Autonomie
- Dezentrale Organisation von Staat und Gesellschaft
- Bürokratiekritik
- Kritik an Großkonzernen
- Anarcho-konservative Beharrung und anarcho-konservativer Eigensinn
- Unmittelbarer Politik statt Stellvertreterpolitik

# Main Characteristics of US-Populism - Now

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- Anti-Intellectualism
- Particularism
- Nationalism
- Sense of powerlessness/ sense of being beleaguered
- Sense of dispossession
- Focus on individual liberty

# Social Basis of Populism

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- The postfordist economy: small business structure of economy, high degree of self-employment
- Decline of manufacturing economy hurts the white male industrial working class
- Not: the poor, welfare recipients etc.
- Postmodern social and political philosophy: communitarianism, network theories, associationalism, decentralization

# View of Society: Populism sees

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- ... the distribution of power and operation of basic social institutions in terms of a fundamental antagonism between
- "the people" and
- "power elites,, or „the establishment“
- Concentrated wealth & power are pernicious
- Ordinary people can be trusted to make their own decisions (wisdom of crowds)

# View of Government/State

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- Opposed to:
- Strong central government: a demand of the technocratic left (social democracy), parts of the revolutionary left (state communism, Stalinism) and the antiliberal right (fascists, Nazis)
- Transnational: deep integration, strong supranational EU institutions
- Not opposed to government as such

# Difference between right and left populism: meaningless?

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- Individual liberty direction
- Deregulation and privatization trap
- Associational, community-oriented direction
- The government trap: for and against big government at the same time

# Preliminary Findings: General

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- Anti-establishment revolts grow in importance in times of social and economic stress.
- Contemporary 21st century US-Populism and to a lesser extent Canadian populism is anti-authoritarian, anti-elitist, anti-totalitarian, and anti-hierarchical
- Populism in North America: resistance against a modernization that predominantly relies on technocratic planning, expert-based problem-solving and state interventionism
- resentment against a disenchanted secular world



# Preliminary Findings: Distinctiveness

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- The white working class has no love of corporations, but hate of central/federal government is more pronounced
- Populism of the left and the right does not wish “bigger government”
- populism permeates neighbouring ideologies (conservatism, libertarianism and progressivism), no ambition to replace or become force/party of its own
- Racial resentment is a lot less central to contemporary populism than to earlier populisms

# Preliminary Findings: Comparison

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- Essence: the property rights of farmers and small businessmen, rejection of major elements of redistributive welfare state
- Europe and Canada; revival (of style and rhetoric)
- Europe and Canada: institutional populism: advocating instruments of direct democracy (like U.S. populists in early 20th century)
- Are major parties (CPC) able to successfully adopt and integrate populism into the mainstream?

# Desiderata/More Research Needed/Prüfsteine

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- Populism and Progressivism/and the Left
  - The Noam Chomsky question: Outrage misguided?
- Populism and foreign policy
  - Assertive or isolationist nationalism?
- Populism and direct democracy
- Populism and immigration/race

# Chomsky-Question

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- “Ridiculing Tea Party shenanigans is a serious error, however. It is far more appropriate to understand what lies behind the movement's popular appeal, and to ask ourselves why justly angry people are being mobilized by the extreme right and not by the kind of constructive activism that rose during the Depression, like the CIO (Congress of Industrial Organizations).”[\[1\]](#)

[\[1\]](#) Noam Chomsky: „Outrage, Misguided“, In These Times, November 4, 2010.