Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen

Populism from Left to Right

On the populist conception of democracy around the world

Author: Kors Visscher

Studentnumber: s4598415

Supervisor: Dr. Andrej Zaslove

Faculty: Management Wetenschappen, Radboud Univeriteit Nijmegen

Date: 7 April 2017

Abstract

In this thesis, an alternative definition of populism is proposed and tested. Using current definitions as stepping stones, it is suggested that populism should be understood not as an ideology, but as a conception of democracy. Therefore, the principles of representative government –which in common parlance tends to be called democracy– are analysed and contrasted with what might be called the populist conception of democracy. The claim that populists use this conception is examined using six cases: the Dutch Partij voor de Vrijheid, *the Spanish* Podemos, *the Venezuelan* Partido Socialista Unido de Venezuela, *the Peruvian* Cambio 90 – Nueva Mayoriá *and its successor* Fuerza Popular, *and the nominees for president elect for the Democratic Party and the Republic Party in the USA, senator Bernard Sanders and Donald Trump. These parties mark the dividing lines between subfields of populism studies, as they are from different continents, and from different ends of the ideological spectrum. The proposed definition should be able to bring these subfields together by defining populism as a single phenomenon.*

CONTENT

Introduction

In May of 1967, a conference was held in London, under the title 'To define populism' (Allock et al., 1967: 137). Some forty renowned scholars spent several days trying to figure out whether it was possible to define populism as a single phenomenon, and if so, how to define it. To this day, the debate rages on. For every step towards a single definition, it seems that two steps backwards are taken. Or rather, sideways. The debate has been circling around a combination of several features that define populism, but the academic community has so far been unable to find the perfect combination of these features. Possibly, this perfect combination is a phantom, a pie in the sky, but it is tempting to keep trying. As Margaret Canovan states in 'Two Strategies for the Study of Populism': "The search for a clear account of populism has all the attractions of a treasure hunt. What could be more satisfying than to hit upon a single theory that could explain such a diverse collection of movements and ideas?" (Canovan, 1982: 544). This thesis suggests that all the elements are already there, but that a shift in perspective is necessary to understand populism as a single phenomenon.

The current debate

The abovementioned treasure hunt seems to have lost much of its appeal after over fifty years without finding the single unifying definition of populism. Most scholars have given up the search and instead focus on explaining and understanding specific forms of populism. Libraries can be filled with research delving into the conditions that enable populism to surface and thrive, or mapping the characteristics of populist voters. However, these libraries focus on one specific type of populism, without looking at other forms at all. These libraries are divided mainly geographically, with the scholars on European populism hardly talking to their colleagues that study Latin- or North-American populism. Even in the European research field, a split exists between left-wing and right-wing populism, which are not generally explained as a single phenomenon. In chapter 1 four main 'schools' of studying populism are distinguished and considered in depth. These schools are the ideology school, the instrumental school, the pathology school and the safety valve school.

A contested concept

Why is it so hard to define populism as a single phenomenon? Tim Houwen argues that populism is hard to define because it refers to other political, polemic, and contested concepts, such as 'the people' and 'democracy' (Houwen, 2013: 77). Houwen correctly argues that a proper

understanding of populism starts with an analysis of the concept of democracy. However, he also claims that no single definition of populism is ever really possible, as its core concepts are so contested. He claims that, for example, democracy has such a different meaning in Latin-America than in North-America, that it is extremely unlikely that populism refers to the same phenomenon on both continents. On top of that, the scholars that use the term also all have different visions of these contested concepts that populism relies on, which means that one has to be exceedingly clear in defining the underlying assumptions about democracy and the people. Otherwise two scholars, even if they are from the same country, could be talking about something fundamentally different when they discuss populism. This explain why, of the four distinguished schools of populism research, one refers to populism as the normal pathology and another refers to populism as the safety valve of democracy.

A shift in perspective

Of course, Houwen's analysis that populism refers back to other contested concepts is right. However, his conclusion that populism therefore cannot be understood as a single phenomenon is not. Rather than a term that is vague because it refers to these contested concepts, populism should be understood as a way to understand these contested concepts. Populism defines the people and democracy in a specific way, just like representative democracy gives a certain explanation of these contested concepts. Instead of looking at these politically charged concepts as the reason why populism cannot be defined as a single phenomenon, the specific understanding of these concepts becomes the very definition of populism. Instead of the content or instruments of populist parties, we should look at the underlying concepts. Instead of discussing the relation between populist parties and representative democracy and arguing over the potential threat or worth of populism within this system, we should look at populism as a distinct form of democracy.

One the one hand, this is a minor change. This thesis is not aimed at discrediting the work that has been done so far on populism. As becomes clear in chapter 1, the ideological definition as it stands uses several of the same aspects as the proposed definition. That many populists share certain organisational aspects is evident and is not disputed at all. On the other hand, however, this small change has major consequences for our understanding of populism. All these different schools are united within the proposed definition, because it moves beyond them. By looking at populism as a specific conception of democracy, the links between the different populist parties become clear. Regardless of the geographical location or the position on the ideological spectrum, the proposed definition is expected to be able to envelop all populist parties.

Populist democracy

Working from the field of democracy theory, the expectation is that *populist parties share a certain distinctive conception of democracy*. The democratic conception is considered to be distinct mainly from the representative democratic conception that most other political parties subscribe to. To test the expectation, it is broken down into four facets of populist democracy. The first is facet is the unrestricted sovereign, which leads to the expectation that: *Each of the six cases considers the will of the people to be unrestricted by the law*. Populists see the sovereign people as unbounded by the law that restricts it in the representative government. The second facet deals with the believe that sovereignty is inalienable, which means that: *Each of the six cases rejects the notion of representation*. Here, it is important to stress the difference between speaking with the voice *of* the people, and speaking *for* the people. The first is considered populist, the second representative. Populists do not represent the people: they are the people. The third facet rejects the pluralist interpretation of society and instead considers the people to be a single entity. It is therefore expected that: *Each of the six cases considers the people to be indivisible*. There might be other groups in society, but these are necessarily in an antagonistic relation with the people. This antagonistic relation leads to the last facet. Not only do populists consider the people to be homogenous, but they perceive deviation from the homogeneity as morally wrong. Therefore, it is expected that: *Each of the six cases denies the legitimacy of one or more anti-groups*. As is represented in the expectation, more than one group can be in an antagonistic relation with the people.

Populism is thus defined as a conception of democracy that considers the people as a single, homogeneous, and indivisible entity, which is contrasted by one or more illegitimate anti-groups. This people is the sovereign, which is inalienable, unrepresentable, and unrestricted by laws. In chapter 1, the relation between this definition and the current definitions is explained. The proposed definition is shown to originate from an alternative reading of the current definitions. These definitions are not wrong, just not quite right either, as they recognise several important aspects of populism, but all fail to take the final step that populism should be seen as a distinct conception of democracy.

In order to test the definition empirically, six cases are selected. The expectation is that the proposed definition can explain all parties currently considered populist, regardless of geographical or ideological characteristics. The selected cases therefore consist of a left-wing and a right-wing party from Europe, Latin-America and North-America. If the expectation is corroborated and the parties are shown to share a distinct conception of democracy, the new definition succeeds where other definitions have failed. Until now, no definition has been able to

link populist parties over these geographical and ideological divides. These cases are the Dutch *Partij voor de Vrijheid* (Freedom Party/PVV), the Spanish *Podemos* (We Can, no abbreviation), the Venezuelan *Partido Socialista Unido de Venezuela* (The United Socialist Party of Venezuela/PSUV), the Peruvian *Cambio 90 – Nueva Mayoriá (Change 90 –* New Majority/NM*)* and its successor *Fuerza Popular* (Popular Force/FP), and finally both senator Bernard Sanders and mister Donald Trump, who were candidate-elects for respectively the Democratic Party (no abbreviation) and the Republican Party (no abbreviation)[1] in the United States of America for the 2016 presidential election.

Structure

In the first chapter, the theoretical framework of the thesis is elaborated. Working from the main schools of thought considering populism, the problems strengths and weaknesses of each of these are considered. From this analysis of the current ways of defining populism, the step is made to democracy theory. It is shown that by looking at populism as a conception of democracy, an unifying definition of populism can be created. The populist conception of democracy is contrasted with the representative conception, to explain the differences. Looking at representative democracy also serve as a demonstration of how a concept of democracy relates to the ideological aspects and instruments of political parties.

The second chapter is reserved for the methodological discussion of the thesis. Three important issues are considered: the case selection, the choice for qualitative content analysis and the sources used. Why are specifically these cases included? And why only six? For these questions the choice for a qualitative method is relevant. In a field of study that is largely dominated by quantitative studies that use statistics to show correlation in large populations, this study only looks at six cases. What does the small N mean for the validity and generalisability? Several other research designs are considered and shown to be less effective for the purposes of this thesis. Related to the case selection, is the issue of the sources used. To study the cases, party programs and platforms are analysed.

Finally, chapter 3, the body of this thesis, deals with the actual qualitative content analysis. In this chapter the four facets of populist democracy are considered. Using the texts from populists themselves, their conception of democracy is reconstructed. The analysis is done per party, to

---

[1] There is a short-hand for the Republican Party, which is GOP. This stands for Grand Old Party, but this is considered a nickname rather than an actual abbreviation of Republican Party. To stay clear from the connotation this nickname may have, no abbreviation is used in this thesis.

ensure a critical examination and to ensure that each party is examined in its own context. For example, it matters if a country has the right to referenda embedded in its political system for the claims a populist makes about the voice of the people. It might also matter whether the populist is in power, as in the Latin-American cases, or in opposition. By keeping the national context of the individual cases in mind, the value of certain findings can be ascertained.

Contextualisation is important for another reason: it enables us to assess whether a comparison is fair and what the scope of the comparison can be. Are we comparing apples and oranges, or Goldrenette and Jonagold apples? A final reason for contextualisation is that a large section of scholars study populism as a contextual phenomenon. These scholars have abandoned the search for an overarching definition in favour of doing research on a specific subtype of populism. Their case is compelling, as so far, no one has been able to define populism as a whole, without the definition becoming so broad that it is rendered useless (Canovan, 1982: 546). Tim Houwen makes a strong case for a contextual understanding of populism, in his dissertation 'Power to the People' (2015: 35). It might seem contradictory, but in order to argue that the proposed definition has the reach to exceed the contextual approach to populism, it is paramount to display serious knowledge of the context.

Why does it matter?

To a large extent, finding a single overarching definition of populism would be its own reward. There are also reasons why this research is valuable beyond the quest for a definition within populism-studies. First and foremost, connecting the separate subfields of the study of populism would combine extensive libraries and vast pools of data, which at the moment remain separated because they are presumed to be on different topics. Secondly, while a lot of research is still being done on the definition of populism, the debate has a tendency to go in circles, without ever moving forward. By making a convincing case for the single definition of populism, a creative impulse is given to this debate, thus moving the debate forward. Changing the perspective from ideology or style to the more abstract notion of a concept of democracy, will force those who are critical to respond to a new type of argument, invigorating the debate.

The value of this thesis is not just academic in nature. Politics and society as a whole can benefit from better understanding populism as well. Populism has a negative connotation in today's society. Interestingly, this has not always been the case. Houwen shows us that the appreciation of populism fluctuates over time, which increases the complexity of the concept, as it is normatively classified anywhere from dangerous to necessary (2013). In this thesis, the argument

is made that populism is neither the normal pathology of democracy nor its safety valve. It is important to recognise both sides of populism, the dangers and the warnings. If we only consider populism as a threat to society, we are deaf to the legitimate criticisms that populism offers, and if we only look at the positive aspects, we risk dangerous divisions in the population.

The benefits of understanding populism are then twofold: it becomes easier to defend against the populist threat if other politicians properly understand what it entails, and it becomes possible to learn from the populists and to deal with their legitimate concerns about the working of representative democracy. In the current debate, it is often the case that populists dominate other politicians. This is at least partly because the conception of democracy that populists use is more intuitive and more resembles the basic understanding of democracy for most people. Other politicians should not be afraid to point out the potential problems with the populist system and explain that their system is fair as well.

1. Theory

In order to understand populism as a conception of democracy, it is necessary to understand how this new definition relates to the current definitions and how it relates to the representative notion of democracy. This chapter examines the problems and potential of current definitions first, to show how and why the notion of democracy becomes the centre of the new definition. Secondly, the chapter dives into an examination of the concept democracy and examines the difference between representative democracy and populist democracy. Through this theoretical examination, expectations about the empirical are formulated, which are tested in chapter 3.

1.1.   The four schools

Proposing a new definition of populism has to start with considering the current definitions. As the new definition is meant to incorporate many aspects of the old, but shifts perspective to understand all forms of populism at once, the current definitions are the stepping stones for the new definition. To structure the discussion and to make the intense debate that has been going on for more than fifty years comprehensible, the current definitions are grouped into four 'schools'. These schools are not strictly defined units, and the debate within the schools is often as fierce as between them. It is also possible to be part of several schools at the same time. However, each of these schools makes a valid and valuable contribution to the study of populism. Any new definition should at least explain its relation to the existing definitions and explain when and why it deviates.

The instrumental school

The instrumental school refers to two separate groups of scholars, that both look at populism as a set of instruments that politicians can use to appeal to or mobilise voters. The first group defines populism as mobilisation technique, while the second focusses on the populist style. The mobilisation definition is mainly used in Latin-America, while the populist style used to be a common explanation in European populism studies until it fell from grace. This school of thought has done better in Latin-America and Eastern-Europe, as it is closely linked to modernisation theories (Houwen, 2013: 48). A newly developed underclass is given political rights. Charismatic leaders, appealing to the people as whatever group they wish to mobilise, capitalise on the inability of the older parties to deal with this new group of voters (Germani, 1978: 88; Di Tella, 1965: 47).

Mobilising underrepresented parts of the constituency using a charismatic leader is seen as populist politics. While it is certainly true that many populists, especially in Latin-America and Eastern-Europe use these tactics, many other politicians do this as well. Obama managed to mobilise the 'black vote', while the USA can hardly be said to be a recently developed country. Even if many populists use this mobilisation technique, the question is whether it is quintessentially populist. Is using this technique a sufficient or necessary reason to label a movement populist? Before we answer this question, the so called populist style should be considered.

The populist style has been described as simple answers in plain language (Deiwiks, 2009: 5). This style is in part connected to the populist conception of democracy, in that they believe that the people can understand complex problems and formulate opinions about them. In practise this belief means that populists must rephrase problems in simple language, because the people have to be able to understand it. By removing the nuances of the problem, the solution might become less nuanced as well. It is often called *Stammtisch*, or barroom, politics as it uses both the language and type of solution that the academic establishment associates with discussing politics in a bar (Mudde, 2004: 542-543). Populism is the practise of 'buying support' instead of letting voters make a 'rational' decision and vote for the 'best option' (idem: 542). Mudde problematizes these notions as politically charged, because who decides what policies are 'rational' and 'irrational', which are 'sound' and which 'opportunistic'?

Again, the aim is not to claim that the style or other instruments which commonly referred to as populist are wrong or unconnected to populism. Rather, the claim is that the style is neither a sufficient, nor necessary feature of populism, but a logical result of the underlying conception of democracy and believe in the people. Mudde phrased the critique on the instrumental school poignantly: although the instrumental school of defining populism is widespread and "seems to have some intrinsic value", the features it describes "facilitate rather than define populism" (Mudde: 2004: 543, 545). Mudde suggests using other terms for the instruments that populists use, like demagogy or opportunism (idem: 543). This creates conceptual clarity, as the term populism currently refers both to a set of political instruments with a negative connotation, and more content-focussed definitions of populism.

So one argument against the instrumental school would be that it hinders conceptual clarity by using populism to refer to two concepts. A second major problem of the instrumental definition is that populism becomes so broad and refers to so many different actors, that it loses all meaning. Pierre Rosanvallon has argued that populism in this sense is a worthless container

concept, with little conceptual value (2008: 267). According to him, many 'mainstream' politicians also use these instruments, which means that populism no longer refers to a useful and distinct category of politicians. The conceptual inflation created by the instrumental definition of populism is one of the reasons why scholars have moved away from creating a single definition and towards studying subtypes of populism (Canovan, 1982: 550-551 and Rosanvallon, 2008: 266-267). The challenge of defining populism is that the definition is either to narrow, and excludes important parties, or so broad it loses all meaning, as is the case with the instrumental definition.

Still, the literature on 'populist' instruments is widespread and shows us that a clear link exists between populist parties and certain instruments. It is undeniable that populist often use a certain demagogic style and a certain mobilisation technique. As Mudde argues, these features should not define populism, even if they facilitate it (2004: 545). The fact that populists often start out as outsiders, or at least lay claim to the outsider role, also partly explains the instruments of choice. Being, or pretending to be, outsiders, limits their options for mobilisation and style, and incentivises them to use certain techniques. This is why populism has so often been linked to a certain political way of acting. If populism is defined as a conception of democracy, the frequent use of these features can even partly be explained by this underlying conception of democracy, which lends itself to a specific style. The view of the people as the ultimate and infallible sovereign fits well with demagogy and appeals to this people as a pure and illegitimately restricted whole.

The ideology school

The main school of thought in European studies of populism is the ideological definition of populism. This school looks at the content of what populists say, and tries to construct a definition of populism based around their policy preferences. One of the most important proponent of this school is Cas Mudde (2004). Before looking at his definition, a quick side path is necessary to consider what an ideology actually is.

Ideologies are value systems that can be used to frame and order political, but also socio-economic or religious-cultural events. The most common examples given are liberalism and Marxism, as two integrated, all-encompassing frames. An ideology enables one to structure reality into a hierarchical overview, which shows the respective importance of different issues. Freeden has famously introduced the term thin ideology to refer to nationalism, as it is not quite an actual ideology, but does display several aspects of one (1998: 751). Thin ideologies are not all-encompassing but rather focus on a specific aspect of life, which is elevated and given an

important place within the overarching frame of the actual ideology that surrounds the thin ideology. For example, one can be nationalist, but that does not exclude the possibility of one being Marxist or conservative (Stanley, 2008: 99-100). For populism, a similar case is made: there are socialist as well as neoliberal populists.

Mudde defines populism as an 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 (Mudde, 2004: 543). This definition is thus centred around the antagonistic relation between two single identities, the people[2] and the elite. Mudde explains that populism is thus the opposite of both elitism and pluralism, as it views the people as a whole, in contrast to pluralism, and views this single people as pure, in contrast to elitism (idem: 543-544). For Mudde, the people is linked to an imagined heartland, which explains that the people is a "mythical sub-set of the whole population" (idem: 546). This people is always right, and their consciousness, which is referred to as common sense, is the basis for good politics (idem: 547).

Mudde's definition of populism as an ideology is rather influential. In a summary of the current debate on populism by Christine Deiwiks from 2009, she states that a consensus has been reached on at least two core principles of the populist ideology (8). These two core principles are an emphasis on the people and on an anti-group. This is close to Mudde's definition, but there are two significant differences. Firstly, Deiwiks' summary loses the antagonistic relationship between the people and the anti-group. An emphasis on both says nothing about the relation between the two, although the term anti-group has some implications. Secondly, and most importantly, while Mudde talks of an elite that contrasts with the people, Deiwiks explicitly states that the anti-group does not need to be the elite. Depending on the ideology of the populists, different groups in society can be singled out as the anti-group.

The ideological definition is very close to the proposed definition. In fact, the two core principles that Deiwiks distinguishes, are two of the four facets of the proposed definition. Mudde is correct in arguing that populism is the opposite of pluralism and elitism. Deiwiks point that the people are opposed by an anti-group that does not need to be the elite is an important improvement on Mudde, as for instance the anti-group of many current populists in Europe is the Muslim immigrant population.

---

[2] Interestingly, Mudde uses the term 'people' as a plural term, referring for instance to 'the people that are'. However, in this thesis the populist logic is followed, referring to the people as a singular entity, i.e. 'the people is'.

That being said, the ideological definition is not quite right, because it is incomplete. Populists share more than just these two features. Mudde acknowledges this to some extent, as he claims that the populists consider common sense to be the basis of proper politics. Here, Mudde is closing in on the proposed view of populism, as a conception of democracy. Surely, for a conception of democracy, the view of the people is crucial, as is explained in the second part of this chapter. While Mudde is right that the view of the people of populism contrasts with elitism and pluralism, populists also share certain implications of this view of the people, like the inalienability and unrestricted nature of the sovereign power that originates in the people. In Mudde's articles, one can read clues for this: he routinely refers to the "wishes of the people" and notes that plebiscitary instruments are populist amendments to the representative system (2004: 547 and 562). Both these claims fit well within the narrative constructed by the proposed definition, that is expanded in the second part of this chapter.

There is a second critique, that resembles Mudde's critique of the instrumental school that is mentioned above. Why would one call populism an ideology, 'thin-centred' or otherwise (Mudde, 2004: 544)? Populism is not an all-encompassing framework of values that enables one to structure reality. Mudde himself argues that it isn't and contrasts it with pluralism and elitism. One would assume, then, that pluralism and elitism are ideologies as well. Instead of saying populism is a thin-centred ideology, it is simpler and less confusing to recognise it as something else. If contrasted with pluralism and elitism, it would be a view of the people, but populism is much more. It is a conception of democracy, that should be contrasted with representative democracy. Populism denotes a specific view of the sovereign (the people) and features of this sovereign, both as an entity and as a source of power.

The pathology school

Almost every definition of populism also has a normative aspect, valuing populism either positively or negatively. However, some author focus very much on this normative question, often looking at the relationship between populism and democracy. These scholars make up the last two schools: the pathology school and the safety valve school. The analyses of the relation between populism and democracy are not dissimilar, but the normative understanding of populism is diametrically opposed to each other. The reason for this curious difference of opinion is that, like populism, democracy is a contested concept, which can be understood and valued in different ways.

The most influential scholar that considers populism to be the normal pathology of representative democracy, is Paul Taggart. He defines populism using six features it may exhibit, which are:

1. A call for better governance
2. A linkage to the heartland
3. A lack of core values
4. A reaction to a sense of crisis
5. Reluctantly political
6. Highly versatile, dependent on circumstances
   (Taggart, 2002: 66-70).

The first point refers to the populist challenge to the representative features of representative democracy. However, populists do not necessarily argue for more direct democracy or more complete representation, but for "a greater linkage of the masses to elites" (Taggart, 2002: 67). The second feature solves the conceptual problems surrounding the people, as it is often unclear who this term refers to (for example Canovan, 1982: 550-551; Betz, 1993: 422; Mudde, 2004: 545). For Taggart, 'the people' refers to those that inhabit the imaginary, idealistic and romanticised heartland. To deal with the ideological inconsistency of populists, the third feature is added. This is a common notion, that relates back to the thin-centred ideology school (for example Canovan, 1982: 552; Canovan, 1999: 11; Mudde, 2004: 561-562). For Taggart, the core values of populism are contextual, depending on the environment in which it surfaces. This relates to the fourth feature, which states that populism is inherently reactionary. Populism surfaces in reaction to a sense of crisis, regardless of whether this sense is justified. Populist leaders always are (or pretend to be) reluctantly political, as they frame themselves as alternatives for the establishment which is unable to deal with the crisis at hand, as seen in the fifth feature. Finally, the sixth feature argues that just as the core values of populism are contextual, so is the organisation and form.

Taggart attempted to create a definition that does not only encompass all variants of populism, but also all possible definitions of populism. His definition envelops the thin-centred ideology definition with the third feature, and the instrumental definitions in the sixth. Taggart's analysis of the relation between populism and representation is astute and relevant. However, his definition has so many features and many of them are quite vague. In practise, definitions like this are not usable in the empirical (Deiwiks, 2009: 2). Conceptualising each feature in a

measurable way is nearly impossible. This type of definition has appeal, because it seems intricate and all-encompassing, but in reality it becomes unclear and unwieldy.

Taggart adds another relevant feature to defining populism: he claims that populism is a phenomenon that surfaces when certain conditions are met. These conditions are quite vague on the one hand, because populism surfaces through a sense of crisis, regardless of whether this perceived crisis is real or what this crisis entails (Taggart, 2002: 69). On the other hand, Taggart links the rise of populism to a sense that the established political parties are unable to solve this crisis, and a rejection of the representative features of representative democracy (idem: 67 and 70). According to Taggart, populism is a necessary result of the representative system. Populism is the logical reaction to the aristocratic or pragmatic restrictions on the democratic. When people, either citizens or politicians, are disillusioned by the reality of the political, they lose faith and become embittered (idem: 69). This results in attempts to 'restore' politics to the 'right' path, in which they try to recapture the pure politics of a presumed past (idem: 67-68). In the populist discourse nuance becomes indecision, compromise becomes catering to partisan interests and those who are not on board become saboteurs. Populism is the 'normal pathology' of democracy, as it stems from tensions inherent in the system (idem: 80). There is no real solution, according to most authors, but to battle the symptoms of democracies pathology. Populism cannot be prevented, but populist parties or leaders can be cured. How this should be achieved is a field in itself, where academics and politicians work together. The pathology school tries to understand the appeal of populism, and tries to map who votes for it, in order to keep these people from becoming enticed by populists. Before considering the value of this normative approach, it's opposite is considered.

The safety valve school

Working from the same premise that populism is a necessary result of inherent tensions in the democratic system, the safety valve school comes to the opposite evaluation of populism. They consider it a necessary and healthy impulse to correct the unsavoury tendencies of representative democracy (for example Mudde, 2004: 542). When a democratic society focusses solely on rules and minority protection, slowly taking power away from the people, populists exploit the situation by appealing directly to the people. This causes the establishment to react, thereby achieving the double goal of shifting focus back to the redemptive side, and making the populists redundant. Just as populism is created inevitably by the system it criticises, its criticism invariably leads its own demise in the end. Scholars on this side of the debate are less afraid of populism, as

they see it as a safety valve that is activated when too much pressure is built up and closes again when the pressure is released.

This school became influential in the 1980's in Western-Europe, especially in France (Houwen, 2013: 53). Instead of defining populism as a thin-centred ideology or political instruments, this school looks, like the pathology school, at the relation between populism and democracy. Following Ernesto Laclau, an Argentinian philosopher, populism is not only an aspect of liberal democracies, but of politics in general (Laclau, 2007: 167). He defines populism as a result of the antagonistic relation between the people and the elite, and sees populism as a corrective impulse to prevent the elites from disregarding the people. However, Laclau's definition is not widely accepted, as it again makes the concept too vague for concrete analysis (Houwen, 2013: 53). Even if his specific definition is not widely used in the field, the logic of the antagonistic relation and populism as a corrective impulse does have its merits.

Chantal Mouffe is one of the most important scholars that follow a similar logic. In her renowned book *On the Political*, Mouffe explains that the contemporary focus on consensus is unhealthy for democracy and the political (2005). She claims that consensus is unattainable and dangerous, as it limits the possibility to disagree in a legitimate fashion. The danger is that the relation between certain groups in society becomes antagonistic and hostile, because of the focus on consensus. Her solution to this problem is to implement agonistic relations, which means viewing those with different opinions not as enemies, but as opponents. This ensures the legitimate and peaceful struggle for power.

The normative approaches

How is it possible that working from the same logic, these two schools come to opposite normative evaluations of populism? The reason for this is the same reason why many scholars argue that populism cannot be defined as a single phenomenon: it refers back to essentially contested concepts like democracy and the people (Houwen, 2013: 77). While the analysis that populism has a conceptual relation to these terms is correct, the notion that populism cannot be defined is not. The main difference between Taggart and Mudde in their appreciation of populism lies in these contested concepts, which they value differently. Mudde sees populism as a healthy impulse to a sick system, while Taggart sees it as a sickness of a healthy system.

This thesis does not argue that one or the other is the right, but instead wants to point to the normative differences as a clue for a new understanding of populism. Both the pathology school and the safety valve school make interesting contributions to the study of populism, but their

disagreement points to the fundamental issue of populism. Houwen, and many with him, might argue that the fact that populism refers back to essentially contested concepts invalidates any overarching definition because the concepts populism refers to can have different meanings over time. The claim made in this thesis is that populism can be defined *because* of these contested concepts. Populism is a way to understand, define and value concepts like democracy and the people.

What all the current definitions that have been examined in this chapter have in common, is that they define populism in relation to representative politics or democracy. Many of the points they have made over the years are correct: populism is reluctantly political, it can have many different ideologies, and is focussed on the relation between the people and the elite. However, none of them have been able to confidently explain populism as a whole, because they could not rise above the contested concepts that are so fundamentally important to populism. In the next part of this chapter, this problem is reversed. Our understanding of populism is not limited by the contested concepts, but populism is considered as a way to define these concepts. Populism is one of the possible conceptions of democracy and the people, just like representative democracy. This method implies that populism should not be explained or understood as an aspect of representative democracy, but rather as a separate and equally valid way to deal with the same contested concepts.

1.2. Defining democracy

Inherent tensions

Populism is often explained from inherent tensions in democracy. Most commonly, this is done using what Koen Abts and Stefan Rummens have called the two-strand logic (2007). In this view, democracy in constantly pulled in opposite directions by two strands within itself. One strand is populism, but the second strand can be any number of things: representation (Bobbio, 1987; Hayward 1996; Taggart, 2002; 2004), pragmatism (Canovan, 1999), constitutionalism (Canovan, 1999; 2002; 2004; Habermas, 1998; Mény and Surel, 2002; Papadopoulos, 2002) and liberalism (Abts and Rummens, 2007). The logic is that constitutional or liberal democracy consists of two pillars or strands, each with its own logic: a constitutional and democratic pillar (Abts and Rummens, 2007: 409-410). These logics are incompatible, which creates tensions within the system. Populists are a direct result of these tensions, and as is discussed above, can either be hailed as a welcome corrective or seen as a dangerous destabilising impulse.

Absts and Rummens argue against the prevalent two strands logic by pointing to two major problems. Firstly, the scholars working with this model "fail to provide a coherent account of democracy and are unable to decide, for instance, whether democracy is about the will of the majority or the inclusion of the interests of all citizens" (Abts and Rummens, 2007: 412). While working with highly contested concepts, the scholars are unable or unwilling to define the underlying concepts, which makes it impossible to come to a consensus regarding populism. Think back to Houwen's claim that populism is indefinable, as it refers to these same contested concepts. As stated in the earlier in this chapter, and in line with Abts and Rummens, the response in this thesis is that a definition of populism should not be dependent on a certain understanding of these contested concepts, but rather that populism itself is a way to understand these concepts.

Secondly, Abts and Rummens show that it is problematic to make populism the embodiment of the democratic pillar, as not every democratic movement is populist (2007: 412). The solution Abts and Rummens propose is called the model of three logics, in which populism, democracy and liberalism all have a distinct logic, which together create the political system we call democracy. Although Abts and Rummens make an interesting case, they do not go far enough. The most important point they borrow from Claude Lefort is that in a democracy, the sovereign is an empty space (idem: 413). Comparing democracy to a medieval monarchy, the meaning of this becomes clear: in the monarchy, the king or queen is the physical embodiment of the God-given sovereignty, while in a democracy, the sovereignty stems from the people and through elections the locus of power can be filled temporarily, but never for a longer time (idem).

The democratic logic enables us to fill the locus temporarily, and allows for government (Abts and Rummens, 2007: 413-414). The liberal logic, at the same time, ensure individual rights to protect the individual against the tyranny of the majority. If this logic degenerates, the unity of the people dissolves into a purely diverse society that is unrepresentable (idem: 414). At the same time, the populist logic fills the locus of power and closes of the image of the people into a homogeneous body, thereby removing the legitimacy of opposition. One of the main problems with Abts' and Rummens' argument is their bias against the populist logic. They refuse to look beyond the closing of the locus of power. This also follows from the second major problem with their argument: they still define populism as an thin-centered ideology that follows from constitutional democracy (idem: 408).

Given that they state that populism "does not provide a comprehensive vision of society", their claim that it is an ideology is weakened by themselves (Abts and Rummens, 2007: 408).

Moreover, the way they define the ideology states that it concerns the structure of power in society (idem). The final evidence that Abts and Rummens move toward the notion of defining populism as a conception of democracy, is that they explain that populism and populistic democracy are interchangeable terms in this paper. Their definition comes very close to the proposed definition in this thesis. Does the difference boil down to only the label used to refer to populism? No, because by defining populism as an ideology, it remains an feature of democracy for Abts and Rummens. Populism is a degenerative form of the logic of sovereignty of the people, instead of an alternate but equally valid conception of democracy.

Representative democracy

In order to understand how populism differentiates from 'common' democracy, it is important to determine what that entails. The paper by Abts and Rummens provides an interesting starting point. They explain that they use the terms democracy, constitutional democracy and representative democracy interchangeably (2007: 407). For them, democracy is and should be constitutional and representative. Starting from the two features of representative democracy Abts and Rummens focus on, constitutionalism and representation, the concept is defined by looking at four main facets of this conception of democracy. This means that no complete definition of representative democracy is attempted in this thesis, because it is neither necessary nor feasible. The four facets are just a sample of the possible features of representative government, but they are the features that most distinguish this system from a populist democracy.

The first facet of representative democracy is one that Abts and Rummens see as so fundamental that they refer to democracy by this prefix: constitutionalism. Of course, Abts and Rummens are not alone in pointing to the fundamental importance of constitutions for representative democracy (Canovan, 1999; 2002; 2004; Riker, 1982; Urbinati, 1998). From this point of view, the sovereign people is bound by law, specifically the constitution (Hampshire, 2013: 7). This means that even though the people is nominally sovereign, this sovereignty is not limitless. The rationale behind constitutions is that although the people should be sovereign, it is also capricious. In this view, certain values (such as the inherent equality of individuals) or certain institutions (such as the independent judiciary) should be protected from the whims of the people. Even though the people is sovereign and might at some point wants to change these institutions, it has bound its own sovereignty to protect these valuable and fragile foundations of society.

Scholars do not just contrast populism with the constitutional facet of democracy, but also with the representative facet (Bobbio, 1987; Hayward, 1996; Mény and Surel, 2002; Taggart, 2002;

2004). Representation is enabled by the notion that sovereignty in representative government is transferable. This means that even though the people is sovereign, it can and should transfer this sovereignty to certain individuals or institutions (Manin, 1997: 116-117 and 236-238). In representative government, transferring takes the form of elections, in which certain members of society run against each other in competition, currently through the filter of political parties. These elections amount to the transferal of sovereignty from the people to the representatives, who are allowed to use it for a predetermined period of time, while formally keeping the locus of power empty (Abts and Rummens, 2007: 413). Effectively, they are limited by public opinion and the wish to be re-elected after their term is over (e.g.: Manin, 1997: 175-183). However, formally they are only restricted by the law, as we have seen in the first facet.

The third facet of is directly linked to the second: sovereignty is transferable, because it is also divisible. This also relates back to the first facet, because the main function of the constitution is to defend the institutions that divide the sovereignty. Lefort, and with him Abts and Rummens, refer to this as the liberal logic of representative democracy (Abts and Rummens, 2007: 413; Lefort, 1988: 232–233; see also Rosanvallon, 2008). To ensure that the locus of power remains empty, that no single force can seize control of this locus, and to protect the individual rights of citizens against the tyranny of the people as a whole, sovereignty is divided into different institutions. By separating legislation, execution and jurisdiction, sovereignty is divided in such a way that it becomes impossible for any one entity to rule by itself.

The fourth notion is not a facet of sovereignty as such, but of the people. The people is considered to be pluralistic, that is, build up from several overlapping groups (Chambers and Carver, 2007; Dahl, 2000; Lefort, 1988: 18-19). These groups are in constant flux, and they strive for power for themselves (Mouffe, 2005). However, this strive is well-natured, civilised, and explicitly non-violent. A certain amount of conflict, especially agonistic conflict, is not just acceptable, but vital for the survival of the pluralist state. There is no general will that is ever true for the entire people at once, as the people is not a single entity. Several parties can share power, and even the parties in opposition hold a legitimate position, with the right and duty to voice their views on behalf of those they represent (Dahl, 2000: 52-53). In representative government, a major part of this political conflict takes the form of elections, where parties try to win as much seats as possible, by promising benefits for certain groups. All these parties are legitimate and all share in the sovereignty that is divided through elections. Some political systems, like the Anglo-Saxon first past the post elections, do limit the extent to which sovereignty is divided, but fundamentally, the opposition still holds power in a legitimate way.

The scholars that use one of these facets of representative democracy in contrast to populism, are not wrong. However, populism cannot be explained or understood by contrasting it with any one of these facets. Instead, it should be contrasted with the larger whole of all these facets combined. These facets together create a partial definition of a conception of democracy, which is referred to as representative democracy. By contrasting populism with the entire conception of democracy, instead of the individual facets, the perspective on populism itself shifts. Populism is no longer a corrective or degeneration of a certain logic *within* the conception of democracy, but it is a separated and coherent conception of democracy. Looking at the literature, the content of this populist conception of democracy can be reconstructed, just as the representative conception of democracy has been reconstructed.

Populist democracy

Just as its representative counterpart, the populist conception of democracy also views the people as sovereign, but is distinctly different in how it views the sovereign. In fact, the populist view of the sovereign comes down to an alternative to the representative view. It mirrors the four facets, but with a different content. So, firstly, populism rejects the notion of constitutionalism (Abts and Rummens, 2007: 408; Canovan, 1999; Mény and Surel, 2002: 10-11; Papadopoulos, 2002). For populists, the sovereign people is unbounded by any laws, because its sovereignty is unlimited. The very notion of a law that binds the sovereign is nonsensical to the populist, because nothing can exist above the sovereign. If the people is the only or ultimate source of legitimate power, nothing can hold power over the people. This of course does not mean that *people* are unbounded by law, only that *the people* is unbounded. So, based on the theory, it is expected that each of the populist parties considers the will of the people to be unrestricted by the law.

Mirroring the second facet of representative democracy, populistic democracy rejects the notion of representation (Bobbio, 1987; Hayward, 1996; Mény and Surel, 2002; Taggart, 2002; 2004). Sovereignty is not transferable, or as it is more commonly phrased, sovereignty is an inalienable aspect of the people (Rousseau, 1923 [1762]: 83). If sovereignty is not transferable, that means representation becomes impossible. This is not to say that populists want every individual to participate in governing. Nadia Urbinati explains in detail the difference between the representative from the current system and the delegate that fits with the populist notion of sovereignty (2006: 63). Representatives are elected to do what they deem appropriate and can usually not be dismissed in the meantime, unless they violate laws or rules. Delegates are selected to do the bidding of the people, in that they are only allowed to realise predetermined policy. At

any time, the people can revoke them, because the delegates do not hold sovereignty themselves, but only act as a broker of the people. The populist parties are thus expected to reject representation.

The delegate system is necessary and possible because, thirdly, sovereignty is indivisible (Rousseau, 1923[1762]: Book II chapter II). The single will of the people exists and guides society as it becomes known (Canovan, 2002: 34). For populists, discussion is acceptable until the general will becomes known, but after that point any opposition or difference of opinion becomes illegitimate (Canovan, 2002: 34; Taggart, 2000: 91–95; Urbinati, 1998: 116–118). The people is sovereign, and the sovereign is one. How this general will becomes known, depends on the institutionalisation the populist suggests. For many of them, it is through direct democracy, but for others it is simply something that is known intuitively by all who care to hear it (Abts and Rummens, 2007: 407). In the latter case, the populist leader often voices the general will, and the dictatorial tendencies of populism become clear. Based this, the populist party are expected to consider the people to be a single indivisible entity.

The last notion is one of the most contested and potentially dangerous notions of the populist conception of democracy: populism considers the people to be homogeneous (Canovan, 1999; 2005: 94-96; Taggart, 2000). There is a core element that all members of the people share, which makes them one. This shared feature can be ethnical or cultural, but whatever the criteria of selection, it is a hard line: one either belongs to the people, or one does not. Since the people is sovereign and one, only those that belong to the people can have legitimate political rights (Canovan, 1981; 1999; 2002; Laclau, 1979; 2005; Mény and Surel, 2002a; Mudde, 2004; Stavrakakis, 2004; Taggart, 2000). This logic also works the other way around: since the people are one, only those that agree belong to the people. Obviously, this is more dangerous if the populist holds an ethnic view of the people. Those that view membership as a cultural affair are more open to becoming a member, even if they still consider those that are not part of the people as irrelevant. This homogeneity leads to the expectation that the populist parties reject the legitimacy of one or more anti-groups.

As with representative democracy, this definition of populist democracy in four facets stems from the extensive literature on the subject. All the scholars that contrast populism with one of the facets of representative democracy, and that therefore focus on the opposing populist facet, point to an important part of populism. However, these facets should not be seen as individual, unconnected features. One might argue that the rejection of representation is more important than the notion of the indivisible people, but these facets are so firmly connected and depended

on one another, that such a claim is hard to defend. The facets overlap and support each other. In the next chapter, these facets are conceptualized to make them testable.

2. Method

In this chapter, the research design is first explained, and then defended. The first part of the chapter is dedicated to the "what": what cases and sources are examined with what method? When these questions have been answered, alternatives are considered and the chosen method is defended. Populism can be studied in many different ways, but it depends on the type of question that is asked, which of these research designs is to be used.

2.1.   How is it done?

What cases are examined?

For this thesis, six cases are used to test the expectations. The cases are selected based on their geographical and ideological spread. As it is impossible to show that all populists *can* be defined with the proposed definition, the aim of this thesis is to show that they *could* be defined this way. The sheer amount of populist parties makes careful consideration of each one impossible, but through the case selection, a sample is taken which encompasses parties from different continents and different ideological positions. This way it is shown that the definition can explain populism, regardless of these two factors, which are the main obstacles for an overarching definition of populism so far.

The original research design considered only four parties, from the two continents with the largest scholarly interest in populism: Europe and Latin-America. As the research coincided with the presidential election in the USA, and to strengthen the overarching claim of the proposed definition, a candidate for president was added for both the Republican Party and the Democratic party. The fact that both parties had a nominee that is considered populist, one of which not only won the candidacy for his party, but also the actual presidential election, piqued the interest of political commentators and scholars around the world. The major differences between the two candidates raised additional question about the label 'populist'. This is considered to be a perfect example of the limitations of the current use of the term populist, which is why both candidates have been added to the study.

From Europe, the right-wing *Partij voor de Vrijheid* (Freedom Party/PVV) and the left-wing *Podemos* (We Can/no abbreviation) have been selected. The Dutch PVV is considered right-wing populist, although it has rather left-wing socio-economic plans (Parlement & Politiek, 02-12-

2016). This party was founded in 2006, after Wilders left the large right-wing *Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie* (People's Party for Freedom and Democracy/VVD). Podemos is a Spanish political party that was founded in 2014, and came from the anti-austerity movement 15-M. From the start, this party espouses left-wing socio-economic points of view and has been considered populist (Mudde, 2016: 141). It is led by the political scientist Pablo Iglesias, which is noteworthy, as populism has a tendency to have a problematic relationship with the intellectual elite.

North-America is represented by two nominees for presidential candidate for the two major parties, the Republican Party and the Democratic Party, Donald Trump and senator Bernard "Bernie" Sanders. Donald Trump is the current president of the USA and has taken office on January 20, 2017. He ran a campaign on behalf of the Republican Party that focussed on keeping out immigrants, both economic immigrants from Mexico and refugees from the Middle-East, and defending the right to bear arms (Becker, 2016). During his campaign he also moved towards the orthodox-Christian side of the Republican spectrum. Trump can thus be described as culturally right-wing. On economics, his most important issue is reversing Obama-care, which is a mandatory insurance program designed to insure the poor. Revoking this policy alone qualifies Trump as right-wing, although he does have some leftish tendencies on socio-economic issues. Trump is considered populist by many commentators (Kazin, 2016). Senator Sanders ran against Hilary Clinton for the position of presidential candidate for the Democrats. He is quite atypical for an USA politician, as he is a self-proclaimed socialist (Dreier, 2016). Sanders spoke out in favour of LGTB-rights, against racism, wanted free education and healthcare, and can thus be described as left-wing, in the USA even radical left-wing. He is often considered a populist by journalists and political commentators (Kazin, 2016). The candidates are only considered as candidates for presidential candidate, so only their electoral program for this election is taken into account. Action president Trump has taken as president are disregarded, just as any earlier statements of senator Sanders.

Finally Latin-America is represented on the left-wing by the *Partido Socialista Unido de Venezuela* (The United Socialist Party of Venezuela/PSUV) The PSUV has a long history in Venezuela, even though it was founded in 2007. It was preceded by the Fifth Republic Movement, and both are coalitions of groups that supported the Bolivarian Revolution which established the constitution of 1999. It was led by Hugo Chávez until his death. It is a socialist and Bolivarian movement, interpreting the anti-imperialist thoughts of the Latin-American hero Bolivar in a socialist light. It is thus left-wing, and generally considered populist by both political

commentators and scholars (Panizza and Miorelli, 2009: 39). The right-wing is a different matter. There is only one strong example of right-wing populism in Latin-America, which is the Peruvian party *Cambio 90 – Nueva Mayorita* (Change 90 – New Majority/NM), led by Alberto Fujimori. This party no longer exists and is a little older than the other cases – it was established in 1989 and was in power until 2000. Unfortunately, no electoral programs for this party could be found. The party has been succeeded by a new party, led by Fujimori's daughter Keiko Fujimori, which has similar ideologies, called *Fuerza Popular* (Popular Force/FP). However, this new party is not considered populist. Therefore, a comparison between the two parties is made, in order to show that populism is separate from ideology and other similar superficial factors.

What sources are used?

Following established methods, the sources used are official party documents. This method is used by among others Andrej Zaslove, who is inspired by Mudde (Zaslove, 2011: 13-14). The sources used in this thesis are mainly electoral programs. For the PVV all three available electoral programs are analysed: *Klare Wijn* (Clear Wine,[3] 2006), *Agenda van Hoop en Optimisme* (Agenda of Hope and Optimism, 2010) and *Hun Brussel, Ons Nederland* (Their Brussels, Our Netherlands, 2012). For Podemos, the two only available electoral programs are analysed which are both from 2016: *20PROPUESTAS para desbloquear la situación política y posibilitar un Gobierno de cambio* (20 PROPOSITIONS for unblocking the political situation and enabling a government of change) and *26J*. Here we already see an unfortunate trend. Apart from the PVV, other parties remove the links to older electoral documents, and there often is no institute that allows access to these electoral programs online.

This was especially problematic for Latin-America, where hardly any electoral programs were available. For the PSUV, other official party documents are used, such as the *Estatutos Del Partido Socialista Unido De Venezuela* (Statutes of the United Socialist Party of Venezuela), the *Declaración De Principios* (Declaration of Principles) and the *Bases Programáticas Del Partido Socialista Unido De Venezuela* (Basis of the Program of the United Socialist Party of Venezuela). As mentioned above, the electoral programs for NM were not found, but through contacting several Latin-American scholars via Cristóbal Kaltwasser, a selection of speeches for Peruvian businessmen by Alberto Fujimori were located. Although no speeches were used for the other cases, an exception is made for this case, as no other sources are available. For FP, the electoral program from 2016, *Plan De*

---

[3] *Klare Wijn* literally means clear wine, but should be understood as "speaking the truth". It is a saying in Dutch to pour clear wine, meaning that one speaks the unadulterated truth.

Gobierno De Fuerza Popular (Governmental Plan of Popular Force), is used, as no older program are available.

For the USA only the electoral programs from 2016 are used, as both cases are only considered as candidates for president, regardless of earlier political actions. They did not have traditional party programs, but both used websites with several issues that outlined their proposed policies. Sanders' website is called: *On the Issues*: https://berniesanders.com/issues/ and Trump's site: *Make America Great Again:* https://www.donaldjtrump.com/. Both sites have been checked throughout 2016, but Trump has redesigned his website since his election, so that it no longer shows his issues.

What method is used?

In order to test the theoretical assumptions, the party documents are read in their original language. Instead a using fully formed coding sheet, statements that relate to the four facets of democracy are collected for each party and marked as either corroborating the expectation or defying it. The facets follow from the theory, and are:

- *Each of the six cases considers the will of the people to be unrestricted by the law.*

- *Each of the six cases rejects the notion of representation.*

- *Each of the six cases considers the people to be indivisible.*

Each of the six cases denies the legitimacy of one or more anti-groups.

After all documents have been examined, the results are regrouped, based on similar types of phrases that are found in the documents. Each facet is broken down into three aspects, which arise not from the theory, but from the empirical. For the first facet, the notion of the unrestricted sovereign, the results are fell mainly in three categories: a general dislike of rules, unconstitutional or unrealistic policies and the rejection of the separation of power. For the second facet, the rejection of representation, the three categories that could be constructed based on the results are: an appeal to power of the people, a blueprint of democracy and the rejection of representative politics. For the third facet, which relates to the indivisible people, the phrases could be grouped in people versus citizens, rejection of partisan interests and an emphasis on shared culture. Finally, the fourth facet concerns the anti-group, and is broken down into a discussion of the different types of anti-group that the parties acknowledge, the financial and

cultural thread these anti-groups present for the people. So while the facets follow from the theory, the aspects in which the phrases are presented follow inductively from the empirical.

This iterative category creation is typical for qualitative content analysis (Bryman, 2008: 531). In a quantitative research design, this would not be acceptable, as the research is meant to test specific hypothesis against the empirical (idem: 274). Qualitative content analysis instead follows the empirical to a larger extent. However, the general expectation have been arrived at through theory and are not open for alteration through the empirical: the facets of democracy which are expected to be found in all cases are theoretically constructed in the chapter before. A qualitative analysis merely allows for the divergence in context, which makes it hard (or impossible) to create a coding schedule that fits all parties as would be required by a quantitative analysis.

This approach has benefits and downsides, but ultimately suits the aim of this thesis best (Bryman, 2008: 529-531). Aside from the contextual needs of the research design that qualitative content analysis provides a solution for, there is a second important reason to choose qualitative over quantitative analysis: no attempt is made to generalise certain results, or to show a correlation between variables. Instead, the empirical is meant to show the readers that the proposed definition is better suited to encompass populism than current definitions. Since no single definition of populism exists, there is no ultimate benchmark that can be used to determine whether a party or movement is populist. Instead, in this thesis, it is the other way around: the definition is tested on the empirical, and the parties used to test are selected because there is little discussion about them being populist.[4]

An example of the possibilities of this method might be due. In earlier research, the author studied radical right-wing populists in Western-Europe (Visscher, 2013). In the course of this research, the same definition of populism was tested, and one of the benchmarks was that the parties considered populists were expected to be in favour of direct democracy and popular referenda. However, to the initial surprise of the author, the *Schweizerische Volkspartei* (Swiss People's Party/SVP) spoke out against the use of referenda. Due to the careful analysis that qualitative content analysis demands and facilitates, the reason became clear: the Swiss use so many referenda that they start to impede the possibilities to act. The party claimed that most people who vote were not part of the people, but of the urban elite.

---

[4] The (semi-)consensus can be seen both through the overwhelming number of academic studies that designate the chosen parties as populist, as by the fact that all of them are called populist in their Wikipedia-entries (Bos, 2013; Inglehart, 2016; Kay, 1996; Kessel, 2011; Savage, 2014; Schimdt, 2000; Vossen, 2010; Waisbord, 2011). While Wikipedia obviously is not an accepted academic source, it is a source that is edited by an international community and resembles an general consensus.

2.2.   Why is it done this way?

Why not use another method?

The methods that have been used to study populism until now have mainly been one of two types. The first type, which has already received some attention, is the more quantitative, more statistical analysis. This often coincides with an interest in the causes of populism, whether they are on the macro level, such as the history or socio-economic state in a country, or on the micro level, in which case they focus on different aspects of the constituents that vote for populist parties (e.g. Checchi, 1996; Leon, 2014). The quantitative method is considered valuable, but fundamentally looks at a different type of question than this thesis does. No causal relation, or correlation, is established in this thesis, so there is little need for the numerical safety that quantitative studies claim. Also, no general rule is put forward, so there is no reason to generalize the results. The claim is simply that the proposed definition is able to do something no other definition has been able to do: cross the boundaries of (geographical) space and ideological placement.

However, there is a second issue with these quantitative methods. From the point of view of this thesis, they are premature. Of course it is valuable to know when populism is likely to arise, or who is drawn to the populist movements, but until we know *what populism is*, there is little point in proving when it arises, or who partakes in it. It could even be considered problematic to stigmatise certain people as potential populist followers, as long as populism is as misunderstood and demonised as it is today. If we know when populism arises, without knowing what it is, what does that mean for the political purpose of this knowledge? It might be that populism arises in times of economic hardship, but does that somehow undermine its legitimacy? So while the questions quantitative research ask are important, it has to be noted that without knowing what populism is, these questions are anywhere between relatively worthless and potentially dangerous.

The second type of research is qualitative. It has a close resemblance to historical papers, in which a single case of populism is taken and analysed in its national context (e.g. Van Kersbergen and Krouwel, 2008). This case is then argued to be either typical or atypical, depending on the findings and the point the author tries to make. Because so much information has to be taken into account and because the selection process of what information to use is so tricky, this research is typically done by an expert. Such an expert is someone who has or claims the authority over either the country or the party in question. A common variation on this type of

research is a combined study, with several experts all analysing their own country or party, and a shared introduction and conclusion (e.g. Bale et al. 2010).

This thesis veers closer to the last variety, in that several parties are analysed in their respective contexts. A crucial difference is both the point of departure and the goal of the studies. This thesis is an example of theory building, as it uses current definitions, but reinterprets them, creating a new perspective to construct a new definition of populism. The empirical part of the thesis is used to show that this is a valid way to define the concept. Expert studies start from a accepted definition of populism, and make a case about the spread, influence or rise of populism in a certain country. The goal is to explain or understand a well-defined concept on the empirical level, while this thesis operates on the conceptual level. If an expert does attempt a conceptual examination of populism, the problem is that the proposed definition of explains the area of expertise perfectly, but does not hold up in other cases. This thesis starts from a general theoretical discussion of democracy, regardless of the context in which it occurs. In fact, the claim is that populism should be defined in a way that holds up regardless of context. The expert survey is a good method of understanding complex empirical relations and correlations, even if it is not suited well for defining populism.

Why use these sources?

The sources used are official party documents, as mentioned earlier. The reason for this is twofold. Firstly, the official documents are the official statements made by the party, and therefore less bound to the personality of the party leader, which is the case if one uses interviews. A party can claim that something said in an interview was provoked or taken out of context, or even a slip of the tongue of the party leader. For official documents, it is harder to deny or distance the party from the content. Secondly, without this limit, the amount of information would become so large that critical information might be lost or misinterpreted. If, for example, interviews were added, the amount of data collected would be nearly endless, and therefore not suited for the qualitative research design used here. For a quantitative study, a large dataset is less of a problem, as the abstracted and modeled way of interpretation is ideal for analyzing large datasets. It is less suited for more exploratory and contextual research, as is the case in this study. Using newspaper articles or other secondary sources would furthermore have been problematic as this study rejects the more commonplace definitions of populism. Any analysis that is made using those commonplace definitions has relatively little value for the goal of this study.

Why select these cases?

In qualitative content analysis the case selection is vital. As there is a limit to the number of cases that can be examined, the selection has to be more or less perfect. In statistical research case selection is important as well, but the large number of cases can often mitigate the damage if there is a problem in the selection.

The current research on populism is divided in small subfields using their own definitions and data. The theoretical expectation of this thesis is that populism can be defined as a single phenomenon, bringing these subfields together. In order to test this expectation with a select number of cases, the cases should represent not necessarily the population of all populist parties, but the dividing lines between the subfields. Therefore the cases are selected based on two features: their geographical location and their position on the ideological spectrum. The geographical feature is incorporated in the case selection by taking two parties from Europe, Latin-America and North-America each. Africa and Asia are not taken into account because the number of cases needs to be limited and Europe and Latin-America have the most lively debates on populism. North-America is added because of the interesting presidential election which was held during the research.

	Left-wing	Right-wing
Europe	Podemos	PVV
Latin-America	PSUV	NM/FP
North-America	Sanders	Trump

Table 1. *The geographical and ideological spread of the cases.*

The second feature is incorporated by selecting a left-wing and right-wing case for each of the continents in this research. Right-wing populism in Europe is very common place: nearly every country has a party that is considered right-wing populist. Each of these parties could have been taken, whether it would have been the *Alternative für Deutschland* (Alternative for Germany/AfD), the *Schweizerische Volkspartei* (Swiss People's Party/SVP), the *Front National* (National Front/FN) or the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP). The choice for the PVV is party made through convenience, as the author is most acquainted with this party and its context. The PVV is also an established party, while for example the AfD is relatively new. In essence, however, each party could have been chosen, because they all suit the research design by being right-wing populist parties. The expectation is that it would not matter which party is chosen, as are all expected to adhere to the populist conception of democracy.

For the European left-wing, the pool of potential candidates is smaller. There are relatively few left-wing parties of which there is a consensus that they are populist. For instance, parties like the *Bündnis 90/Die Grünen* (Alliance '90-The Greens/Grünen) or the *Socialistische Partij* (Socialist Party/SP) are sometimes considered populist, but not everyone agrees. In the end, only two left-wing parties exist in Europe that everyone agrees on as being populist: Podemos and *Synaspismós Rizospastikís Aristerás* (Coalition of the Radical Left/Syriza). The reason for choosing Podemos becomes clear if the choice for qualitative content analysis is taken into account. In order to use this type of research, it is necessary to read the sources in their original language. Of course, one might use translations, but this is a sub-par option that should be reserved for emergencies. Aside from that, populists hardly ever translate their electoral programs, so if translations would be used, the focus would shift from electoral programs to interviews, which are a less reliable measure and deemed inadequate for the purposes of this study.

Learning Spanish was more or less required by the chosen research design, as Latin-America is considered so crucial it had to be accounted for in the study. As Latin-America (with the exception of Brazil) consists of Spanish-speaking countries, the effort of learning a new language is easily repaid by opening up this entire continent. On this continent, the left-wing populists are plentiful, while the right-wing population is remarkably small. There is only one major right-wing populist party, the NM, so there was no real choice in this regard. For the left-wing, the situation resembles the right-wing populist parties in Europe: almost every country has a left-wing populist party. The PSUV is perhaps the most studied example of left-wing populism in Latin-America, with the possible exception of Peron. However, in the case of Peron the time-difference between the parties would be too large for accurate comparison.

As mentioned earlier, the USA is mainly added because of the extraordinary circumstances of both major parties not only having a populist running for presidential candidate, but these populists actually being a credible adversary for their established counterparts. The fact that both parties simultaneously experienced this populist challenge seemed too good to be left out of the study. So with relatively little extra effort, the expectation that populists all over the world share the same conception of democracy could be tested much more thoroughly. The Tea Party movement from the USA might also be an example of right-wing populism, but it is not a political party. This makes the comparison much more complicated.

In this chapter, the selected method, cases and sources have been explained and defended. Alternatives have been suggested, examined and rejected. Now that we know how the research is done and why it is done this way, it is time to move to the empirical.

3. Content Analysis

So far, this thesis has been theoretical, meaning that a case has been made for a possibility. Populism might be better explained as a conception of democracy, instead of an ideology or style, for several reasons. In political science, if not all sciences, there is a vast gap between what might be and what is, and this gap has proven to be problematic for the study of populism. Several grand unifying theories of populism have been suggested, each more convincing than the next, but none of those fitted properly with the empirical. This, therefore, is the most crucial and exiting part of the study, at the doorstep of this great test.

Structure

In this chapter, the new definition is checked against the empirical, by examining how well the expectations hold up. The expectations are examined per party, to ensure a coherent line of logic. Starting with the PVV, each party is analyzed in turn, on each individual facet of the populist conception of democracy. In order to make the comparison of the different cases more accessible and to allow for the variance caused by the contextual differences, the data is grouped together in groups of statements. These groups are built of quotes or references that all express a certain sentiment. For example, the first expectation that all cases consider the will of the people to be unrestricted by the law, is broken down into a general dislike of bureaucracy, a habit of making unconstitutional claims and a direct attack on the notion of separation of power. While the expectations that structure this chapter have been made before the actual analysis and have thus come about through theory and reasoning, the grouping of statements was inductive. The data was analyzed and then divided into manageable samples, depending on the links that were found in the data itself. The results are analyzed in the final section of the chapter. Here, the structure is reversed, so instead of taking the facets per party, the parties are discussed together per facet.

3.1.   The PVV

The PVV is a right-wing, anti-immigration party from the Netherlands. It is considered a typical European populist party, combining a strict law-and-order program with a nationalistic defense of social security and an emphasis on the Dutch, Judeo-Christian and Enlightenment cultural values in society. It's first party program in 2006 was neoliberal and might even be considered libertarian, but the PVV switched to a more common combination of economic left-wing and cultural right-wing in the following election in 2010.

I.   Unrestricted sovereign

The first facet of populist democracy is the notion of the unrestricted sovereign. The theoretical expectation is that populist parties reject constitutionalism, and consider the will of the people to be unbounded by the limits of the law. The statements of the parties are divided into three categories: a general dislike of rules, violations of the constitution and the rejection of the separation of powers.

Anti-rule sentiment

There are several different ways in which this aspect of populist democratic attitude expresses itself. At the most basic level, one recognizes a certain dislike of rules or procedures in general in most populist parties. For the PVV, with its neoliberal roots, this aspect of the unrestricted sovereignty of the people is quite common. In 2006, the PVV wanted to limit the power of government on any level to increase the freedom of the people to rule themselves (PVV, 2006: 3). Apart from this quite general statement, no other statements fitting this aspect have been found in the 2006 program. However, in 2010 and 2012 several statements present themselves. In 2010 the PVV argues that the police should work harder on catching criminals and give out less tickets (PVV, 2010: 9). In 2012, a similar case is made for a "doing police" instead of a "talking police", followed by the statement "Not too much emphasis on procedures, but simpler ruler, to ensure more blue on the street" (PVV, 2012: 31). Blue is the colour of the Dutch police uniform, and the phrase "more blue on the street" is commonly used to express the desire for more police officers patrolling the streets. The dislike of rules also extents to the economic sector, specifically the largest airport, which should not be hindered by too many rules (PVV 2010: 51 and PVV, 2012: 52).

Now, of course, a dislike of rules is not reserved for populists. Preferring an active police or wanting to skimp on environmental regulations to favor a growing airport are common right-

wing features, while the PVV might find itself supported by the left-wing in trying to defend the Dutch fishers from EU-regulation (PVV, 2010: 55). However, a general and pervasive dislike of rules, regulation and the bureaucracy necessary to support it, is a common feature of populist parties (PVV, 2012: 39).

Unconstitutional suggestions

If we combine the general dislike of rules with the habit of making suggestions that are clearly unconstitutional, we veer closer to the ideal-typical populist. The PVV certainly has a habit of making such claims. Many of these have to do with the unwillingness to allow the Islam the same status as other religions or ideologies (PVV, 2010: 15). The right to establish schools of a specific religious or philosophical denomination is firmly entrenched in the Dutch constitution and the Dutch political history. The PVV stresses their support for this, except when it comes to Islamic schools, which should be banned (PVV, 2010: 29). Not just the Islam as a whole is targeted, but Muslims as a group as well (PVV, 2006: 11). The PVV also attacks of article 1 of the Dutch constitution which encompasses the principle of non-discrimination. The PVV suggested changing this to give more room to freedom of speech and even states that "unequal cases do not have to be treated equal", which in this context is a clear rejection of the first article and basis of the Dutch constitution (PVV, 2006: 10).

A different line of statements is not quite unconstitutional, but more or less meaningless, as they make bold statements about the way the Netherlands should behave in relation to international treaties. In the Netherlands, international treaties supersede national law. The PVV states that no more money will be paid to the UN until the Organization of Islamic Conference formally acknowledges that human rights supersede their national, sharia-based, laws (PVV, 2012: 47). However, this requires a renegotiation with the UN that is not just unlikely, but practically impossible, even if we disregard the coalition forming at the national level that would surely put a stop to this plan. For the statement the a Grexit[5] should happen, a similar logic holds up (PVV, 2012: 12). However, here we also see that a statement that is clearly ridiculous at one time, might become acceptable over the course of a few years.

Rejecting the separation of power

The final aspect of the notion that the people are unrestricted by laws, is the most extreme, and it is therefore not surprising that it is the least common in the PVV electoral programs. This aspect

---

[5] Grexit is the name for the idea that Greece should leave the Eurozone, and go back to using the drachme.

entails the rejection or curtailment of the separation of power. If the people is the ultimate sovereign, the notion of separation of power becomes illogical, as the powers cannot and should not be separated. In the PVV programs, it is most commonly found in the form of attacks on the independent judiciary. This might have two reasons: firstly, the legislative and executive powers are already tied together to some extend in government and parliament in the Dutch system and secondly, the PVV has at several occasions gotten into trouble with the judiciary for statements like the ones in the previous section. The PVV literally states that they wish limit the freedom of judges (PVV, 2010: 9). Other similar quotes often indicate that the judiciary is not truly independent, as the judges are part of the left-wing bulwark (PVV, 2006: 6, 8; 2012: 30). There are not many such quotes, and the PVV does not attack the separation of power directly in different ways. Indirectly, however, they prefer to elect the executive and judiciary branches of government, as is explained in detail under in the next facet of democracy.

II.   Rejection of representation

The second facet of populist democracy is the rejection of representation. In contrast to representative democracy, this is certainly the most prominent difference. The sovereign either is or is not, and sovereignty is not a feature of the people that can be transferred. This facet is found in three different forms: firstly, by referring to the power of the people as the basis or aim of their policy; secondly, they can claim democracy requires involvement of the people or otherwise express the opinion that the current system is not truly democratic; and thirdly, they can flat-out reject representative government.

Power of the people

The core of populist democracy is the notion that the people to be the ultimate sovereign. One would therefore expect quite strong evidence supporting this aspect of the rejection of representative politics. In the electoral programs, this evidence is indeed readily available. Numerous references to the "unchosen", "unelected" or "undemocratic" elites are found in each program, even when talking about for example the EU-parliament, which is elected (PVV, 2006: 4; 2010: 5-6; 2012: 11, 13, 21, 22). These references support the claim made in the thesis by themselves, but read in the right context, the support is even stronger. The PVV uses these labels to discredit certain elites and institutions, such as the European Union. That the PVV takes these allegations seriously becomes clear if we look ahead to the fourth facet of democracy, the anti-group. The PVV views these undemocratic elites as their main anti-group and views the fact that they are undemocratic as their worst feature.

Blueprint for democracy

Traditionally, in the Netherlands, democratic and administrative innovation are championed by the progressive, often left-wing parties. One would not expect a culturally conservative and right-wing party as the PVV to take up this cause. The fact that the PVV strongly argues for this type of innovation shows the problem that arises when one tries to analyze populism through the lens of ideology. The PVV itself explicitly states that traditional party lines are not truly important, as there are only two sides: those that are the current "system" and those that try to challenge this system (PVV, 2006: 1-2). On the one side, they place every party from the socialists to the liberals[6], and on the other side themselves. By doing so, the PVV claims that their difference from other parties in not merely ideological, but on a different level as well, and although they don't make it explicit, they refer to their conception of democracy.

This can be inferred from statements like: "They (the people) don't accept a political constellation in which they, as a rule, cast their vote once every four years, and then become mere onlookers to the process, without the ability to dismiss politicians in the meantime" (PVV, 2006: 4). Here, the PVV clearly levels a fundamental critique at representative democracy, in which the citizens place their trust in the politicians and in which the fact that politicians cannot be dismissed is considered a positive feature, as it is a safeguard against rash decisions made under pressure of the will of the majority. As an alternative, the PVV suggests that citizens ought to have a way to bind politicians to certain policies, namely, through the use of the binding referendum (PVV, 2006: 6; 2010: 17; 2012: 28). In the Netherlands, referenda were never used on a large scale, as of now it is still unconstitutional to have a binding referendum. The PVV supports this claim by stating that the progressive elite might fear the voice of the people, but they do not (PVV, 2012: 27).

The second alteration the PVV wishes to make to the Dutch political system, is to make more offices electable, instead of appointed by the government. For instance, they want to elect the prime-minister, although they do not explain how this would relate to the election of parliament.[7] Finally, the PVV also wants to elect judges and especially the councilors of the *Hoge Raad*, which is comparable to a supreme court as the highest court where cases end up after several appeals

---

[6] Which in the Dutch context means the extreme left to the extreme right, as liberals are the right-wing. Their position is similar to that of conservatives in Great-Brittan.
[7] The current situation is that parliament is chosen directly, and the parties then have to form a coalition to gain the majority. The leader of this coalition is the prime-minister, but the citizens have no influence over this process.

(PVV, 2012: 33). This court is important as its verdicts are a source of law, by determining how written law should be understood.

Reject representative politics

Finally, the rejection of representative government can come in the form of rejection of representative politics. As noted in before, the PVV rejects the premise that parties should be distinguished mainly through their ideological differences. The PVV wants to break through the culture of shady coalition negotiations, and "want a substantive discussion, without party or power politics" (PVV, 2006: 2). The political elite is described as a egocentric caste, and citizens "have to fear for their lives as long as the politicians talk" (PVV, 2006: 4, 5). The rejection of the current system goes deep, as Dutch democracy is called a façade, in the deepest crisis since it was properly established[8], with a powerless parliament and a coalition that is called a collection of puppets (PVV, 2010: 17; 2012: 11, 12). The reason for rejecting representative politics is that the will of the people is not adequately represented. There is a gap between what the people want and what the politicians do (PVV, 2010: 17). One might interject that this does not mean the PVV rejects representation, but rather that they want to refine the method of representation. This is true, in a sense, but they reject the notion that representative politics can represent the people. They claim that the gap between the people and politics is artificial, created by the representative system to keep the people at bay (PVV, 2006: 6). However, the PVV does not dare to take this critique to its logical extreme, as they also state in 2006 that they want more participation to make citizens more responsible and more supporting of politics, but that they do not want politicians to become puppets of the people (PVV, 2006: 6).

III.   The indivisible people

The notion that the people is a single entity is one that most clearly differentiates the populist worldview from that of most, if not all, other political parties. To some extent, the indivisible people is axiomatic, the fundament on which the populist conception of democracy is build. Ways in which parties can express this notion include choosing "the people" over multiple "citizens", rejecting partisan interests, and emphasizing the cultural homogeneity of the people.

People vs. citizens

---

[8] The quote states: "the deepest crisis since Thorbecke" who is widely, if slight erroneously, credited with rewriting the Dutch constitution to its current form in 1848.

The most elegant way to emphasize the homogeneity of the people is by referring to it as a whole. In the electoral program of the PVV from 2012, such a phrase is even the title: "Our Netherlands, Their Brussels" (PVV, 2012: front page). The Dutch people is presented as a whole, with a single notion of what their country is or should be. In this case, more than any other aspect of the populist conception of democracy, the confirmation is in the details: Wilders continuously refers to a "we" that want policies, behaves a certain way, or has certain interests (e.g. PVV, 2006: 3, 13; 2010: 5, 6, 17; 2012: 10,11, 13, 34). The PVV explicitly states what interests the party serves: "The Dutch, the Dutch and finally the Dutch!" (PVV, 2012: 14). The PVV sides with the "regular men and women" and understand that "many" fear for the state of the Netherlands (PVV 2010: 17; 2006: 3). Notably, the PVV does not use one shorthand that is common among the other parties, as we shall see: it refers to citizens, not a people (e.g. PVV, 2006: 5; 2010: 17; 2012: 27). This way, the PVV refers to individuals, instead of a singular people that supersedes the individuals that it is made up of.

Rejection of partisan interests

Given that the people are a singular entity, partisan interests are illegitimate. There is but one true will, and that is the will of the people, or the general will. For a populist, then, differing opinions lose their legitimacy once the general will has become known. Practically, this means that populists are expected to reject partisan interests and stress the solution that the people want. The PVV, as we have already seen, wants to eliminate party politics and coalition negotiations, to "make the Netherlands a county everyone can be proud of" (PVV, 2006: 2). Most problems stem from "elites that have lost touch with reality" and that are now implementing policies that "regular people do not benefit from" (PVV, 2010: 5). The elite is painted as cowardly and unpatriotic, and is accused of selling out the people (PVV, 2012: 34). Also, the PVV wants to get rid of the last remnants of Pillarization, the system in which each ideology had its own political party, newspapers and cultural outlets (PVV, 2012: 45).

Emphasis on shared culture

The PVV also paints a picture of a single Dutch nation, a people that is connected on a fundamental level. "The Dutch are a nation of merchants", they claim, invoking the image of a single identity (PVV, 2012: 11). Another example of creating such an identity can be found in the same program, where it says that "Dutch people love animals" (PVV, 2012: 43). The PVV also wants to defend symbols of this nation, by instating the rule that schools should fly the Dutch

flag, teach lots of national history[9] and defend the beautiful Dutch language (PVV, 2012: 43, 45). The patriotism becomes explicit in the statement that there is no people like the Dutch (PVV, 2010: 5). Finally, the PVV refers to a shared and imagined past, claiming that "we [rebuild] a swampy marsh delta to a blooming nation" (PVV 2012: 11). By stating that "we" did this, a direct continuity between the current Dutch people and the historical (or rather mythical) Dutch people is created.

IV.   The anti-group

Finally, the last facet of the people is the notion of the anti-group, one of the most accepted aspects of the populism. In nearly every definition the notion that populists use the image of a group in society that is the negative mirror-image of the people has a place. However, there is a vast variety in what types of groups constitute these anti-groups. Also, as is shown below, a single populist party can have multiple anti-groups, each in their own way inferior to the people and trying to sabotage the homogeneous identity of the people, which they do not belong to.

Type

In Western-Europe, where this thesis is written, populism is almost synonymous for radical nationalism and islamophobia. The PVV is a clear example of this type of populism, with its frequent claims that the Netherlands and the rest of "the West" are threatened by islamization (PVV, 2010: 5, 33; 2012: 35). This translates in policy that is aimed at reducing the amount of Muslims coming to the Netherlands and at limiting their possibilities to express their culture within the Netherlands. The PVV wants to limit the building of mosques, completely banning minarets, and wants close Islamic schools (PVV, 2012: 37). All of the above go against the Dutch constitution and the political culture that is based on freedom of religion, but the last suggestion, outlawing Islamic schools, is particularly problematic in the Netherlands. One of the major political crises in the history of the Netherlands concerns the issue of schools with a religious or philosophical base, so this right to choose a school that fits with ones *Weltanschauung* is still a touchy issue.

As could already be observed in the previous facets of democracy, the PVV also considers the people to be threatened by the political elite, much in line with most definitions of populism. For the PVV, this dislike of the elite can be general, as when they claims that all political parties serve the same interest: their own, instead of the interest of the people (PVV, 2006: 1-2, 4, 5; 2010: 5, 6,

---

[9] The exact phrase is "*vaderlandse geschiedenis*", which has a more patriotic connotation than mere national history.

33). However, for the PVV the political elite is epitomized by the progressive elite, which he claims has completely lost touch with the reality in the Netherlands (PVV, 2006: 8; 2012: 10, 13). This elite has a second manifestation in the European elite in Brussels, which the PVV also firmly attacks (PVV, 2012: 10-11).

Financial threats

So, it is established that there are several distinct anti-groups, but how are they perceived to harm the people? Broadly speaking, two problems can be recognized: economic harm and cultural harm. First the economic issues are considered and afterwards the even more fundamental threat to the culture of the people is studied. For the PVV, economics are only a small part of the problem, although it is mentioned (PVV, 2012: 13). In his typical succinct style, the party leader Wilders says it best: "Henk and Ingrid pay for Ali and Fatima" (PVV, 2010: 5). Henk and Ingrid are the names Wilders uses to symbolise the working class Dutch, as John might be used in English. Ali and Fatima are used to implicate Muslim immigrants.

Cultural threats

More fundamental than any economic issue is the threat the anti-group(s) pose to the unique and superior culture of the people. The PVV refers to the process of "islamization", through which the Muslim community infects Dutch society (PVV, 2006: 3-4, 11; 2010: 5, 33). This process in enabled and even stimulated by the political elite, who opened the gates to the Muslim immigrants (PVV, 2012: 11). The regular people has to adjust, instead of the immigrants, while the people suffers because the elite has sold out to the notion that all cultures are equal (PVV: 2012: 12; 2010: 6). One final quote deserves specific mention: "Now, bureaucrats from Brussels tell us that we should flood our polders"(PVV, 2012: 11). This statement sums up the way in which the PVV uses both the notion of an indivisible people and an anti-group. The anti-group, that is, the bureaucrats from Brussels, dictate what we, the people, should do, which is bad in and of itself. However, what they want us to do, goes against the core of our being as Dutch people: giving land back to the water. The Dutch are famous for, and proud of, living below sea level and for a large part, living on land they claimed from the sea. Giving this land back to the sea goes against the image the Dutch created for themselves.

Conclusion PVV

The PVV is a prime example of right-wing populism, that has the typical aversion of bureaucracy, Europe, immigrants and the elite. However, looking through the lens of the concept of

democracy, one notices that the PVV has different and more fundamental problems with the established system. They argue for elected judges, binding referenda and direct election of a prime-minister. They consider the autonomy of the judiciary problematic and claim that ideological differences are a sham. The true choice is between two conceptions of democracy.

3.2. PSUV

The ideological and geographical counterpart to the PVV is the PSUV, the socialist party from Venezuela. In the current literature on populism, it is considered a typical case as well, because it fits perfectly with the current theories on populism in Latin-America, which are focused on left-wing parties. One might expect these two parties to be almost completely unrelated, and the current literature is unable to link these two with a single definition of populism. By analyzing the PSUV along the same aspects that are used for the PVV, the parties become comparable. The expectation is that doing so reveals the underlying connection between these two superficially unrelated parties.

I. Unrestricted sovereign

Anti-rule sentiment

The first facet of the populist conception of democracy is the believe that the will of the people should be unrestricted. This facet is approached through a general dislike of rules, which the PSUV does not share. They speak harshly of the extremes of law-enforcement, notably in the case of an insurgence of the people against the government (PSUV, 2016b: 4). The government reacted with extreme prejudice and massacred the people, and the PSUV vehemently reject this (over)reaction. On the whole, the documents of the PSUV do not express this dislike of rules, although they do not argue for rules either. Their program is a little too general to be concerned with the daily rules governing the land, and focusses more on the principles that are the foundation of the party.

Unconstitutional suggestions

Again going against the grain, the PSUV is not a party that goes against the constitution. They do focus on the revolutionary past of the party, and are clearly proud of having overthrown an established system, but they do not complain about the current restrictions the constitution puts on the people (e.g. PSUV, 2016b: 23). They state explicitly that the constitution is a result of the will of the people, which might explain their lack of dislike of this arrangement (PSUV, 2016b: 18). The PSUV operates within the constitutional context that their predecessors created, which explains that they are more accepting of the current political system than other populist parties.

Rejecting the separation of power

The first two aspects are proxies that are meant to determine whether a party adheres to the notion of a limitless sovereign without stating this explicitly. The third aspect, rejecting the separation of power, is not a proxy. It shows that a party rejects the notion that power is divisible. So while the PSUV does not confirm the first two aspects, this is not problematic as long as the third aspect is confirmed. The PSUV explicitly states that they believe that sovereignty, as an attribute of the people, "subordinates all branches of government: legislative, judicial, executive, electoral and moral" (PSUV, 2016c: 5). There is no real need to look at the proxies, as there is direct confirmation of the populist conception of democracy. There are several similar quotes, that focus on the subordination of the parts to the whole, of the lesser to the larger and of the minority to the majority (PSUV, 2016a: 3). The party and the people are put on one line, as is evident from the demand for "[a]ccountability to the management bodies and to the people" (PSUV, 2016a: 3). Equating the party to the people and thus the sovereign is defended in the very first sentence of the statutes of the party by stating that "[t]he party was born as an expression of the struggles and the revolutionary will of the people" and similar statements throughout the texts (PSUV, 2016a: 1).

The first aspect of populist democracy can thus be said to be confirmed by the PSUV although it did not adhere to each aspect. This shows the benefit of a loose and inductive approach that allows for variance between the parties while still showing their similarities. It also shows importance of context: as the PSUV is the sole populist that works from within a system largely of its own making, it can often be much more explicit than the other parties about their conception of democracy.

II.   Rejection of representation

This facet is fiercely corroborated by the PSUV: Their hatred and disdain of the representative system their predecessors have overthrown shines through on every page, as does their clear believe in the populist alternative.

Power of the people

Mentioned briefly in the last section, the PSUV considers the party to be an extension of the will of the people (PSUV, 2016a: 1, 2; 2016b: 14, 17). Their belief in the power of the people goes so far that they sanction their members with suspension for not contributing to the cause of strengthening the power of the people (PSUV, 2016a: 16). The power of the people is not just

their origin, but their goal at the same time. Actions that do not further this goal are not condoned. This might seem harsh, but the PSUV has a near religious believe in the power of the people, hailed among other things as the solution to poverty and inequality (PSUV, 2016b: 15).

Blueprint of democracy

 Although there are not many mentions that fit with this aspect of rejecting representative government, the disdain of the PSUV for this system still shines through. For example, they claim as their "fundamental purpose" to construct what they refer to as Bolivarian socialism[10] (PSUV, 2016a: 2). This purpose if further described as "the anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist struggle and the consolidation of the Bolivarian, participatory and cutting-edge democracy, by means of recognizing and bolstering the power of the people." Once more, there is no need to look for subtle hints indicating that the party wants to create a democratic system in which the people has a more central position, because the PSUV is explicit about their wish. This alternative democratic system they propose is contrasted with the "liberal and neoliberal bourgeois democracy", which they go on to explain, is the Western representative conception of democracy (PSUV, 2016c: 3-5). One aspect of the ideal democracy as the PSUV paints it is that it should be participatory, so aimed at including the people as much as possible (PSUV, 2016a: 2; 2016c: 4, 16). This is not considered a part of the populist conception of democracy, although it does not necessarily go against it either.[11] On the one hand, the PSUV uses the term participation, but on the other hand they explicitly link their democratic conception to Rousseau's concept of non-transferable power (e.g.: PSUV, 2016c: 5). Similarly, the PSUV views participatory democracy only as a step towards the construction of socialist democracy, which they define as "nothing else than the construction of popular power" (PSUV, 2016c: 5). This supports the notion that participatory democracy is, in the view of the PSUV, not in contrast with populist democracy, but should rather be considered as support for the populist conception.

---

[10] Named after the famous Latin-American revolutionary Simón Bolívar.

[11] Participatory democracy is assumed to be a separate conception of democracy. However, neither the theoretically nor the empirical research stretch to this term, beyond these few mentions in the PSUV's programs. It would be worthwhile to consider the concept both theoretically and empirically. However, as it does not interfere with the PSUV confirming the definition of populism as a distinct concept of democracy, the question is put aside for now. This is different from the issue of deliberative democracy as encountered when looking into Podemos. In that case, it is clear the party has a distinctly different conception of democracy, while the PSUV might just use a term that has a different meaning in the field of democratic theory.

Reject representative politics

If it is unclear what the PSUV want to move towards, it is at least very clear what they want to move away from. Using a set of different terms to refer to representative politics, the PSUV attacks this political system fiercely. They define it as "the old liberal, bourgeois democratic model, based on formal, representative and fundamentally political democracy, and in which the right to elect, be elected and vote are sufficient" (PSUV, 2016b: 3). Thus, the PSUV clearly defines the political system they oppose. How far this opposition goes, becomes clear in the ideological basis of the party, where it is explained to build a new and proper democracy, "the old, liberal democratic culture inherited from the representative democracy" must first be destroyed (PSUV, 2016c: 3). This old, representative democracy has "perverted democracy by reducing it to a mechanism of electoral legitimization of the power of corrupted elites" which was the social base of imperialism (PSUV 2016c: 4).

The PSUV is exceedingly clear about their rejection of representative politics and their believe in the power of the people. Even if the party refers to a type of democracy that is not necessarily populist, they do not go against the populist conception of democracy. Instead, they are explicit and convincing in supporting the populist conception of democracy.

III.   The indivisible people

People vs. citizens

So far, the PSUV has corroborated the populist democracy to a large extend, but they also scored poorly on some aspects. With the third facets, the notion of the homogenous people, this is not the case. In fact, the entire statutes of the party is comprised of a description of the people as a single entity. They refer to the people as the fundamental source of legitimacy throughout the text, as we have seen in the facet of the rejection of representation (PSUV, 2016a). The people is the ultimate judge and the only source of legitimacy, meaning that the people is the beginning and the end of the political process (PSUV, 2016a: 3; PSUV, 2016b: 2, 17). The party itself is nothing but a direct expression of the will of the people (PSUV, 2016a:1). Let's move from this general statement to more specific signs of support for the populist conception of democracy.

Rejection of partisan interests

The PSUV strongly rejects the individualism and partisanship that is the basis for the pluralism that defines representative democracy. The party exhibits the believe that society should be a united whole (PSUV, 2016b: 22). The organized people should legitimize and force actions that

bring about such a world, with social equality as a basic principle for the distribution of the riches and benefits of society and with "socialist moral as the fundamental kernel that determines the selfless behavior of the members of society, for the sum of moral happiness" (idem). This quote was the only passage that directly addressed the concept of partisan interests, but it is rejected so firmly that one hardly needs more evidence.

Emphasis on shared culture

The PSUV has two ways of showing that the people has a shared culture: firstly by continuously referring to the people as a single entity and secondly by listing all different groups of which the people is comprised, and stating explicitly that they all share a single culture. A great example of the first way can be found in the statutes: "All members of the PSUV are socialist, Bolivarianist, anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist, internationalist, humanist, environmentalist and feminist" (PSUV, 2016a: 4). This is a list of cultural believes that the people has, which is simply listed following the statement that the members of the PSUV are a certain way. Considering that the PSUV is itself a direct expression of the will of the people, the passage above becomes even more convincing, as the PSUV might accept that not everyone is a member, but does claim to be an expression of the people (See also: 2016a: 19; 2016b 1-2). The second way is more or less an inversion of the first: it lists different groups that are part of the people, to explain that they all share a certain culture (PSUV, 2016b: 14). The PSUV continuous to be explicit in their corroboration of the populist conception of democracy.

IV.   The anti-group

The PSUV puts a twist on the expected populist demonization of the political elite, as they have been the elite for several years. They thus reserve their disdain for the old elite, which is still blamed for many problems that plague the country (PSUV, 2016a: 7; 2016b: 4). The old, liberal elite is considered to be corrupt and to have perverted democracy (PSUV, 2016c: 4). However, the main anti-group is international capitalism, exemplified by the USA (e.g.: PSUV, 2016a: 2, 4; 2016b: 5; 2016c: 1, 7). Imperialism and capitalism are even equated with fascism (PSUV, 2016a: 19). The imperialism practiced by the USA is compared to the Spanish imperialism from earlier centuries, and considering that the PSUV consistently claims to be a Bolivarist movement, this comparison gains importance (PSUV, 2016b: 2). Simón Bolívar was a famous revolutionary, that helped to end the Spanish imperial rule over Latin-America. The PSUV thus equates their own struggle against the USA in terms of the (in)famous violent revolution against their former

colonial rulers. The PSUV also refers to military activities of the USA, such as incursions of a naval fleet in Latin-American waters and the military presence in Columbia (PSUV, 2016b: 8).

As will become clear by the end of the chapter, most parties claim that the anti-group is threatening to the people either financially or culturally. The PSUV has some passages that bear witness to the latter, where they list the scourges inherited by liberal democracy such as laziness, individualism ad inefficiency (PSUV, 2016a: 7). However, the threat of the main anti-group, the USA, is more direct. The PSUV paints their struggle with the USA in violent terms, as mentioned in the last paragraph. Once again, the PSUV does not fit comfortably in all aspects that have been created based on the data, because they are an extreme case. The PSUV has no internal anti-group, like the other parties, and presents their struggle with the external anti-group as a cold war with the potential to escalate.

Conclusion PSUV

The PSUV is a populist party in its very core: it does not deal in proxies, but always scores well on the more extreme and explicit aspects of populist democracy. This is possibly in part because the party exists in a political and constitutional system that was created by its predecessors. While the PVV, Sanders and Trump have to at least acknowledge that they deviate from the norm in their countries, the PSUV is the elite and is part of a linage that has been the elite for several years.

3.3. Podemos

Moving back from Latin-America to Europe, the next party we look into is Podemos. This party is considered the deviant case in European populism, as it is one of the few new left-wing populist parties, together with Syriza from Greece and the Five Star Movement from Italy. Podemos was founded in March 2016, following the 15-M Movement. The party leader is the political scientist Pablo Iglesias, which makes the party an immediate outlier in European populism, which often has a troubled relation with the intellectual elite. The party aims to reduce corruption and austerity. Interestingly, the party does not self-identify as populist, but the term is used by political opponents as a pejorative name (e.g.: Villacañas, 2014; Liria, 2014).

The expectations that are tested in this chapter state that Podemos should adhere to the populist conception of democracy, even if it is considered a deviant case and regardless of whether the party considers itself to be populist. However, when looking into the party, it becomes clear that Podemos does not support the populist conception of democracy. The party thus defies expectations, but instead of rejecting the proposed definition of populism or simply accepting that Podemos is beyond the scope of the definition, it is worthwhile to look critically at the case and the definition. This way, one either gathers information about the scope of the proposed definition or one can understand why Podemos should indeed not be considered populist.

I. Unrestricted sovereign

Anti-rules sentiment

Podemos have an unusually detailed program when compared to the other cases. They shower the reader with numbers, statistics, and concrete and minutely detailed policy measures (e.g. Podemos, 2016b: 8, 27). Of course detailed policy plans do not mean in and of itself that Podemos reject the first facet of populist democracy. A party could have detailed plans and still believe the sovereign should be unrestricted. The unrestricted sovereign does however go together with non-specific planning more naturally, as it allows a party to shift its program with the will of the people. The first aspect of this facet of populist democracy, the general dislike of rules, is clearly not supported by Podemos. Take the plan to create a different set of laws regarding the cultural sector, which would reform the current tax system or their suggestion for a comprehensive National Energy Transition Plan (Podemos, 2016b: 28 and 35). While both deal with serious issues, the notion of creating extra legislation instead of sharply cutting in the amount of rules goes against the expected dislike of rules.

Unconstitutional suggestions

Podemos often makes radical suggestions, like reforming the labour market, explains that the suggested policy cannot be implemented in one go (Podemos, 2016b: 58-60). They go on to outline the different steps they want to take to gradually implement the suggested policy. This contrasts rather sharply with the bold statements of the PVV, but does not show the blind devotion to the constitution as an expression of the will of the people like the PSUV displayed. Podemos is looking for radical change, but does not believe that claiming it shall be so will help. Instead, they choose a more careful and thoughtful approach, which can be explained by looking further at their conception of the people and politics.

Rejecting the separation of power

The only aspect of the unrestricted sovereign that Podemos share is the rejection of the separation of power. Mainly, they put a strong emphasis on the people as the final judge (e.g. Podemos, 2016b: 108). For example, they suggest instituting a Citizen Public Policy Evaluation and Accountability Observatory, which would allow citizens to hold politicians accountable for their policies (Podemos, 2016b: 68). Even more explicit is the notion that electoral programs should be seen as contracts with the public, allowing people to start a recall process, so issuing new elections, after a party breaks with their program too fundamentally (Podemos, 2016b: 67). This would significantly decrease the political maneuverability of parties, as it hands the voter a measure to hold politicians to their promises. However, the notion of the people as the final judge is the only suggestion Podemos does that is in line with the expected rejection of the separation of power. Both the PVV and the PSUV make several suggestions, mainly focused around the possibility to elect judges and members of the executive power. Podemos comes close, but considering all aspects together, there is no sense of adhering to an unrestricted sovereign.

II.   Rejection of representation

The second facet of populist democracy shows us the first interesting features of Podemos, as the party does in fact reject representation in its current form. The party has specific problems and has several suggestions to reform the system thoroughly. In contrast to the other parties, these grievances and suggested remedies do not flow from the notion of a single, indivisible people that is the unrestricted sovereign. Instead, Podemos believes in the strength of dialogue, of listening to all relevant parties and looking for a compromise between the different interests.

While both the populists and Podemos reject the current system of representative democracy, their alternatives are vastly different.

Power of the people

As mentioned just above, Podemos do not adhere to the power of the people in a populist sense. They do, however, believe in the power of citizens, which is a small but crucial difference. The difference between a body of citizens and a people is considered when discussing the third facet, the indivisible people. For now, suffice it to say that Podemos looks for support among the citizens. This support is not just a means to an end, but is of fundamental importance for Podemos, because they see the support of those involved as the only way to legitimize political action. Several other examples are given in the next paragraph, but consider that Podemos has a returning section in their electoral program called "Citizens Democracy" (Podemos, 2016b: 86-87, 104-105, 116-123). To them, involving the citizen beyond voting is fundamental in the democratic process.

Deliberative Podemos

Podemos makes several large-scale suggestions for changing the current representative government to a more deliberative political system (Podemos, 2016a: 12; Podemos, 2016b: 56, 71). Similar to the other parties discussed in this thesis, they also argue for the implementation of popular initiatives and referenda (Podemos, 2016b: 66). However, their program goes beyond only allowing the people to speak, as they suggest on multiple occasions that a dialogue between the stakeholders should be implemented, implying that Podemos is looking for a two-way conversation (e.g. Podemos, 2016b: 17, 30, 51, 61 and 96). They suggest deliberation, which can be used to solve specific regional problems, in which case Podemos argues for geographically based group discussions to diagnose the needs of each area (Podemos, 2016b: 50). In other cases, for example when discussing the problems with "revolving doors" between the Ministry of Defense and the military industry, a group of expert should be instituted to study the problem deliberate with members of civil society to suggest solutions (Podemos, 2016b: 31). Similarly, Podemos suggests that citizen participation for large infrastructural projects, going so far as the ability to audit the executive (Podemos, 2016b: 102). They also want to incorporate "the voice of the social economy and the self-employed in the social dialogue", which again means allowing a certain, specific and defined group interest to influence the political process (Podemos, 2016b: 74). Podemos thus indeed rejects the notion of representation, in that they suggest an alternative for representative government. By allowing citizens to vent frustrations, but also suggest

alternatives and consider the limitations of what is possible creates understanding and should lead to the best possible outcome.

III.   The indivisible people

People vs. citizens

The difference between the other parties and Podemos becomes most clear when looking at the respective visions of the people. The theoretical assumption is that populist parties display a belief in a homogeneous people, as demonstrated by the PVV and the PSUV. Podemos, however, does not share this view of the people. Therefore, no references to a homogeneous people can be found and instead, several references to the opposite. Deliberative democracy is based on a pluralist world view, in which the issue of clashing interests is resolved not through the marketplace of election, but through deliberation. The lack of understanding of the diversity and multi-nationalism is singled out as one of the major problems in the current Spanish system (Podemos, 2016a: 2). Podemos envisions a democracy where everyone is invited to the table, because deliberation and open dialogue are assumed to increase the social consensus, a concept that is in direct violation of the notion that the people is homogeneous (Podemos, 2016b: 65). If the people is a single entity with one will and a common interest, there is no need for consensus because the people is necessarily in agreement. Interestingly, Podemos does refer to the general will and the common good, but suggests participation and deliberation as the way to know these (Podemos, 2016b: 113).

Rejection of partisan interests

Podemos thus differs significantly from the populist conception of democracy, but they do not fit with the representative conception of democracy either. Indeed, a rejection in the partisan interests of the political parties can be found in the call for consensus, especially if one considers that Podemos looks for this consensus within the people (e.g. Podemos, 2016b: 5, 65, 113). Podemos accepts more than the other parties that citizens are divided by differing interests, but believes that the politization of these interests in political parties that align with certain interests is the core flaw with representative government. Podemos believe that the people can come to a rational consensus through deliberation, and therefore reject the partisan politics of the current representative system. Podemos believes that stakeholders, those who have a vested interest in the issue at hand, should discuss the issue with each other, facilitated by the government. To make the difference between Podemos and the populist conception of democracy concrete, let us look at the problem that both Podemos and the PVV have with EU-regulation on the fishing

industry. Podemos suggests "to open a real and balanced dialogue between all the stakeholders in the fishing sector", while the PVV simply states that they will protect the fishermen from EU-regulations (Podemos, 2016b: 17; Wilders, 2010: 55). While one might argue that Podemos just has a more completely formed solution, there is a fundamental difference. The PVV speaks with the voice of the people, which includes fishermen, and the people wants to protect the fishermen from those meddling EU-bureaucrats. Podemos suggests a dialogue with citizens with different interests, such as fishermen, environmentalists and those living near the coast, to find the best solution. The next section showcases this difference even more clearly, in the discussion of the anti-group.

IV.   Pluralist Podemos

Since Podemos does not consider the people to be a united whole, they do not put emphasis on either a shared culture or on the corrupting anti-group. If they do consider something the anti-group, it would be international big business (Podemos, 2016b: 38). However, given that they do not consider the people to be a single homogeneous entity, there cannot be an anti-group that is the negative mirror-image. In the pluralist worldview, the notion of a single anti-group does not make much sense, which explain why Podemos has hardly any mentions that can be considered as pointing to an anti-group. Podemos thus defies the expectations on every facet, which would mean that the definition is not able to encompass all parties that are normally considered populist.

Conclusion Podemos

The aim of this thesis is to suggest looking at the conception of democracy of a specific group of parties, referred to as populists. The argument is that the conception of democracy of a party is often ignored or taken for granted, as both scholars and politicians have a hard time defining democracy. Although Podemos cannot be considered a populist party per the proposed definition, they do not share the representative conception of democracy either. Podemos appears to hold a deliberative conception of democracy, which would be a third and distinct conception altogether. As this thesis was aimed solely at explaining the difference between populist and representative democracy, there is no real definition of deliberative democracy.[12]

---

[12] Deliberative democracy is an established theory of democracy, that has received much attention over the last thirty years. Among the main scholars on the issue are Jürgen Habermas and Joshua Cohen. Cohen, J., "Deliberation and democratic legitimacy." In: *1997* (1989): 67-92; Cohen, J. "Democracy and liberty." In: *Deliberative democracy* 1 (1998): 185-231; Habermas, J. (1996) *Between facts and norms: Contributions to a discourse theory of law and democracy*; Elster, J. (1998) *Deliberative democracy*. Vol. 1.

While Podemos is not populist, it does show the importance of taking the conception of democracy of a party into account.

3.4. Sanders

I. Unrestricted sovereign

The left-wing populist case in Latin-America corroborated the expectations, while the left-wing populist case from Europe defied them. To complete the tour over the continents considered in this thesis, it is now time to consider left-wing populism in the USA. Sanders is a rather a-typical politician, as he is a self-proclaimed socialist and pacifist, which is not common in the USA. He has been in politics for a long time, and served as a senator while running for the democratic candidacy for president. Sanders has been called s populist by several mayor news outlets, as well as by Bill Clinton (Cassidy, 2016; Gass, 2016; Kazin, 2016). If Sanders lives up to this claim, he is expected to share the populist conception of democracy and its belief in the unrestricted sovereign.

Anti-rule sentiment

Sanders is rather critical of several of the power structures in the USA, mostly of the police and the district attorneys. He has a whole chapter named "Racial Justice" that is dedicated to the problems in the judiciary and law-enforcement (Sanders, 2016: Racial Justice)[13]. Sanders' problem lies not only with rules as such, but with the enforcers of these rules. These enforcers abuse the rules there are to mistreat part of the people they should protect. In their attempts to mistreat certain groups in society, they are supported by unfair rules. However, like the PSUV, Sanders does not exhibit a noteworthy aversion to rules and bureaucracy.

Unconstitutional suggestions

Sanders does display the populist habit of making radical, infeasible and down-right unconstitutional claims. To address the radical policies first: Sanders wants to make university free for all students (Sanders, 2016: Income Inequality). While he states that "this is not a radical idea" because several countries in the world have free education, in the context of the USA this is actually a unlikely policy that goes well beyond what other politicians suggest (idem). Sanders defends several other extreme policy suggestions claiming that they are common sense (e.g. Sanders, 2016, Income Equality, Puerto Rico) or that the people wants what he is suggesting (e.g.

---

[13] Neither Sanders nor Trump has an electoral program as one united whole with page numbers. They both used a website with several different "chapters" that address a certain issue in one flowing text, again without page numbers. This makes referring difficult, so the references are to the chapter in which the information is found.

Sanders, 2016: Creating Jobs, Climate Change, Racial Justice). Furthermore, Sanders also suggests policies that defy the legal possibilities in the USA. For instance, in reference to climate change deniers, he claims he wants to "bring [them] to justice", which effectively means that he wants to outlaw a certain point of view, held by many of his political rivals (Sanders, 2016: Climate Change). Sanders also wants to infringe on state sovereignty, by ending LGTB discrimination that is still legal in certain states, which he defends by stating that it "is unacceptable and must change. We must end discrimination in all forms" (idem: LGTB rights). Here again, we see a rather far-reaching suggestion, with little defense, other than an appeal to common decency or sense.

Rejecting the separation of power

Sanders is not above critiquing law-enforcement or the judiciary when he believes the they abuse their power, as is shown in the discussion of the first aspect of the unrestricted sovereign. His attack on the separation of power takes is more explicit and far-reaching than merely speaking out against problems in the judiciary. Sanders continually criticizes decisions by the constitutional court of the USA, particularly their *Citizens United* decision[14] (Sanders, 2016: Big Money out of Politics, Climate Change, Women's Rights). Sanders does not merely disagree with this interpretation of the constitution, but makes it out to be the center of what is wrong with the current political system in the USA. He also explicitly states that he wants to use his power to nominate candidates for the Supreme Court to influence the interpretation of the constitution (Sanders, 2016: Women's Rights). It is of course not unusual that this power is used to further once own agenda, but the boldness with which Sanders announces his intention shows that he is not shy about exerting influence over the judiciary.

II.   Rejection of representation

Sanders might not share the populist dislike of rules, but on the other aspects, he clearly confirms our expectations when it comes to making unconstitutional claims and rejecting the separation of power. Sanders has thus been shown to problematizes the separation of power. This leads to the next facet of the populist conception of democracy: the rejection of representation. The theoretical expectations are that Sanders makes several claims supporting the people as the ultimate sources of legitimate power, has a blueprint of democracy and rejects representative and

---

[14] The *Citizens United* decision allowed companies to count as citizens and donating money as a form of speech. This meant that donating money is now protected by the freedom of speech, which resulted in unlimited and non-transparent campaign donations.

partisan politics. As with the first facet, if one of the aspects is corroborated to a lesser extent, that does not defy the expectations as long as the overall rejection of representation shines through.

Power of the people

As discussed earlier, the PSUV uses historical imagery to refer to the old, liberal, bourgeois democracy as a contrast for their new and improved democracy. Like the PSUV Sanders appeals to a historical model by invoking Abraham Lincoln's famous phrase that democracy is a government of the people, by the people and for the people, and contrasts it to the current political system in the USA (Sanders, 2016: Big Money). Unlike the PSUV, however, Sanders refers to a golden past when democracy was still pure, to contrast it with the current, corrupted democracy. Both parties use a mythical past to strengthen their claim to pure democracy when opposed with the current Western representative democracy.

A different type of passage that confirms Sanders belief in the power of the people, is his repeated claim that a certain policy, whether is it is reducing the price of pharmaceuticals or expanding Social Security, is justified or legitimized because most Americans want it (Sanders, 2016: Social Service, Drug Prices). Sanders combines his majoritarian claims with the statement that the issue is not a partisan issue, as it would be if he were representing a certain segment of society, but an American issue. When discussing the next facet, the indivisible character of the people, this type of statement is examined further, but for now it shows that Sanders values the will of the people, expressed in this case as the will of the vast and unpartisan majority, over partisan wills and interests.

Blueprint for democracy

Sanders is quite clear on the flaws and problems with the current political system in the USA. His main concern is the bias towards the rich and the immense influence of money on politics. This can be done directly, through funding (re)election campaigns, since businesses can donate secretly to campaign funds (Sanders, 2016: Big Money). Sanders also fears the power of the wealthy lobbyists, as he fears that the USA is turning into what he describes as an oligarchy where all power rests with the billionaire class (Sanders, 2016: Make the Rich Pay, Drug Prices). However, Sanders does not have clear blueprints for creating a better democracy. The only passages that suggest something of the kind are to do with local sovereignty, such as Guam and Puerto Rico (Sanders, 2016: Guam, Puerto Rico). Here, Sanders clearly suggests an alternative to the current practice: he wants to allow the locals to be heard and to give the people of Guam and

Puerto Rico a voice in the political debate that rages about their political and economic relation to the USA.

Reject representative politics

Sanders rejects representative politics mostly based on a common critique: the politicians that claim to represent the people do not know what the people want. Whether it is higher taxes for the wealthy to increase Social Security or lowering the prices of medication: the people want one thing and the political elite, bought and paid for by the rich, do the other (Sanders, 2016: Social Service, Drug Pricing). Sanders puts his dislike of the current political practices in a succinct manner when talking about the influence of large corporations in US politics: "This practice is business as usual in Washington and it is not acceptable" (Sanders, 2016: Climate Change). Sanders equates the current representative system with a government that protects the interests of only "a handful of powerful wealthy special interests" instead of the entire people (Sanders, 2016: Big Money). Even though Sanders does not make many practical suggestions to improve politics, his rejection of the current representative system is clear.

III.   The indivisible people

As we have already seen, Sanders makes a clear distinction between the people and the wealthy special interests. This encompasses both his belief in an indivisible people and his emphasis on an anti-group that is its negative mirror-image. The expectations thus seem to be corroborated, but taking a closer look can reveal to what extent Sanders believes in the homogenous single people.

People vs. citizens

Sanders refers to a shared interest of the American people, for example when he discusses the problems with high student loans, which he challenges as going against the best interests of "our country" (Sanders, 2016: College Tuition). According to Sanders, the people is a single entity, that is opposed by a class of extremely rich that try to create a plutocracy, which is discussed more in the next section (Sanders, 2016: War and Peace, Big Money out of Politics). However, there is one issue where Sanders clearly undermines the notion of an indivisible people, which is the Tribal Sovereignty of Native-Americans (Sanders, 2016: Tribal Sovereignty). The Native-Americans have their own governments, which are distinct sovereigns, which should have the autonomy and authority to protect their own people, according to Sanders. This implies that Sanders considers the Native-Americans to be distinct peoples, which do not fall under the American people. If this is the case, the peoples remain indivisible, because that would mean that

the American people is a single entity, which coexists with the Native-American tribal peoples, each its own distinct indivisible and sovereign entity.

Rejection of partisan interests

The rejection of partisan issue has already been addressed to some extent when discussing the facets before. Sanders has a firm belief in the common will of the people, which is only hindered by partisan agendas. He claims, for instance, that taking steps to solve climate change should be straightforward. "After all, the majority of Americans understand the seriousness of climate change, and they demand action" (Sanders, 2016: Climate Change). However, the partisan interests of large corporations prevent any action from being taken, to the detriment of the world at large. A similar case presents itself in the chapter on drug pricing, where Sanders states that "[t]his is not a partisan issue. Most Americans –Republicans, Democrats, and independents– want Congress to do something about drug prices" (Sanders, 2016: Drug Pricing). By now, it has become clear that partisan interests for Sanders almost exclusively means the interests of the rich minority that opposes the common interest of the people.

Emphasis on shared culture

The shared culture does not escape this binary way of looking at society. In his introduction, Sanders urges the American people to make a fundamental decision: "Do we continue the 40-year decline of our middle class and the growing gap between the very rich and everyone else, or do we fight for a progressive economic agenda that creates jobs, raises wages, protects the environment and provides health care for all?" (Sanders, 2016: Introduction). However, the emphasis on a shared distinct culture does move beyond the economic, especially when it concerns the problems with racism and law-enforcement (Sanders, 2016: Racial Justice). In this chapter a case is made for a shared emotional and ethical frame of reference with passages like: "The violence fills *us* with outrage, disgust and a deep, deep sadness" and "This should offend the conscience of *every American*" (idem: emphasis added). To conclude the chapter, Sanders assures the reader that the American people in general want change, thus placing anyone who objects to his interpretation of the issue outside the American people in general.

IV.   The anti-group

Type

Sanders has a clear anti-group that mirrors the people. The focus on the anti-group is so great, that one would almost suspect that the people mirror the anti-group, rather than the other way

around. Either way, as has become clear in the discussion of the other facets of populist democracy, Sanders anti-group is the extremely rich. Given that Sanders is a self-proclaimed socialist, the fact that the anti-group is the "billionaire class" that is taking over the country, is not a surprise (Sanders, 2016: Intro). He blames them for making money over the backs of their workers and the common good (Sanders, 2016: Social Service, Climate change).

Financial threats

Several examples of how the billionaire class makes money from the suffering of the people have been mentioned already. One poignant example of how the political elite serves the billionaire class, is by allowing unreasonable drug prices to bankrupt the American people (Sanders, 2016: Drug Pricing). Nearly every issue is linked to a combination of the billionaire class reaping benefits because the political elite does not dare oppose them (e.g. Sanders, Introduction, Income Inequality, Big Money, Climate Change, Social Service, War and Peace, Make the Rich Pay, Pipeline). Sanders succeeds in making this link not only on topics where it seems logical, such as the issue of corporate influence on politics, but also when talking about HIV or racial justice (Sanders, 2016: HIV, Racial Justice). While Sanders blames the wealthy elite for just about everything wrong with the country, he always focusses on the economic aspect. Sanders never accuses the elite of attacking the American culture directly. He comes closest in blaming them for the destruction of the American middle class, by shipping jobs overseas, but again, his focus is on the financial gain of the elite first (Sanders, 2016: Introduction).

Conclusion Sanders

Sanders corroborates the theoretical expectations, even if he displays a remarkable emphasis on the anti-group. Throughout his electoral program there are numerous passages that refer to the unrestricted sovereign, the rejection of representation, the indivisible people and especially, as mentioned, the anti-group. In 2016, when Sanders ran for presidential candidate for the Democrats, Donald Trump ran for the same position with the Republican party. Although the two have rather different ideologies, both are considered populist. While Sanders lost to Hillary Clinton, Trump won not only the candidacy, but the presidential election as well. The question we now turn to is whether the current president of the USA corroborates the expectations and should be called a populist according to the new definition.

3.5. Trump

Donald Trump is a famous real-estate tycoon and celebrity persona from the USA. He announced that he would run for presidential candidate for the Republican party under the slogan: "Make America Great Again". Ideologically, Trump is hard to pin down, displaying conservative and liberal elements on different issues. His main issues are protecting American jobs, reducing taxes and limiting immigration. Trump appears to fit well within the trend of European right-wing populists, that combine conservative and neoliberal policies with an emphasis on the working class and social security.

I.   Unrestricted sovereign

The notion of the unrestricted sovereign shows us why populism has a tendency towards authoritarianism. A populist leader that knows he or she speaks with the voice of the sovereign people, need not heed other institutions or counter powers. Does Trump display evidence of corroborating the expectations in this regard in his electoral program?

Anti-rule sentiment

The general dislike of rules is mainly used by right-wing populists, who tend to oppose rules ideologically as well as through their conception of democracy. A prime example of this is Donald Trump's plan to solve the issues with the taxation in the USA: simplify the rules (Trump, 2016: Tax). Although his plan entails a little more, for instance closing loopholes that the extremely rich use to dodge taxes, but Trump literally states that simplifying the taxes rules is his main concern with regard to taxation. Trump also opposes government interference concerning certain firearms, if honest people want to own them (Trump, 2016: Second Amendment). The people should be free to own guns if they please.

Unconstitutional suggestions

When talking about outrageous policy proposals with flimsy legal or constitutional support, Donald Trump is a prime example. He has relatively few issues in his electoral program, but most of them are quite extreme. One of the most well-known example is his suggestion to build a wall between the USA and Mexico, for which he has promised to make Mexico pay (Trump, 2016: Wall). Another example is Trump's foreign policy regarding China. Trump firstly states that China must play by the rules of international trade, suggesting a certain respect for international rules and regulation that seems contradictory to the conception of the sovereign and unrestricted

will of the people (Trump, 2016: China). Secondly, and conflictingly, Trump states that he will not wait for the results of an IMF investigation into the alleged Chinese currency fraud, because he already knows what is going on. This inconsistency shows that Trump has no real respect for international institutions and their rules, and that he only invokes them to serve his point.

Trump uses a similar paradoxical logic when talking about immigration, as he states that "[t]he following steps will return to the American people the safety of their laws, which politicians have stolen from them" (Trump, 2016: Immigration). Trump wants to protect the people by enforcing laws, which might seem contradictory to the expectation that populists dislike rules. However, the notion of the unrestricted sovereign does not state *that people are* unrestricted by laws, only *the people*. This means that populists can still have a law-and-order agenda, as long as they still claim that the general will is unrestricted by laws.

Rejecting the separation of power

Remarkably, Trump does not show any evidence of rejecting the separation of power in his electoral program. He comes closest in his attack on state rights, although that is not quite the same thing. Trump pledges to cut the funding of cities that do not cooperate with federal law enforcement (Trump, 2016: Immigration). Also, he wants to force states to accept the concealed carrying permit for fire arms that have been issues in other states, even if they do not conform to the rules they use themselves (Trump, 2016: Second Amendment). However, Trump does not refer to rejecting the autonomy of the judiciary. Trumps relation to the legislative power, specifically Congress, is discussed in the next facet, and is more problematic.

II.   Rejection of representation

In seven short chapters, Trump manages to showcase his dislike of rules and his tendency to promise extreme policies, thereby corroborating the most expectations regarding the first facet of populist democracy. The second facet, rejecting representation, is likewise addressed in this small sample of texts. Again, not all aspects are confirmed to an equal extent, with the rejection of representative politics being by far the most addressed issue.

Power of the people

Trump is the least clear on the aspect of the rejection of representation. The statement that most clearly reveals Trump to believe in the power of the people, stands at the start of a summary of suggested policies in which he says that the representatives in both houses "must" implement the policies listed (Trump, 2016: Healthcare). It is not that they could, or should, or are morally

obliged to, but they *must*. There is an inevitability to the list of policies he mentions that does not fit within the framework of representative politics. A president cannot prescribe what the representatives must do, let alone a presidential candidate, because they are separate political actors, each with their own (more or less) clearly defined rights, duties, prerogatives and legitimacy. However, in the populist conception of democracy, there is but one source of legitimacy, which means that everything else is subject to that. When Trump says that the representatives in both houses must implement the policy he suggests, he does not speak a president (elect) or as a Republican: no, Trump voices the will of the people.

Blueprint for democracy

Like Sanders, Trump does not really make suggestions to solve the problems of the current democratic system. Unlike Sanders, however, he is not that clear on what the problem is, either. Where Sanders constantly referred to the corrupting influence of money and the power of the extremely rich as the major flaws in the current system, even referring to specific laws and ruling that enabled this system, Trump mainly just vents frustration with 'Washington' and the political elite. For instance, Trump claims that politicians have stolen the safety of the law from the people (Trump, 2016; Immigration). Trump appears to want people to stop looking for politicians for solutions and to enable civil society or the market to become the central sphere in which people solve their problems. When discussing the problems with the healthcare for veterans, Trump suggests that "[i]t's time we stop trusting Washington politicians to fix the problems and empower our veterans to vote with their feet" (Trump, 2016: Veterans).

Reject representative politics

Most clearly, Trump reject the current representative system of politics. He believes politicians ignore problems, or even knowingly go against the will of the people in secret (Trump, 2016: Second Amendment, Immigration). Representative politics leads not to solving problems, but to "grandstanding or political agendas" (Trump, 2016: Second Amendment). Trump firmly rejects the divided and partisan outcome of the representative system and believes that to solve a major problem in America "we need a President who has the leadership skills, will and courage to engage the American people and convince Congress to do what is best for the country" (Trump, 2016: Healthcare).

III. The indivisible people

People vs. citizens

The third facet of the populist conception of democracy relates to the people as a single entity. Trumps belief in the homogeneous single people is pervasive but subtle. In all of his issues, relevant phrases can be found, whether it is that "Mexico needs access to *our* markets much more than the reverse, so *we* have all the leverage and will win the negotiation" (Emphasis added, Trump, 2016: Wall), or: "*All Americans* agree that *we* must do everything *we* can to help put *our* service men and women on a path to success [...]" (Emphasis added, Trump, 2015: Veterans). More general is the notion that it is "the moral responsibility of a nation's government to do what is best for the people and what is in the interest of securing the future of the nation" (Trump, 2016: Healthcare). For Trump this is not just an abstract goal, but a feasible and useful guideline for making policy, because there is only one thing that is best for the people, and he knows what it is.

Rejection of partisan interests

Regarding the partisan interests, Trump is explicit in rejecting any traces of partisanship. He refers to Obama-care as being "passed by totally partisan votes in the House and Senate and signed into law by the most divisive and partisan President in American history" (Trump, 2016: Healthcare).[15] Aside from rejecting partisan politics, Trump also attacks partisan interests in general. For example, he want immigration reform that "puts the needs of working people first – not wealthy globetrotting donors" (Trump, 2016: Immigration). Here, Trump makes a clear distinction between the needs of the (working) people and a special interest, the cosmopolitan elite, and takes side with the people. Trump believes that partisan interests are illegitimate and should not be allowed in politics, and to eradicate them from the political, he believes in a strong leader that knows the will of the people (Trump, 2016: Healthcare).

Emphasis on shared culture

A homogenous people is only homogenous is it shares a specific culture. In Trumps electoral program, several passages referring to this shared culture can be found. Firstly, it is one of (economic) freedom (Trump, 2016: Healthcare). Secondly, this culture is one of loyalty and

---

[15] Totally partisan refers to the fact that all Democrats voted in favor and all Republicans voted against, in this case. In a coalition system like the Dutch, voting along party lines is much more common, but the USA does not have strict party discipline. Especially Senators often vote with their local interests in mind, regardless of the party line.

reverence towards those that serve to protect. According to Trump, "[a]ll Americans agree that we must do everything we can to help put our service men and women on a path to success as they leave active duty" (Trump, 2016: Veterans). Trump refers to the middle class as the backbone of America, and to the belief that the American workers are the best in the world (Trump, 2016: China). Trump also uses geographical imagery to link to USA together as a single entity, when he states that "[f]rom textile and steel mills in the Carolinas to the Gulf Coast's shrimp and fish industries to the Midwest manufacturing belt and California's agribusiness, China's disregard for WTO rules hurt every corner of America" (Trump, 2016: China). In this one sentence, Trump links the American people both economically – China hurts every corner of America – and culturally – by invoking the image of the USA in a view key sectors.

IV. The anti-group

As noted while discussing Sanders, he had a remarkable emphasis on the anti-group. Almost every issue he addressed, he blamed on the billionaire class. Trump goes the other way, in that he often invokes an anti-group, but instead of using one specific group as the blame for all problems, Trump refers to four separate anti-groups on different issues.

Type

Trump and the PVV are both right-wing populists, and for both immigrants are an anti-group, although Trump is more focussed on the Mexican economic immigrant, and does not mention Muslims in his electoral program (Trump, 2016: Wall, Immigration). Similar to Sanders, Trump also paints the very rich as an anti-group, but with much less emphasis (Trump, 2016: Tax, Immigration). Trump also takes a page from the PSUV, by painting another nation as an anti-group. While the PSUV uses the USA as a symbol of the decadence of Western capitalism, Trump refers to China as a nation that cheats the international system of free trade and that steals jobs and wealth from the USA (Trump, 2016: China). Finally, as the other parties, Trump paints the political elite as an anti-group as well, constantly stating that the political caste is ineffective at best and threatening to the common good at worst (Trump, 2016: Healthcare, China, Veterans). Trump specifically has it in for the Obama-administration, repeatedly attacking them by name 9Trump, 2016: Healthcare, China).

Financial threats

For Trump, the economic aspect of the anti-group is most important. For example, he states that the Mexican immigrants abuse the USA's hospitality to take millions out of the economy, and

blames Washington for shipping of thousands of American jobs to China (Trump, 2016: Wall, China). The immigration policy also costs American workers and through that the American people as a whole, thousands of jobs and dollars (Trump, 2016: Immigration). Politicians waste public funds on prestige projects, without coming close to solving the problems at hand, as with Obama-care (Trump, 2016: Healthcare). Similarly, when discussing the issues with the Veterans Administration, Trump states that "[p]oliticians in Washington have tried to fix the VA by holding hearings and blindly throwing money at the problem" (Trump, 2016: Veterans). Like Sanders, Trump is less worried about the cultural corruption of the American people by the anti-groups. This presents an interesting contrast with the PVV, who also look to immigrants as one of the anti-groups, but who firmly focus on the threat they pose to the fabric of society.

Conclusion Trump

In his electoral program, Trump corroborates all expectations, by displaying evidence of confirming to the populist conception of democracy. Except for Podemos, all parties so far have complied with the theory. Podemos is a special case, as it holds neither the populist, nor the representative conception of democracy, but instead a third and different kind, the deliberative conception of democracy. Populist parties have been shown to share a specific conception of democracy, as approximated through four facets, across continents and regardless of ideology. In order to contrast the populist conception of democracy with the representative in a contained environment, we turn to the last country in this thesis: Peru.

3.6. Peruvian cases

Peru warrants some special attention, because in the past twenty years something interesting has happened. In 1992, Alberto Fujimori staged an *auto golpe*, or self-coup, that claimed to bring democracy (Schmidt, 2000: 99). In 1995, the Peruvian people could choose in elections between Fujimore, who is considered a delegative democrat or populist, and his opponent, the former secretary general of the UN, Javier Perez de Cuellar (idem: 101). Fujimori's party was called Cambio 90 – Nueva Mayoriá or NM for short, which dissolved into FP, which is currently led by Fujimori's daughter, Keiko Fujimori. However, she is not commonly considered to be a populist. During the preliminary research stage, it was confirmed that she does not adhere to the populist conception of democracy. By comparing two parties that are extremely closely linked through ideology, familial bonds, and direct party succession, the width of the populists conception of democracy becomes clearer. When does a movement stop being populist and become "representative"? In order to determine this, the same structure is used here as in the paragraph before. Both parties are compared on each of the facets and the similarities and differences are critically examined.

I. Unrestricted sovereign

The first facet of the populist conception of democracy is not corroborated for either party. NM hardly makes any claims that are related to the unrestricted sovereign, and of those claims, about half claim a stricter adherence to law and more importantly the constitution (NM, 1990a: 2; 1990b: 1). NM's reluctance to grand the sovereign unlimited power, unrestricted by the law, could well be explained by the historical context, as Fujimori sr. took control of the country through a coup after a period of chaos and in a time when narcoterrorism ran rampant. Even on this aspect, however, we can see the difference between NM and its non-populist offspring. FP repeatedly refers to the need for independent branches of government (e.g. FP, 2015: 6, 7, 12). Most other parties, especially the PSUV and the PVV, explicitly reject the notion of separation of power. FP not only does not want unrestricted or unlimited popular sovereignty, but instead defends one of the most basic principles of the representative conception of democracy: the separation of power. So even while NM does not exhibit populist traits, the difference between the parties becomes clear, as FP explicitly espouses the representative conception of democracy.

II. Rejection of representation

Looking at the expected rejection of representation, the difference becomes much clearer. NM repeatedly rejects the partisan politics of the political system before they took control (NM, 1990a: 1; 1990b: 1). NM states that they "have only one objective, to remove once and for all from our country the phantom of that false democracy, that imitation of formal representation and national institutions that was the Peruvian political system until recently" (NM, 1990a: 1). This is a clear rejection of representative politics that is similar to claims made by the PSUV, who also argue fiercely against the system they overthrew. FP also makes suggestion on how to improve democracy, but they focus on becoming more aware of what the majority of the citizens want (FP, 2015: 1, 21, 38). The pride themselves on having spent years talking to the different groups in society to learn the needs and wishes of the citizens in different parts of the country (idem: 1). Aiming to improve on the current state of democracy is something all populist parties do, but not all parties that do this are populist. It depends on how the party in question want to reform the democratic institutions. FP and Podemos both have plans to improve on the current system, even more constructive and clear plans than Sanders and Trump, but neither is populist because they emphasise the importance of participation and deliberation.

III. The indivisible people

A small but significant difference between the two parties is that FP refers to citizens, while NM does not (e.g. NM, 1990a: 1, 2, 4 ; FP, 2015: 17, 19). Simply using the phrase 'citizens' invokes the image of a multitude of individual persons, with their own interests and goals. However, 'the people' refers to a single entity, which can have a single will and common interest. FP even explicitly wants to strengthen the position of the individual in the public domain (FP, 2015: 7). FP also strongly believes in taking local differences into account, respecting cultural diversity and opening a dialogue with local and regional governments to ensure that the policies meet the needs of the citizens in all their variety (FP, 2015: 26, 30, 64). Invoking regional differences is a far cry from Trumps sweeping statement that "[f]rom textile and steel mills in the Carolinas to the Gulf Coast's shrimp and fish industries to the Midwest manufacturing belt and California's agribusiness, China's disregard for WTO rules hurt every corner of America" (Trump, 2016: China).

NM not only refers to 'the people', but uses several other methods of conveying the homogeneity of the people. They state that "[*w*]e live in a country with many difficulties, but in *our* beloved country *we* need the concurrence of the best energies, *because we must all share one responsibility*"

(Emphasis added, NM, 1990b: 3). In the same passage NM refers to the concessions that must be made for the national interest (idem). NM does accept the fact that not everyone is the same, and that entrepreneurs have different partisan interests than workers, but they do not believe that these interests are valid or legitimate if they go against the national interest or common good (See also NM, 1990a: 2). In this passage, Alberto Fujimori claims that Peru itself expects entrepreneurs to abandon their own interests for the common good (NM, 1990b: 3).

IV.   The anti-group

Finally, it is expected that NM acknowledges the existence of one or more anti-groups, while FP is not expected to do so. For NM, the anti-group is the corrupt government that was in place before they took over (NM, 1990a: 1, 2, 3; NM, 1990b: 2, 6). This anti-group is not just economically threatening, although they do live "at the expense of the people, of the productive sectors"(NM, 1990b: 2), but they are also responsible for mortal danger. Specifically, the corrupt state is blamed for sheltering the partisan special interests that allowed the "homicidal narco-terrorism" to seize control over parts of the country. In a way, NM designates not just one special interest as the anti-group, but rather the system of special interests as a whole (NM, 1990a: 2). FP, however, makes no mention of an anti-group, even if they are critical of corruption (FP, 2015: 34). These are individual remarks, that are not part of larger narrative in which the state or its corrupt civil servants are demonised as the negative mirror-image of a perfect people.

Conclusion Peru

The difference between both parties is clear: while NM corroborates three of the four expectations, FP corroborates none. Instead, it actively distances itself from several populist notions, such as the separation of power. The one facets that NM does not corroborate is the notion of the unrestricted sovereign. Two possible explanations come to mind: the historical context and the sources. As NM came to power after a coup and during an internal war on drug cartels, order and lawfulness were extremely important to the party. The sources that are used for this party are speeches of the president to a gathering of businesspeople, which also might explain the difference, because the president might focus less on this rather revolutionary aspect of populist democracy. Still, when compared to its successors, it is clear that NM is populist, and FP is not.

Analysis

Through critical examination of the current definitions of populism and shifting the perspective to that of a conception of democracy, the overarching expectation of this thesis that *all populist parties share a certain distinctive conception of democracy* is proposed. This conception of democracy consists of the notion that the people as a indivisible whole is the unlimited and unrepresentable sovereign. Any group not part of the people has no political legitimacy. This overarching definition of populism is specified in four facets, and tested on the six cases. These cases are parties from three different continents, consisting of a left- and right-wing party for each of these continents. Before returning to the overarching definition, let us look at the four facets and see to what extent the populist parties corroborate or defy the expectations.

Unrestricted sovereign

In chapter 1 it is deduced from the theory that the populist conception of democracy entails the believe that the people is the only and ultimate sovereign. It follows that this sovereign is unrestricted, as no institution could ever bind the ultimate sovereign legitimately. To test this, the expectation that *each of the six cases considers the will of the people to be unrestricted by the law* is formulated. The first way in which populists can corroborate this expectation is by expressing a general dislike of rules and regulation. Rules or laws that prevent policies the people wants cannot be legitimate and should be removed. In the empirical, this aspect is most common in the right-wing parties, as they oppose rules and regulation from an ideological standpoint as well. Of the right-wing parties, only NM did not corroborate this aspect, while none of the left-wing parties argues against rules in general, although Sanders is extremely critical of the justice system in the USA and the sources for the PSUV focus more on the underlying principles than actual policy, so they might argue against rules in their electoral program.

The second aspect of the unrestricted people entails the populist habit of making unconstitutional claims, defended by claims to common sense or majority support from the people. For this aspect, the possible ideological divide seen in the aspect before, does not manifest. All accept for both Latin-American parties use the habit of making unconstitutional claims, even Podemos. However, where the other parties simply state that something must be changed, Podemos explains that it is impossible to implement unconstitutional policies immediately and shows how they gradually want to work toward the ultimate goal. No other party does this, as they reject compromise and do not need planning beyond: the people wants it, so it must be. As the Latin-American cases are both results of revolutions or coups, that

established their own constitutions, the respect for rules and the constitution might follow from the historical context.

The third aspect is the most explicit, as it relates to the rejection of one of the fundamental institutions of representative democracy: the separation of power. Rejecting the separation of power is a logical if extreme result of viewing the people as the only legitimate sovereign. The PVV, Podemos and Sanders all corroborate this aspect, but most notable is that the PSUV also strongly corroborates it. The PSUV does not corroborate the other two aspects, as we have seen, but by arguing so fiercely against the separation of power, it clearly corroborates the facet of the unrestricted sovereign. The limits of the research design become clear if one compares the results of Trump based on the sources in taken into account in the thesis, with Trumps simultaneous stance in interviews. Based on the results of this study, Trump does not reject the separation of power explicitly: based on statements in interviews, press conferences, and tweets, for example concerning his temporary "Muslim-ban", Trump clearly rejects the independent judiciary. However, as these sources are not part of the study, Trump formally defies the expectation on this aspect. The difference between NM –a populist party– and its successor FP, is that while neither explicitly rejects the separation of power, FP goes the other way and explicitly argues for strengthening the independent judiciary.

Every party, except for NM, corroborates the expectation of the unrestricted sovereign. The PSUV might only support the last aspect, but rejecting the separation of power is the most fundamental result of seeing the people as the only sovereign. Although Podemos also corroborates the expectation, some warning signs that this party is not the same as the others can be found, especially relating to the planning and realism of their unconstitutional policy suggestions. NM is the only party that does not corroborate the expectation at all, but the party was still trying to establish a stable rule and deal with a war on drug cartels, so a focus on rules and order can be explained by their context.

Rejection of representation

The most explicit difference between representative democracy and populist democracy is that for representative democracy the people is the source of sovereignty, that is distributed through elections; for populists, the people is the sovereign, which means that sovereignty is an inalienable feature of the people as a whole. This means that for populists, the sovereign –and thus the people– cannot be represented, while in representative democracy it obviously can. This

theoretical expectation is tested as the second facet of populist democracy: *Each of the six cases rejects the notion of representation.*

A focus on the power of the people as the source of legitimacy is the first aspect of the expectation of the rejection of representation. Every single party confirms the expectation, although for some it is clearly more important than for others. Trump, for instance, is not too explicit in his reverence of the power of the people, while the PSUV confirms the expectation on nearly every page. Even Podemos could be said to confirm the expectation, because they focus heavily on involving the people in the democratic process. However, on closer inspection it again becomes clear that they argue against the same system as the populists –representative democracy– but they have a different solution to the problems both they and the other parties recognise with this system. NM, which did not corroborate the first facet, does pay homage to the power of the people.

Because the phrasing of the facet is negative, in that it merely states that populists are expected to reject representation, the second aspect of this expectation is added to look into the way the parties want to improve the system. This way a party like Podemos is found out as being neither populist nor representative. However, not all populist parties confirm the expectation through this aspect. The PVV clearly does confirm it, as does NM, while Sanders is really clear on the problems of the current system, but does not make concrete suggestions for fixing it. Trump is the most notable example that does not corroborate the expectation, as he does not move beyond the generic hatred of 'Washington' or any respective capital. The PSUV also does not have concrete suggestions for improving the current system, but one has to take into account that they designed their own system. The PSUV operates within a populist democracy, in contrast to the other parties. Podemos has clear alternatives for the current representative system, as does FP, but both make deliberative rather than populist suggestions: they want to involve citizens and organise dialogues between stakeholders.

Finally, the rejection of representation manifests in the rejection of the mechanics of representative politics, such as elections, political parties and common political practises. A perfect example is the PVV that calls the current Dutch democratic system a "façade" as representative politics are not 'real democracy'. The PVV is an excellent example of this altogether, but really, any party except for Podemos are clear in their rejection of the institutions that enable and facilitate the current system of representative politics; although for the PSUV it should be noted that they reject the former system of representation. They do so more fiercely than any other party, however.

The expectation that *each of the* six parties rejects the notion of representation is thus corroborated, with one major caveat: Podemos does reject representative democracy, but does not want to institute populistic democracy in its place. Also, Sanders leaves the door open for a different system, such as deliberation or participatory democracy, as he is unclear on his alternative to the representative system. Trump is the weakest example of this facet, being rather unclear on every aspect. However, his anti-establishment rants show that he thoroughly rejects the current system, even if he is unsure of what type of political system he prefers.

The indivisible people

The entire populist conception of democracy is centred around the notion that the people is a single and indivisible whole. Without this preposition, the rejection of representation and the notion of a single sovereign are unattainable. Also, this facet clearly shows the difference between those who reject representative democracy and those that espouse populist democracy. Podemos has corroborated the expectations fairly well so far, but no party can be called populist if it does not accept the notion of the indivisible people. The expectation that is tested is that *each of the six cases considers the people to be indivisible.*

The first way in which this expectation is tested is by looking at simple choices of word, such as 'people' or even just 'we'. Every single party, especially NM, uses these little techniques to show the people as a whole, as a single identity, with the exception of the pluralist Podemos. Or rather, Podemos uses the same techniques, but the other way around: they focus on the fact that Spain consists of individuals with differing interests, that can be bridged through rational dialogue. Sanders is the only person that is not extremely clear in this aspect, and that again veers towards a more deliberative conception of democracy. However, as Sanders does corroborate the expectations on all facets and does not explicitly reject certain core aspects of populist democracy, it is hard to discount him as a populist, following the definition in this thesis. If a more accurate study of deliberative democracy and its relation to populist democracy had been part of the study, Sanders would have been an interesting case on the edge.

If the people is a single entity, it follows that it also has a single will or interest. The common good is not a hypothetical or unattainable ideal for populists, but a real benchmark and guide for creating policy. Any partisan interests are therefore illegitimate, as are those that further these interests. Again, every party corroborates this aspect of the indivisible people. The PVV, Sanders and Trump are clear cut cases that simply deny any interest that is not the interest of the people. The PSUV is explicit as well, but does not devote the same amount of space to the issue. NM

stretches the limits what we can call confirming expectation, which can be explained by the different sources used. The sources are the party leader addressing a conference of business people, instead of more general electoral programs. NM acknowledges that the working class has a different interest than these business people, but does not legitimise these interests, as Fujimori states that Peru itself demands that these differences must be put aside for the general good. Podemos does believe in a common good or general interest, but also acknowledges that different interests exist. The difference with NM is that Podemos legitimises partisan interest by allowing them a place at the table as stakeholders, instead of simply making the nation demand compliance.

A final way in which parties can confirm the notion of the indivisible people is an emphasis on the shared culture of the people. This creates an image of a single, homogeneous entity. While every party does this, with the unsurprising exception of Podemos, no party is as explicit or persistent as the PVV. Their electoral program is a veritable barrage of what the typical Dutch person is like. It is unsurprising that all parties with the exception of Podemos confirm the facet of the indivisible people with such overwhelming evidence: as mentioned above, this facet is axiomatic for the populist conception of democracy. All other facets follow from the notion that the people is a single, indivisible entity, and all parties confirm the expectation –again with the exception of the deliberative democratic Podemos.

The anti-group

As shown in chapter 1.2, the people is not just indivisible, but also homogeneous, and anyone that does not belong to the people is a dangerous and destabilising force. It becomes clear that every populist party attacks an elite, whether it is the current elite as is the case in the countries with a representative system, or the former elite in the Latin-American countries that have disposed of the representative system. But several other anti-groups are possible, such as immigrants for the PVV, a foreign power for the PSUV and the extremely rich for Sanders. Trump is noteworthy in challenging all of these anti-groups in turn. The type of threat can be either cultural or economical, or even both at the same time. All parties except for Podemos have one or more anti-groups, which is no surprise, as the anti-group follows from the populist notion of the indivisible people. Podemos did not share this notion, and therefore does not share the notion of an anti-group either.

4. Conclusion

Half a century ago, the *crème de la crème* of the populism scholars gathered in London to answer one simple question: what is populism? The search for a definition of populism has been describe as a treasure hunt, but after fifty years most people have stopped searching for the treasure. In the academic community it is now widely felt that the treasure, the single overarching definition of populism, was a hoax; if it has not been found by now, it is likely not there at all. Populism is either considered a container concept, that is too broad and vague to be useful, or seen as a contextual phenomenon, in which case two manifestations of populism are not part of an overarching concept.

One could summarise the argument in this thesis with the parable of the blind men and the elephant. In this story, a group of blind men are let into a room with an elephant and each touch a single part of the creature. The first touches the tusks and believes the creature to be a monster made out of bare bone, while the second feels the tail and thinks it is a paintbrush and so forth. The moral of the story is that one might aptly describe a part of something, while still being completely wrong about the nature of the whole. Only when the perspective shifts from the parts to the whole can one appreciate what one is describing and how all the descriptions of the parts are related.

What was the goal?

So, while the research on European right-wing populism might accurately describe said specific form of populism, which appears as different from Latin-American left-wing populism as a tusk from an ear, that does not mean they are not both parts of the same phenomenon. This thesis leaves the descriptive or explanatory aside and aims to take a broader perspective. By taking a step back, an attempt is made to see the entire elephant. Instead of seeing different descriptions and concluding that they are either wrong or unconnected, this thesis tries to find the connecting elements and determine the core of what populism is. A definition of populism is constructed through theory building and critically examined against the empirical evidence. The proposed definition should be able to link all different subfields of populism and explain how two seemingly different parties are manifestations of the same concept.

Results

Based on the empirical testing of the expectations, three main conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, the four facets of populist democracy are corroborated by five out of six cases. The PVV, the

PSUV, Trump and Sanders all confirmed the expectations completely: evidence was found for every facet of democracy, in many cases overwhelming evidence. NM corroborated most expectations, but did not explicitly adhere to the facet of the unrestricted sovereign. As is explained in the summary of chapter 3, this might very well be explained by both the context and the source material.

The second important conclusion relates to the one case that did not confirm the expectations: Podemos. Although it did confirm the first two facets in some way or other, Podemos has a radically different view of the people than the other parties. In the first two facets, their view of the people is already visible, as they reject representation, not for the populist alternative, but for deliberation. While the expectation of the thesis is that all populist parties share the populist conception of democracy, the danger of a party being referred to as populist, without it sharing this conception of democracy, was always present. Rejecting, at least in part, the current use of the term populist, both academic and societal, makes it hard to determine whether a selected case is actually populist before studying it. Podemos is widely considered populist, as a radical anti-establishment party that rejects representative politics and mobilises disgruntled voters. According to this thesis, that no longer qualifies it as being populist, as the alternative the party offer for representative democracy is deliberative rather than populist.

Finally, the overarching expectation that *populist parties share a certain distinctive conception of democracy*. This thesis set out to show that it is possible to define populism as a single, overarching phenomenon, that can explain the link between parties from different context, despite superficial differences. As parties from different continent, with different ideologies, and different organisations exhibit the four facets of populist democracy, this expectation is confirmed. It is of course premature to claim that all populist parties share the proposed conception of democracy. However, in this thesis we have seen that parties that share very few features can be linked through their conception of democracy. The expectation that this conception of democracy enables scholars to look past the differences of individual parties to populism as a whole, has been confirmed.

Research design

This thesis set out to test the strength of an alternative way of defining populism. The link between populism and democracy has been made before, but never has populism been defined as a conception of democracy. In chapter 1 the theoretical foundation of this conception of democracy is laid out; what is more, this chapter shows where other theories fall short. Regarding populism as a thin ideology or style does not allow for the conceptual clarity to link those parties

commonly considered populist, without becoming so broad and vague that the term becomes meaningless. This thesis follows in the tradition of the early works of Margaret Canovan and many others, who searched for the foot that fits in the shoe of populism, as Isaiah Berlin once put it (Canovan, 1981: 7).

In order to test whether the proposed definition of populism as a conception of democracy is indeed able to link parties that are considered populist by themselves, the academic community and/or the general public, regardless of the continent they operate on and the place these parties take on the ideological spectrum, six cases have been selected. These cases come from three continents, with a left-wing and right-wing party from each. From Europe, the *Partij voor de Vrijheid* (Freedom Party/PVV) is the right-wing case and *Podemos* (We can, no abbreviation) is the left-wing case. In Latin-America the left-wing *Partido Socialista Unido de Venezuela* (United Socialist Party of Venezuela/PSUV) is chosen, as well as the right-wing *Cambio 90 – Nueva Mayoriá* (Change 90 – New Majority/NM) and *Fuerza Popular* (Popular Force/FP). For North-America, the potential candidate elects in the presidential campaign were considered: senator Bernard Sanders for the Democratic Party and mister Donald Trump for the Republican Party.

Of these six cases, official party documents are gathered and analysed through close reading. The amount of documents is limited, because not all parties have existed as long. For example, for the candidate elects, only their campaign program has been considered, which means only one document was available. For the PVV all electoral programs since the party has existed have been taken into account, while the PSUV also has documents that relate to the fundaments of the party's ideology. FP is compared with its predecessor, using the electoral program from 2015 for the former and several speeches from 1990 and 1996. Because the study is qualitative in nature, the amount of data has to be limited, as each document is analysed through close reading and considered in its context. This method is well suited for the aim of the thesis, as it enables us to detect similarities or differences hidden under the surface of words. Given that the context and language of the parties variates to a large extend, a single term might have a different connotation, while a single concept might be indicated by different words. The qualitative approach has the flexibility that a quantitative method lacks to make a comparison across borders, without losing valuable information.

Quantitative methods are also more suited to test data against a clear benchmark. In this thesis, the aim is to establish a benchmark, or rather to see if the new definition holds up as a possible benchmark. If the definition of populism as a conception of democracy is convincingly shown to hold up, it can be used as a point of reference for quantitative study. However, this thesis is still a

step behind that, and is but a first attempt to expose a theoretical framework to the harsh test of the empirical. A method that allows for nuance and precision is thus preferred over the rigid generalisation of quantitative research.

Discussion of design: generalization

The chosen method does have its potential shortcomings or pitfalls. Firstly and related to the choice for a qualitative method, it might be argued that the results of the study cannot be generalised. An N of six is hardly sufficient from a generalising perspective, even if the cases are from different continents. By selecting cases from different continents and different extremes of the ideological spectrum, an attempt has been made to cover as much of the variety in populism as feasible in six cases. It is important to stress that the aim of the thesis is not to generalize, but rather to convince that a single definition can bridge the gaps that confine other definitions: geography and ideology. If the definition holds up for the selected cases, an argument can be made that populism is indeed a conception of democracy. Trying to show that all individual populist parties actually fit within the definition is another matter. This thesis tries to convince that there is a benchmark; later studies can attempt to find the exact scope of this benchmark.

Reproducibility

A more problematic pitfall is the reproducibility of the study. With a method like close reading, there is always the danger of becoming too subjective. The data is not put into the confines of quantifiable codes, which allows more interpretative freedom, which saves information that might otherwise be lost. However, the freedom of a quantitative method also means that there are no guarantees that a different scholar repeating the same research will come to the same conclusions. To create some boundaries, sub-hypotheses are implemented and the aspects of each hypothesis are made explicit. The implementation of examples should also help show that the quotes takes legitimately corroborate the sub-hypothesis in question. The analysis consists solely of this type of example and the reflection on these. The reproducibility of other research methods should also not be overstated, as there is always a step where the scientist interprets the data is some crucial way. If the data is coded, the coding is the subjective step, regardless of the safeguards added to reduce individual influence. This study is as open and explicit as possible, but has no pretence of complete objectivity. It is self-critical and tries to make a convincing case for a certain interpretation of the data collected.

Case selection

The pitfall that is hardest to avoid and deepest to fall in, is not to do with the data-analysis, but rather the data-collection. Using only six cases means that those cases have to be selected with care. The hypothesis that states that *each of the* six cases share a certain conception of democracy, the thesis is very vulnerable. As is shown, two of the selected cases are problematic. Firstly the FP, which is not populist itself, but is the descendent of the populist NM. This problem is made into a strength, as it is use to show where the line is between populist and non-populist. If there had not been a non-populist case, the proposed definition might be able to bridge the gaps, but it could still have been container concept that is so broadly defined that any party can be shown to fit. Unfortunately, there was a second case that is generally considered to be populist, but does not corroborate the main hypothesis or most sub-hypotheses: Podemos. As explained earlier, the fact that Podemos does not qualify as populist using the proposed definition does not necessarily mean that the proposed definition should be disregarded. It does, however, show the importance of case selection in studies with a small N. Each case carries more importance, as there are fewer of them. Through critical examination before the case selection is made final, one can try to include only the best cases, either typical or deviant, or in this case, a combination of both. However, as this thesis openly questions the existing definitions of populism, there was always a chance that research beforehand would not suffice.

Further study

1. Making it historical

Having shown that the proposed definition of populism is viable, firstly the definition should be tested against the final gap: time. As the definition is able to show the links between left- and right-wing populists and between populists on different continents, the last gap it has to bridge is time, if the claim that this definition can encompass all populist parties is to be proven. Now, showing a link between all populist parties might seem like hubris, which is why the author suggests a similar research design, only with a longitudinal element to see if the definition holds up at all. Especially North-America offers a promising venture point, as there is a strong tradition of populist parties, from the People's Party in the late 19th century, through Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan to the Tea Party. Of course, taking a continent with that is not a most likely case makes the argument more convincing, so Europe could also be taken. The challenge in Europe is the rise of totalitarian ideologies, especially fascism and national-socialism, which share certain aspects of the populist conception of democracy, but might not be populist as such. Regardless

of the challenges, taking the step into history is necessary to defend the claim that underlies the search for an alternate definition of populism.

2. Making it quantitative

At several occasions in this thesis, the choice for qualitative research has been defended against possible critiques, often resulting in counter-criticism of the quantitative method. However, that does not mean that quantitative methodology is disregarded; it is merely considered less well-suited for the aim of this thesis. In fact, making the proposed definition quantifiable and using it to research on a much larger scale should be the next step in trying to show that populist parties are manifestations of a single phenomenon. Qualitative study lacks the ability to generalize or to effectively research large populations, which is why the step to quantitative methods needs to be made. Making the study quantitative should be done very carefully, in order not to lose information and should always be accompanied with qualitative research to look into inexplicable deviations.

3: Adding deliberative democracy

Finally, the definition and research design should be refined. As this thesis made clear, the dualism between the representative conception of democracy and the populist conception is artificial and incomplete. Podemos fits in neither category, and uses a third conception of democracy that should be added. This thesis could be a starting point for an attempt to translate the large theoretical body of scholarly work on democracy theories to the empirical, not on single cases, but on a larger scale. By adding more possible conception, it becomes increasingly important to be clear and precise in what one means when one talks about democracy. Democracy is a necessarily contested concept, and this thesis shows why it is so hard to define democracy. All cases are democratic, according to themselves, but there are three different conceptions of democracy represented in the cases, which do not necessarily accept each other as truly democratic.

Being clear about what one means when one talks about democracy is not just necessary within the academic community. Conceptual clarity makes it easier to compare research and theories among scholars, but in politics it can make a difference in the way a country is governed. At the heart of this study lies the belief that populism is recurring phenomenon because the representative conception of democracy is poorly explained. An institution like the European Union does not appear democratic at all, even if it has been carefully constructed and can be considered relatively democratic from a representative conception of democracy. Respect for

minorities and the need to compromise are two of the most important and fundamental aspects of representative government, and can be defended from the representative conception of democracy. Populism rejects both, and succeeds in presenting themselves as more democratic, because the "established" parties that have a representative conception of democracy are unable or unwilling to explain why the limitation on the sovereign should be considered important. They let the populist dictate the discourse of the debate, which then becomes what Canovan calls the redemptive face of democracy, while they should focus on the pragmatic face.

While this thesis is still being finished, Donald Trump has become the new president elect of the USA. What almost all political scientists, historians, journalists and politicians dismissed as impossible has become true. Trump's presidency shows once more that it is important to understand what populism is, instead of dismissing it a politics of the fringe, appeals to angry, insecure voters. Until we understand populism, we cannot learn from it and listen to the relevant and legitimate critique is has on representative government. If we cannot learn from it, we can never defend against populists, and from time to time populist parties will surface and occasionally win big.

Bibliography

Abts, K. and Rummens, S. (2007) "Populism versus Democracy". In: *Political Studies* 55(1) 405-424.

Akkerman, T. (2010) *Democratie: De Europese Grondslagen van het Moderne Idee* (Het Spinhuis, Amsterdam).

Allock, J. et al. (1967) "To Define Populism". In: *Government and Opposition* (Oxford University Press, Oxford UK) 137-179.

Bale, T. et al. (2010) "If You Can't Beat Them, Join Them? Explaining Social Democratic Responses to the Challenge from the Populist Radical Right in Western Europe". In: *Political Studies* 58(1) 410-426.

Becker, B. (2016) "Trump's 6 Populist Positions". In: *Politico* 13-02-2016.

Betz, H.G. (1993) "The New Politics of Resentment: Radical Right-Wing Populists Parties in Western Europe". In: *Comparative Politics* 25(4) 413-423.

Bobbio, N. (1987) *The Future of Democracy* (Polity Press, Camebridge UK).

Bos, L. W. van der Brug, and C. H. de Vreese (2013) "An experimental test of the impact of style and rhetoric on the perception of right-wing populist and mainstream party leaders". In: *Acta Politica* 48(2) 192-208.

Bryman, A. (2008) *Social Research Methods* (Oxford University Press, Oxford UK).

Canovan, M. (1981) *Populism* (Hartcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York).

Canovan, M. (1982) "Two Strategies for the Study of Populism". In: *Political Studies*, 30(4) 544-552.

Canovan,M. (1999) "Trust the People! Populism and the Two Faces of Democracy". In: *Political Studies* 47(1) 2–16.

Canovan, M. (2002) "Taking Politics to the People: Populism as the Ideology of Democracy". In Y. Mény and Y. Surel (eds), *Democracies and the Populist Challenge*. (Palgrave: New York) pp. 25–44.

Canovan, M. (2004) "Populism for Political Theorists?". In: *Journal of Political Ideologies* 9(3) 241–252.

Canovan, M. (2005) *The People* (Polity Press, Cambridge UK).

Cassidy, J. (3 February 2016) "Bernie Sanders and the New Populism". In: *The New Yorker*.

Chambers, S.A. and Carver, T. (2007). *William E. Connolly: democracy, pluralism and political theory* (Routledge, London and New York).

Checchi, D. (1996) "Macroeconomic Populism: A Formal Representation and a Suggested Interpretation of the Peruvian Experience (1985-90)". In: *Journal of International Development* 8(4) 489-516.

Dahl, R. (2000) *On Democracy* (Yale University Press, New Haven).

Deiwiks, C. (2009) "Populism". In: *Living Reviews in Democracy* 1-9.

Dreier, P. (2016) "Bernie Sanders' Socialism is as American as Apple Pie". In: *The Huffington Post* 05-05-2016.

Fennema, M. (2001) *De Moderne Democratie: Geschiedenis van een Politieke Theorie* (Het Spinhuis, Amsterdam).

Freeden, M. (1998) "Is Nationalism a Distinct Ideology?". In: *Political Studies* 46(1) 748-765.

Gass, N. (13 September 2016) "Bill Clinton: Bernie Sanders a 'much more positive populist' than Trump". In: *Politico*.

Gemani, G. (1978) *Authoritarianism, Fascism and National Populism* (Transaction Books, New Brunswick).

Habermas, J. (1998) The Inclusion of the Other: Studies in Political Theory (MIT Press, Cambridge USA).

Hayward, J. (1996) "The Populist Challenge to Elitist Democracy in Europe". In J. Hayward (ed.), *Elitism, Populism and European Politics* (Clarendon Press, Oxford UK) 10–32.

Houwen, T. (2103) *Reclaiming Power to the People: Populism in Democracy* (Ipskamp Drukkers, Enschede).

Inglehart, R. and P. Norris (2016) *Trump, Brexit, and the Rise of Populism: Economic Have-nots and Cultural Backlash.*

Kazin, M. (2016) "How Can Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders Both be 'Populist'?". In: *The New York Times Magazine.* 22-03-2016.

Kay, B.H. (1996) ""Fujipopulism" and the Liberal State in Peru, 1990-1995". In: *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 38(4) 55-98.

Kersbergen, K. van and A. Krouwel (2008) "A Double-Edged Sword! The Dutch Centre-Right and the 'Foreigners Issue'". In: *Journal of European Public Policy* 15(3) 398-414.

Kessel, S. van (2011) "Explaining the electoral performance of populist parties: The Netherlands as a case study". In: *Perspective on European Politics and Society* 12(1) 68-88.

Laclau, E. (1979) *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory* (Verso: London).

Laclau, E. (2005) *On Populist Reason* (Verso: London).

Leon, G. (2014) "Strategic redistribution: The political economy of populism in Latin America". In: *European Journal of Political Economy* 34(1) 39-51.

Lefort, C. (1988) *Democracy and Political Theory* (Polity Press: Cambridge UK).

Liria, C.F., (30 June 2014) "Podemos qué, algunas reflexiones sobre un supuesto populismo". In: *P36Andalucía.*

Manin, B. (1997) *The Principles of Representative Government* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge UK).

Mény, Y. and Y. Surel (2002) "The Constitutive Ambiguity of Populism". In: Y. Mény and Y. Surel (2002) *Democracies and the Populist Challenge* (Palgrave, New York) 1–24.

Mouffe, C. (2005) *On the Political* (Taylor & Francis Group, London/New York).

Mudde, C. (2004), "The Populist Zeitgeist". In: *Government and Opposition*, 39(1) 542–563

Mudde, C.(2016) *On Extremism and Democracy in Europe* (Routledge, London and New York).

Panizza, F. and Miorelli, R. (2009) "Populism and Democracy in Latin America". In: *Ethics and International Affairs* (Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs) 39-46.

Parlement & Politiek, used 02-12-2016 10.28:

http://www.parlement.com/id/vhnnmt7m4rqi/partij_voor_de_vrijheid_pvv.

Riker,W. (1982) *Liberalism against Populism:A Confrontation between theTheory of Democracy and theTheory of Social Choice.* (W. H. Freeman, San Francisco).

Rosanvallon, P. (2008) *Counter-Democracy: Politics in an Age of Distrust* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge UK).

Rousseau, J.J. (1923[1762]) *Of the Social Contract, or Principles of Political Right* [Original Title: *Du contrat social ou Principes du droit politique*].

Savage, R. (2014) "A Comparsion of 'New Institutionalized' Populism in Venezuela and the USA". In: *Constellations* 21(4) 518-534.

Schmidt, G.D. (2000) "Delegative Democracy in Peru? Fujimori's 1995 Landslide and the Prospects for 2000". In: *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 42(1) 99-132.

Skinner, Q. (1969) "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas". In: *History and Theory*, 8(1), 3-53.

Stavrakakis, Y. (2004) "Antinomies of Formalism: Laclau's Theory of Populism and the Lessons from Religious Populism in Greece". In: *Journal of Political Ideologies* 9(3) 253–67.

Tella, T.S. Di (1965) 'Populism and Reform in Latin-America'. In: Veliz, C. (ed.) *Obstacles to Change in Latin America* (Oxford University Press, London).

Urbinati, N. (1998) "Democracy and Populism". In: *Constellations* 5(1) 110–124.

Urbinati, N. (2006) *Representative Democracy: Principles & Genealogy* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago).

Villacañas, J.L. (15 June 2014) "¿Cuadrar el círculo? El éxito de Podemos". In: *El Confidencial.*

Visscher, K. (2013) *Stijl, Ideologie of Democratieopvatting* (Unpublished Bachelorthesis University of Amsterdam).

Vossen, K. (2010) "Populism in the Netherlands after Fortuyn: Rita Verdonk and Geert Wilders Compared". In: *Perspectives on European Politics and Society* 11(1) 22-38.

Waisbord, S. (2011) "Between Support and Confrontation: Covic Society, Media Reform, and Populism in Latin America". In: *Communication, Culture & Critique* 4(1) 97-117.

Zaslove, A. (2011) *The Re-invention of the European Radical Right: Populism, Regionalism and the Italian Lega Nord.*

List of sources

FP (2016) *PLAN DE GOBIERNO DE FUERZA POPULAR.*

NM (1990a) *Declaro clausurado el 8° Congreso Nacional de Gerencia.*

NM (1990b) *CLAUSURA A CARGO DEL SEÑOR PRESIDENTE CONSTITUCIONAL DE LA REPÚBLICA. INGENIERO ALBERTO FUJIMORI FUJIMORI.*

NM (1996) *CLAUSURA A CARGO DEL SEÑOR PRESIDENTE CONSTITUCIONAL DE LA REPÚBLICA. INGENIERO ALBERTO FUJIMORI FUJIMORI.*

Podemos (2016a) *20PROPUESTAS para desbloquear la situación política y posibilitar un Gobierno de cambio.*

Podemos (2016b) *26J.*

PSUV (2016a) *ESTATUTOS DEL PARTIDO SOCIALISTA UNIDO DE VENEZUELA (PSUV).*

PSUV (2016b) *I Congreso Extraordinario del Partido Socialista Unido de Venezuela (PSUV): DECLARACIÓN DE PRINCIPIOS.*

PSUV (2016c) *BASES PROGRAMÁTICAS DEL PARTIDO SOCIALISTA UNIDO DE VENEZUELA (PSUV).*

PVV (2006) *Klare Wijn.*

PVV (2010) *Agenda van Hoop en Optimisme.*

PVV (2012) *Hun Brussel, Ons Nederland*

Sanders, B. (2016) *On the Issues*: https://berniesanders.com/issues/

Trump, D. (2016) *Make America Great Again:* https://www.donaldjtrump.com/ (however, Trump has taken down the site with his electoral program after he has been elected, and the site is therefore lost)