Varieties of and variations upon populism: The elite-leader problem and elite-plebeian hybrids

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> 'Populism, I suggest, is a particular moralistic imagination of politics, a way of perceiving the political world that sets a morally pure and fully united – but I shall argue, ultimately fictional – people against elites who are deemed corrupt or in some other way morally inferior.' – Jan-Werner Müller.[1]

> 'they [populists] are fine with elites as long as they are the elites leading the people…They know that they are part of the elite, and so do their supporters.' - Jan-Werner Müller.[2]

> 'We seem to lack coherent criteria for deciding when political actors turn populist in some meaningful sense.' - Jan-Werner Müller.[3]

Introduction

Populism studies has long recognized that there are 'varieties [in ontological conceptions] of populism.'[4] The conceptions of populism as a thin-centered ideology and discourse are the most widely adopted. Studies that draw on these conceptions form two canons. There are two strings of claims that cut across works in these canons. The first is that the essential feature of populism divide society into 'the people' and 'the elite,' who meet in conflict. The second is that the essential feature of populism is the disfigurement of liberal democratic thought and the (semi-)authoritarian project which it yields. Some theories of populism written in the ideational and discursive canons adopt the first string of claims. Some theories in each canon adopt the second. Between them, in the center of populism studies, stand theories that adopt both. They weave-together both strings as the twin core features of populism.

However, this weave has a loose thread: how are 'the leaders of the people' constructed? A growing body of research shows that some ideologies to which populism has been ascribed, imbue 'the leaders' with constructed elite features. Some are presented as 'the elite'; others as 'the vanguard elite'; others still as 'the counter-elite.' Such elite features are particularly common among (so-called) populisms in power, but are not exclusive to them. Such ideologies straightforwardly contradict the concept of populism. Populisms construct 'the elite' as the enemy of 'the people.' If a populism constructs 'the leaders of the people' in elite terms, 'the elite' or a part of it is constructed as friends or allies of 'the people.' This contradiction is particularly egregious, because populism has already been distilled to such a minimal core. This minimality is what enables populism to hold together such diversity in political thought. If even this core is adulterated or discarded, the concept of populism is stretched beyond coherence.

Single-strand theories of populism yield straightforward judgements about these elite-leader ideologies. People/elite divide theories imply that elite-leader ideologies should not be designated, for the reasons given above. Democracy disfiguration theories imply that they certainly could be, subject, of course, to whether they also offer disfigurations of democracy. For theories in the two-string center, judgements ought to be equally simple. As such elite-leader ideologies contradict the people/elite string of populism, theories in the twin-string center ought to exclude them from their domains of populism. Yet most do not. Many of these elite-leader ideologies are coveted by theorists of populism. They include among their number house-hold names such as Hugo Chavez, Donald Trump, Victor Orbán, Boris Johnson and Jair Bolsonaro. Not only would revoking their inclusion cede these high-profile cases; many of these so-called populists in power exemplify the second, democracy-disfiguring string of populism. Indeed, some have been pivotal to the study and theorization of this aspect of it. Studies of populism in the center are wedded to these cases.

Therefore, these elite-leader ideologies present a problem for theories in the center of populism studies. I interrogate how they address this elite-leader contradiction. Many seek to resolve this contradiction while preserving conceptions of populism that join both strings. They do so by revising what their theories specify an ideology must do in its construction of 'the elite' and/or 'the leaders' in order to qualify as populist. Some of these attempts fail. Others succeed in resolving the elite-leader contradiction. However, they do so only by emptying the people/elite antagonism of the status-hierarchical content at its core. In doing so, they transform people/elite divides into simply us/them divides in all but name. In effect, these attempts, which ostensibly tie both strings together, discard the first by subterfuge.

Therefore, I argue that the center fails. Faced by this elite-leader contradiction, theories in the center choose one string over another. Therefore, theories of populism cluster around two single-string poles, which cut across existing ontological conceptions of populism as discourse and ideology. These form a further dimension of variety of populisms. I argue that populism studies recognize this polar landscape of populism studies, and acknowledge that these polar theories are rival and have equal valid claims to the term 'populism.' Once it does, it can dispense with the semantic contortions that

theories in the failed center advocate to deny that portraying 'the leaders' in elite terms contradicts a people/elite antagonism. In other words, this enables studies to stop distending and misinterpreting how some so-called meaning-systems construct 'the leaders,' 'the elite' and the relationship between them. Once they do, elite-leader ideologies cases cease to be problems in need of resolution. Instead, they present new possibilities, ripe for study and retheorization.

I ask how such elite-leader ideologies should be theorized. I recognize that these elite-leader ideologies construct 'the leaders' as distinct from both 'the people' and 'the elite.' Therefore, they do not bifurcate society in two; they trifurcate it in three. I theorize trifurcation and sketch out four trifurcatory discourses which, drawing on several authors, I call elitist plebeianisms.[5] Each involves hybridizing populism as plebeianism with elitism. Each enables better interpretation of the elite-leader ideologies previously called populist. They are: elitist plebeianism (proper), counter-elite plebeianism, elitist post-populism as plebeianism, and contradictory populism. These elitist-plebeian hybrids are not varieties *of* populism, precisely because they transgress the boundaries of the domain of populisms. However, they do amount to variations upon populism

This article proceeds as follows. First, I argue that the center of populism studies joins both people/elite dividing and democracy-disfiguring strings. Second, I argue that theories in the center contain a contradiction: they insist on designating elite-leader ideologies as populist. Third, I elucidate that there are single-string theories of populism which offer clear resolutions to this elite-leader problem. Fourth, I review the advertent or inadvertent attempts to resolve this problem by theories in the center. I determine that they only do so by jettisoning the people/elite divide string covertly. Fifth, I argue that this leaves a field of populism studies polarized between single-string theories; this makes-up a further dimension of variety of populism. Sixth, I develop theories of a set of elitist-plebeian hybrids which better capture the meanings expressed in elite-leader ideologies. Finally, I conclude.

The center

Conceptions of populism have proliferated. Ostensibly, this proliferation suggests that there is a divergence in theories of populism; in some respects, there is. Yet there are also points of convergence. There is one set of convergences which is particularly significant for this article. It consists of two strings of claims about what the essential features of populism are: agreements about the substantive - or ontic - contents that define populism. These claims are endorsed by works in ideational canon, and by some works in the discursive canons, the most widely adopted conceptions in contemporary populism studies, as well as (parenthetically) some works in the stylistic canon.

Before I introduce them, a word on ontology is necessary. Works in both these canons adopt, partially and with contradiction, shared claims about ontology; amid many differences, they make some similar claims about what sort of thing populism is. Cas Mudde, the principal theorist of the ideation conception, initially understood ideologies as bodies of ideas in the party families tradition. Concordantly, he later present their conception of populism as 'empirically oriented, [and] positivist.'[6]

However, he and others in this canon ground rest their conception on the theorization of ideology by Michael Freeden. Freeden's theory of ideology bears many resemblances to Laclau and Mouffe's theory of discourse.[7] For Freeden, ideologies enable the formation of subjective 'universes of meaning.'[8] These meaning-universes do not exhaust all the possible meanings or make meanings for all potential subjects. Instead, they are open and incomplete meaning-universes fixed through the arrangement of concepts which 'decontest' their meanings. Meaning systems are instantiations of the same ideology insofar as they elevate the same principal concepts. Ideologies themselves consist of a set of such concepts and a field of possible arrangements of those concept as a 'morphology.' Similarly, Laclau and Mouffe[9] and their successors[10] theorize discourses as partial systems of meaning, which are fixed through key signifiers. Parenthetically, a similar ontology is adopted in theories of populism as style, which are increasingly folded back into theories of populist discourse by their own proponents.[11]

What is distinct to Laclau and Mouffe, to which I return below, is their claims about how identities form. For them, identities are formed through logics of articulation. An 'us' is generated by the presentation of unmet demands as equivalent and those that make them as united. A 'them' is generated by connecting those against whom the demands are made. This set of demands between the 'us' and the 'them' constitutes an antagonism.

These shared claims create a common ontological space in which the two strings sit. The first such string is that populist meaning-systems construct society as divided into two groups locked in struggle: 'the people' and 'the elite.' This 'people'/'elite' divide is absent, in the conception of populist strategy,[12] but it is common to conceptions of populism as discourse, ideology and style. In the ideational conception, the divide between them is a Manichean struggle of the homogeneous, moral and sovereign 'people' against the homogeneous, immoral and illegitimate 'elite.' In the discursive conception, 'people' and 'elite' form the 'us' and 'them' described above, and the divide between them is the us/them antagonism composed of unmet demands.

The second such string of convergence is that populism disfigures democracy in a semi-authoritarian project. Among proponents of the ideational conception, there is near-unanimity on this point. This follows from their stipulations, already mentioned, that there only two groups, which are homogeneous; and that the people/elite struggle is one of good-vs.-evil, and their further stipulation that populists imbue 'the people' with a Roussean 'volunté genéralé (general will).'[13] They spell out that these claims set populisms against the liberal aspects of liberal democracy.[14] Some studies in the ideational conception document that populisms can offer an inclusive corrective to democracy by extending the conception of 'the people' to encompass the previously excluded.[15] Yet they also show that in power, such populists empower the executive, dismantle horizontal checks and balances, and violate civil liberties.[16]

Some attribute this string of claims to the ideational conception alone.[17] which Stavrakakis or Katsambekis work to cite?] However, some, writing out of both the discursive and ideational canons, also argue that populism is the carrier of a democracy-disfiguring project. The most prominent such scholars are (early) Carlos de la Torre and

ambiguously (which I return to in the third section) Jan-Werner Müller.[18] 'Advocacy for "the common people [alone]",' Müller writes 'even if it involves an explicit criticism of elites – is also insufficient evidence of populism.'[19] They locate this project in two features of Laclau and Mouffe's work. First, populists present the 'us' as not a part but a whole of the social (*pars pro toto*). This transforms the us/them divide into the frontier of the social and places the 'them' beyond that frontier. Therefore, these scholars argue, for populists, 'the elite' does not have democratic rights and may need to be eliminated to neutralize the existential threat it poses. Second, bifurcatory discourses like populism progressively empty the content of the 'us' as the equivalential chain extends; the wider the category, the less that unites those in it. At the extreme, the meaning of the 'us' becomes so empty that it is signified by the name of the leader alone. Therefore, they argue, as the leader signifies the people, they alone acquire the right to speak for 'the people.'

In sum, there is a set of shared claims about what the essential features of populism are. This set of shared claims is firmly rooted in the ideational conception of populism, but it also runs across some theories of populism that draw on the discursive conception. These claims fall into two strings: a 'people'/'elite' division and democracy disfiguration. These two-string theories of populism occupy what I call the center of populism studies. They occupy (perhaps, dominate) the center in the sense that they are prominent, probably the most prominent in the field. They also occupy the center in the sense that they unite two strings which, as I describe later, other theorists choose between. In that sense, they stand between such single-string theories.

The elite-leader problem

Recently, some designations of politicians as populist have been called into question. In many such cases of alleged mis-designation, analysts argue that an academic theory of populism has not been faithfully applied. Instead, 'populism' has become a signifier in other discourses,[20] not least academic ones,[21] spurred on by a 'populist hype.'[22] In these cases, implicitly, there is no case to be made in defense of these designations; they are incontrovertibly incorrect, and the most worthy academic exercise is not to further debate their correctness/incorrectness but to analyze the meaning-fixing discourses which use 'populism' as signifier.[23] However, often, judgement of the (in)correctness of application turn on subtleties of populism's definition which are worthy of academic debate. In other words, many (mis)designations are contestable and ought to be taken seriously as scholarly works. To date, arguments of this kind have clustered around one line of contention: that ideologies which are far right first and populist second, or not at all, have been analyzed as populist.[24]

I advance another line of contention which has received less attention: the portrayal of 'the leaders of the people.' A small but growing body of research analyzes how such 'leaders' are portrayed. Their findings ought to make for uncomfortable reading for populism studies. They show that in many different ways, 'the leaders' are portrayed in elite terms. Of course, prior to this conclusion is the question: what constitutes eliteness? More specifically, what qualifies as the imbibing of 'leaders' with eliteness in

a populist ideology (or political eliteness, as Nadia Urbinati argues populists more specifically construct)? 'The leaders' may bear (political) elite characteristics in the eye of the analyst, but nonetheless not be discursively imbued with such (political) eliteness in some populist meaning systems. The answers to this question are contested. I discuss them at length in the next section. Suffice to say, for now, that an actor is characterized as 'elite' insofar as it is located high on or at the top of a discursively created social hierarchy; therefore, it consists of whatever features with which that hierarchy is imbued in the meaning-system.[25] Often this will include power, wealth, advantage, education and/or cultured-ness.

Some portrayals of 'the leaders' as (political) elites are partial and performative. Maria Casullo, for example, analyzes how populists draw on repertoires of performance to offer four stylized presentations-of-self: patriotic military man, social leader, successful businessman, and strong woman.[26] The first and third of these styles, at the very least, include characteristics which often form part of those constructed social hierarchies. In another study, Casullo concludes that populist leaders offer performances in which, in some respects, their take on popular characteristics which 'mirror the people.' However, in other ways, their performances create distance between themselves and the people, and place themselves, elite-like, in power.[27] Ricardo Mendoca and Renato Caetano analyze similar, sometimes playful transgressions of low/high divides by Jair Bolsonaro.[28] Andrea Schneiker analyzes the performance of Donald Trump.[29] She analyzes that he presents himself as a savior and superhero.

Other studies of so-called populist discourses reach yet starker conclusions which should make for still more uncomfortable reading. Manuela Caiani and Patricia Kröll study (so-called) populist extreme right parties in Italy and Germany.[30] They find that *Forza Nuova* present 'the people' as stupid and prostrate. They present themselves as the hierarchically elevated above them. They act as their guide, defenders and vanguard. Similarly, they find that *Alternative für Deutschland* present themselves as the insightful citizens that will be the saviors of 'the people.' Caiani and Donatella Della Porta find that similar elitist thought runs through populist extreme-right movements more widely in Italy and Germany.[31] Zsolt Enyadi argues that so-called populist Victor Orban and his party Fidesz, portrays the people as manipulable, ill-disciplined and in need of paternal rule in a 'leader-democracy.'[32] Robert Csehi argues that they portray themselves as a 'counter-elite.'[33] Carola Schoor analyzes the discourses of Trump, Boris Johnson and Thierry Baudet,[34] all widely recognized as populist. She finds that they distinguish themselves from 'the people' through the construction of their laudable, elite characteristics. They portray themselves as educated and cultured (Baudet and Johnson), wealthy and successful (Trump), and powerful (Johnson, Trump).

In Latin America, Yannis Stavrakakis et al recognize that Hugo Chavez 'performed... a directive style of leadership' in which he took on a 'caesarean' role.[35] In Africa, Paget analyzes the discourses of so-called populists in power.[36] He focuses on John Magufuli and his ruling party. He finds that they draw on Leninist thought and characterize themselves as a vanguard elite, distinguished by their education, ability,

sagacity and power. He argues that such vanguard elitist can be found in the post-socialisms liberation movements like those in Zimbabwe and South Africa.[37]

These meaning-systems are not all alike, but they share something: all of them deviate from the people/elite string of populism. Consider for a moment just how emphatically Mudde defines the populist bifurcation:

> I define populism as an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite.'[38]

In these ideational terms, the ideologies described above defy the constructed homogeneity of 'the elite.' Instead, they construct a part of it which is not opposed to 'the people,' but allied with it. Equally, they contradict the portrayal of 'the elite' as immoral; they imagine one part of it as moral. Laclau is equally emphatic that populist discourses 'divide, in this way, the social into two camps: power and the underdog.'[39] In these discursive terms, in the ideologies describes it becomes unclear that 'the leaders' are joined to 'the people' in an equivalential chain. Even if they are, the us/them divide constructed in relation to it ceases to be one separating low and high axis. Instead, it crosses that axis, uniting 'the people' below and their elite leaders above.

Therefore, these ideologies stand in close proximity to the people/elite divide of populism, but they also incontrovertibly deviate from it. The imbuing of the 'leaders of the people' with features constructed as elite features is a direct contradiction of the definitions of populism described above. These definitions have already been stripped to the bone. Studies of populism have made it a cliché to remark that populisms vary in their ideological content; they vary from left to right, inclusive to exclusive, and so on. This incredible range – one might say audacious range – is facilitated by its conceptual minimality, it's reduction to a thin-centered ideology or logic of articulation and minimal fixation of meaning which can be found in such diverse political thought. As this definition of populism is already so minimal, to apply the term to meanings systems that deviate from it as if these features were incidental to the application of the concept would stretch the concept beyond coherence. By the two-string definitions offered above, these elite-leader meaning-systems are not populist.

Nonetheless, many have persisted in assigning populism to them. Many such elite-leader ideologies, especially those in power, are taken as exemplars of the second, democracy-disfiguring string of populism.[40] Hugo Chavez and Rafael Correa have been major inspirations for studies of authoritarian populism in Latin America.[41] Jaroslaw and Lech Kaczyński and Victor Orbán been go-to cases of authoritarian populism in central Europe.[42] Donald Trump and Boris Johnson have become much cited cases of Anglo-American authoritarian populism.[43] So have Narendra Modi, Benjamin Netayahu and Recep Tayyip Erdogan in India, Israel and Turkey.[44] Studies of the authoritarian aspect of populism have made cases such as these the principals subjects of their research. They might well be loathe to expel any, let alone all of these cases from their domains of study.

Yet many, perhaps all construct 'the leaders' in constructed elite terms in varying degrees and forms. They all display the elite-leader problem.

The center fails

In the two-string center, theorists advertently or inadvertently address the elite-leader problem. They configure their theories of populism in ways that offer potential resolutions to this contradiction while retaining both of its interwoven strings. One such revision configuration builds outwards from the Laclaudian idea that 'the leaders' becoming a signifier for 'the people.' Some interpret this signification as embodiment, notably (early) de la Torre. It is not only that, as in Urbinati, 'the leaders' alone speak for 'the people.' Instead, embodiment implies, to paraphrase Lisa Wedeen, that the leviathan-like body of 'the leaders' are composed of or absorbs 'the people' or that 'the people' absorb, internalize or incorporate 'the leaders', or both.[45] In either case, if 'the leaders' are imbued with constructed eliteness, this does not resolve the contradiction; it exacerbates it. Imagine that 'the people' and 'the elite' are separated along some hierarchy of status. Further imagine that 'the leaders' are located high on that hierarchy, and that 'the leaders' embody 'the people' as described above. This entails either that 'the people' are in 'the leaders' or visa versa. If the former, 'the leaders' are of low status and of high status at the same time. Therefore, the us/them conflict runs along that hierarchy, consistent with populism, but it also still cuts across it, inconsistent with populism. The contradiction is complicated, but not resolved. If the latter, 'the people' are both of low status and, because of their absorption of 'the leaders', or high status. Therefore, the us/them divide does not separate low and high at all. I return to this question of embodiment in the final section of the article, where I discuss contradictory populisms.

Another such configuration focuses on conception of 'the elite' in populism. The foremost proponents of this approach write in the ideational tradition, but others working in the discursive and stylistic canon adopt it too.[46] In his seminal 2004 article, Mudde stipulates that 'the elite' is constructed as immoral, not synonymous with an economic class, and defined in opposition to 'the people.'[47] In subsequent works, Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser refine what, in their conception, this entails. They specify, drawing on Laclau and Mouffe, that 'the elite' is an empty signifier: a term that carriers no innate content. The only content always fixed in that signifier, they assert, is immorality.[48] In later work, he adopts a progressively starker position. In 2012, he and Kaltwasser write that 'the distinction… is first and foremost moral (i.e. pure vs. corrupt), not situational (e.g. position of power), socio-cultural (e.g. ethnicity, religion), or socio-economic (e.g. class).'[49] In 2017, he writes that construction a people/elite divide principally imbued with socio-economic characteristics does not make one a populist at all.[50] In 2021, Mudde becomes yet more forthright: 'Wealth and power in themselves do not make one part of "the elite". What makes you part of the elite is having the wrong values.'[51]

In these theorizations, the term 'elite' is emptied of all the meanings normally associated with it, a critique which others have levelled against Mudde.[52] Freeden, writes

about the 'inalienable elements' of concepts. The meanings fixed in concepts are ultimately arbitrary and changeably. Nevertheless, he argues, elements of meaning are at least partially culturally fixed in them. Otherwise, they would cease to be means of intersubjective communication at all. For example, he continues, the concept 'democracy' takes on a range of meanings, but 'rule by the people' is always a part of that meaning, no matter how it is interpreted; this is, in his terminology, an 'inalienable element' of this concept. I argue that superiority is an inalienable element of the concept of 'elite.' Etymologically, elite means choice or select, as in best. It is derived from the Latin verb 'to choose.' The OED defines elite as:

> The pick or choice part (of society, a group of people, etc.), the flower; *spec. (a)* a select group that is superior in terms of ability or qualities to the rest of a group or society; *(b)* a group or class of people seen as having the most power and influence in a society, especially on account of their wealth or privilege.

The meter or criteria in relation to which 'the elite' are judged to be best is changeable. The hierarchical ranking which puts 'the elite' at the top might be fixed in relation to power, influence, wealth or privilege, as suggested by the OED, or their intelligence, wisdom, education, culture or media-savvy, for example. Pejorative uses of 'elite' do not cease to connote superiority. Instead, the meaning of superiority they fix moves from first- to second-order. They do not think that 'the elite' are the best; they may think that they are *truly* the worst. Nevertheless, they recognize that 'the elite' are either widely regarded as superior by others, or that they have acquired superior positions in social structures.

This notion of superior status is essential to the concept of eliteness. To use the term but alienate this element of it would be to abuse the meaning of the term 'elite' in everyday language. Yet this is exactly what Mudde does. It is not necessarily that the populists he describes misuse the meaning of this term, though of course they may. *He* distorts it's meaning when he stipulates that populists construct 'the elite', where 'elite' need only mean 'immoral.' To see why, imagine an ideology which meets all the ideational criteria of populism: it constructs a Manichean pure-vs.-corrupt struggle between 'the people' and 'the elite', where the former has a general will, in complete agreement with his definition. Further imagine that it further characterizes 'the elite' in one or more of the following ways, but in no other ways: impoverished, powerless, dominated, underprivileged, wretched, or lowly. Mudde is committed to recognizing such an ideology as populist. He would have to recognize it on the basis, in part, that they construct 'the elite' as the enemy of 'the people.' Yet it does so only if one alienates superiority from the concept of eliteness. In other words, it constructs 'the elite' in name only. Therefore, Mudde and others in the two-string center that make equivalent moves, *nominally* keep 'the elite' in their theory of populism, but substantively they eliminate it. This resolves the elite-leader contradiction, but at a high price. Their conception of populism ceases to separate those that substantively construct people/elite divides from

those that construct other us/them divides. Like Urbinati, Müller and others, in practice, they jettison the people/elite string of populism.

Therefore, the center fails. Theories of populism which adopt one string of populism and jettison the other have no trouble navigating elite-leader ideologies, but the center does. Ostensibly, the center holds by resolving this contradiction through its theorization of embodiment and/or its definition of 'the elite.' However, embodiment does not resolve this contradiction. The ideational redefinition of 'the elite' succeeds, but in practice, jettisons the people/elite string of populism in all but name.

Single-string theories of populism

How, then, should such elite-leader ideologies be analyzed? Outside the two-strand center lie two further clusters of theories of populism that. Each contains some theories which draw on the discursive canon, the ideational canon, or both. Each offers a different answer to this question.

Those in the first do not consider populism to be necessarily democracy-disfguring. Many texts in this canon simply do not mention authoritarianism as an aspect of the populisms they study.[53] This position is taken squarely by proponents of the discourse-theoretical perspective, who take Laclau and Mouffe as their foundational text and fall squarely in the discursive canon.[54] When they discuss the *pars pro toto* shift from 'people' as 'plebs' to totality, they do not identify it as the seed of authoritarianism.[55] They do not simply deny or omit the potential for authoritarianism. Instead, they understand it as only one possibility contained in populism, which can be tempered if enemies are recast as adversaries.[56] However, this position also seems to be taken by some prominent proponents of the ideational conception.[57]

Those in this cluster writing in the discourse-theoretical perspective further refine how populist discourses differ from other bifurcatory discourses which construct us/them divides. Stavrakakis stipulates, following Laclau and Mouffe, that 'the people' and 'the elite' are constructed in relation to their different structural locations out of and in power.[58] This confines populists to those that the analyst deems to be in and out of power. Future work continues in this fashion,[59] until he and Benjamin de Cleen offer a reformulation which draws on the work of Pierre Ostiguy.[60] They clarify: populists construct us/them divides which overlay a down/up or high/low axis. This axis 'refers to power, status and hierarchical socio-cultural and/or socio-economic positioning.'[61] So-called populist discourses which construct 'the leaders' as above 'the people' are likely to be best classified as far-right discourses which have been euphemistically mis-designated as populist amid populist hype.[62] They even fleetingly recognize that far-right movements that construct their leaders in elite terms may be 'paradoxical elitist populism[s].'[63]

In sum, those writing in this cluster take the people/elite string to be as an essential feature of populism, and they tightly define it, and the democracy-disfiguring string as a non-essential feature exhibited by a subset of populisms.[64] This makes their position on elite-leader ideologies simple. They are either not populisms, or are populisms combined with some other discursive logic or thought-body.

A second cluster of theories offers an opposing resolution to the elite-leader contradiction: they develop definitions of populism which elevate the democracy-disfiguring string, and relegate the people/elite string. They draw selectively on Mudde and Laclau and Mouffe, and so write out of both ideational and discursive canons. Theories in this cluster are exemplified by Nadia Urbinati.[65] Urbinati understands the construction of a people/elite divide as populist rhetoric common to popular movements. She distinguishes this from populism as a project of power:

> Although the focus on the populists' appeal to the many versus the few have dominated the literature on populism, it is however the relationship between populist governments and democratic institutions (constitution-remaking, in particular) that has to be deemed central.[66]

For Urbinati, populism is principally a project of theoretic and practical democracy disfiguration. Anti-elitism *can* emerge in populisms, especially in opposition. However, she argues that it is epiphenomenal to populism's anti-establishmentarian creed which specifies that holding power corrupts.[67] Therefore, Urbinati, and their subscribers propose theories of populism in which the second, democracy-disfiguring string is essential to populism, but the first is people/elite dividing string is not. The implication of these theories is that elite-leader ideologies could qualify as populist, as long as they also articulate ideologies of democracy-disfiguration.

In sum, beyond the center, some adopt the people/elite string as essential to populism's definition. Others adopt the democracy-disfiguring string as essential instead. Their definitional decisions determine clearly whether elite-leader ideologies could qualify as populist or not.

Another dimension of variety in populisms

This failure of the center leaves a field of populism which is polarized. The field is populated by theories which adopt one string of populism over the other, whether they admit it or not. They cluster around these single-string poles, leaving the center vacant. In his most recent works, de la Torre recognizes these centrifugal tendencies in populism studies. He offers one way to make sense of it. He counsels: stop seeking a unity across all populisms.[68] The search for a minimal definition which all populists meet is, he argues, a positivist conceptual project.[69] Populism, he argues, is complex, and multiple instances can all be populist, even if, family resemblance-style, there are no features which they *all* share. He advocates what he presents as an interpretivist alternative to theorizing populism: an ideal-typical family list of features form which instantiations necessarily deviate. In particular, he delineates populism in opposition from authoritarian populism in government. Populisms in opposition speak to issues which others ignore, expose failings in democracy and protest against inequalities. Authoritarian populists in government enact a democracy-disfiguring agenda like that theorized by Urbinati.[70]

Yet de la Torre is wrong to think that clear concepts are the purview of positivists alone. Certainly, interpretivists (and post-structuralists) recognize that worlds of meaning are messy, changeable, and infinitely variable; consequently, there is always more to instantiations of concepts than the concepts themselves contain.[71] Yet this makes the refinement of clear concepts not less important, but more so. When an analyst ascribes a concept, how are others to understand what they have ascribed if the concept consists of an *á la carte* menu of family resemblances? A family resemblance concept does not resolve the divergences in populisms which I have reviewed above; it obscures it, by denying that there are distinct theories which each disagrees with the other. Worse still, his theorization has implications which confuse. By his conception, a populist in opposition who did all he specifies that they do, who upon entering government, kept doing exactly the same things, would cease to be a populist, or, in de la Torre's ideal-typical terminology, would deviate from the ideal-type of populism by many degrees. Worse still, de la Torre comes close - like other theories in the failing centers – to imposing one string over the other by stealth. While claiming to recognize the diversity in populisms, he hews close to the democracy-disfiguring string of populism. He empties his ideal-typical conception of references to a people/elite antagonism and elevates the construction of people as totality and the portray of leader as embodiment of that totality.

I propose that rather than resisting this divergence in theories of populism, we embrace it. Recognize that there are two clusters of populism theories: populism as people/elite division, and populism as democracy-disfiguration. Some instances may qualify as populist under both concepts, but as elite-leader portrayals are so common to populisms in power, many qualify as populist under only one conception or the other. These two theorizations of populism closely though not entirely resemble populism as plebeianism and populism as totalitarianism as theorized by Camila Vergara.[72] They also map closely onto the distinction which Urbinati draws in the quotation above between what she characterizes as (merely) populism as movement and (more significantly) populism as ruling power.[73] Hereafter I refer interchangeably to populism as people/elite division and populism as plebeianism, and populism as democracy-disfiguration and authoritarian populism respectively. One might insist that one of these theories of populism is *the* meaning of populism and that the other ought to be assigned a different term. Yet populism studies has reached a stage at which large bodies of studies now employ the term to refer to each theory. Both of these rival conceptions have equal claims to the term populist. To call one the true meaning of populist at the expense of the other would be equally arbitrary.

These two poles of populism theories are not reducible to the established varieties of conceptions of populism. Granted, many that embrace populism as people/elite division subscribe to the discourse-theoretic conception. However, so do subscribers to the conception of populism as style.[74] So, seemingly, do some applications, or even theorizations of populism as thin-centered ideology. These dissenting proponents of populism as ideology not only treat democracy-disfiguration as a non-essential feature of populism; they seem to depart from Mudde's treatment of 'the elite' in populism; they certainly do not embrace it explicitly.[75] Equally, as I have already described, theorists of

authoritarian populism are diverse. Some draw on ideational conceptions of populism. Yet others draw more explicitly and extensively on Laclau.

Instead, this divergence makes-up a distinct dimension of variety of populism. Studies of populism have come to recognize that they must choose arbitrarily between rival conceptions of populism as ideology, discourse, strategy and style, and the like.[76] It is now good practice for studies of populism to make this choice an explicit introductory supposition. The theorization of populism as people/elite dividing or democracy-disfiguring ought to be treated the same way.

Variations upon populism

Recognizing this further dimension of variety of populisms opens-up yet another field of variation. Once one concedes that the center fails, one can dispense with attempts to hold populism as people/elite division and populism as democracy disfiguration together. This relieves theories of populism in the failed center of their efforts to distort the concept of eliteness. This in turn reopens the question of how to characterize elite-leader ideologies. Whether or not they articulate democracy-disfiguring projects, if they do not construct a people/elite divide, what do they construct?

Carola Schoor offers the beginnings of an answer.[77] As she elucidates, the ideational theory of populism constructs populism, elitism and pluralism as opposites, when in fact, they can mix. I build on her ideas by theorizing *in what ways* they mix. The first step is to recognize that elite-leader ideologies do not bifurcate the social into two sets of actors, the trifurcate it into three.[78] In the language of ideology studies, this distinction is a straight-forward one to draw. The former imagines society composed of 'the people' and 'the elite' as two groups which meet in conflict. The latter imagines society composed of 'people', 'elite-leaders of the people' and 'elite' with the former two allied in conflict or linked conflicts with the latter. This more faithfully captures the claims of many so-called populists sometimes proposed by Müller, in an act of self-contradiction, which is on display in the epigraph.

However, to make this distinction in discourse-theoretic terms requires further conceptual work. Laclau and Mouffe are clear that 'antagonism does not admit *tertium quid*': the existence of a third element.[79] For them, a totalizing equivalential chain runs to the edge of the social, uniting all on one side as an 'us' and hemming together all on the other as a 'them', each defined in negation of the other. There are two ways to theorize trifurcation within this framework. The first is to point out that equivalential chains do not *have* to run to the edge of the social. To insist otherwise is to commit oneself to a discursive teleology with no foundation. Imagine a pair of discourses, each of which renders equivalent fighting demands: one which interpellates 'the people' and hems together 'the immoral elite', and another such chain which interpellates 'the moral elite' and hems together the 'immoral elite.' These two discourses, stitched together, could offer a fragmentary picture of 'people' against 'immoral elite' and 'moral elite' also against 'immoral elite.'

The second is to reconsider what is meant by 'equivalent.' Laclau and Mouffe think of equivalential chains as consisting of paradigmatic links which render them the

same in some respect. Yet these can be overlaid with syntagmatic links which render them different in another respect. Put otherwise, a chain of equivalences may be kinked or frayed. In such an interrupted chain, the fighting demands *before* this kink could be rendered equivalent and the associated actors interpellated as one heterogeneous 'people.' The demands *after* the kink would be rendered equivalent to one another but rendered merely similar or related to those before it and the associated actors interpellated as a separate elite ally. All those in the chain would share an enemy or adversary, and would form a united 'us.' Nevertheless, within that 'us' coalition, 'people' and 'moral elite' would sit as distinct identities, articulated in reference to their distinct and non-equivalent demands. In other words, combinations of logics of equivalence and difference can create internal differentiation within an equivalential chain. This yields an at most fragmentary 'us' composed of distinct and distant allies. A careful reading reveals that Laclau and Mouffe recognize that such a 'system of relations with other elements' can be made in discourse.[80]

Below, I outline four trifurcatory discourses, which, following several scholars, I call varieties of elitist plebeianism or elitist-plebeian hybrids.[81] They are each applicable to some of the elite-leader meaning-systems which I reviewed above. They all offer new ways to theorize them.

The first is elitist plebeianism (proper). It has been previously theorized by Paget under the same label.[82] Something similar has been theorized by Stavrakakis et al under the similar name 'caesaro-plebeianism.'[83] Like populism as people/elite division, it constructs 'the people' below on a down/up axis of hierarchy. However, it constructs 'the people' as 'the plebs' or 'the many', not as the whole or the totality. It also differs from populism by constructing 'the corrupt' as an enemy/adversary of 'the people' as plebs located above them on the same dimension of hierarchy. However, it does not locate them at the top. It places 'the leaders of the people' above 'the corrupt' in turn. It interpellates those leaders as 'the virtuous elite.' This virtuous elite is not part of 'the people.' Nor does it embody it. However it does act in its interests. It struggles against 'the corrupt', exercising its superior abilities which the plebs lack. Therefore, it is a powerful elite ally of 'the people' as plebs, which might be portrayed as 'the vanguard elite' or 'the guardians of the people.' Paget identifies John Pombe Magufuli of Tanzania as an elitist plebeian.[84] However, Nicolás Maduro, later-Hugo Chavez, later-Jacob Zuma, Yoweri Museveni may, speculatively, all exhibit it.[85]

The second is counter-elitist plebeianism. It has been known under other names by Caiana and della Porta and Schoor. Like populism as plebeianism, it constructs 'the people' below and 'the elite' above. Like elitist plebeianism (proper), it constructs 'the people' as plebs rather than as totality, and so I call it plebeian. Unlike elitist plebeianism, it imagines 'the corrupt elite' and 'the virtuous counter-elite' as entities that operate on the same level of status-hierarchy. It does not complain that 'the counter-elite' embodies 'the people.' However, it does portray them as acting on their behalf by engaging in a struggle against 'the corrupt elite.' Johnson, Trump, Baudet, *Forza Nuova* and *Alternative für Deutschland* are all possible exemplars of counter-elite plebeianism.

The third is elitist post-populism as plebeianism. The term 'post-populism' is developed most elaborately by Dani Filc.[86] However, the populism which he theorizes such post-populisms succeed is not defined in accordance with any of the theories elaborated above. By elitist post-populism as plebeianism, I mean an ideology that builds in low/high locations suspended at different points in time. Specifically, I mean at trifurcatory ideology constructs 'the people' below, 'the moral elite' above, and 'the fallen, corrupt elite.' This ideology constructs a prior point in time, during which 'the fallen corrupt elite' *was* located above 'the people.' However, it constructs a present point in time at which the 'corrupt elite' has tumbled down that hierarchy to a low position, either on par with or below 'the people.' As 'the corrupt elite' has fallen, it does not need to be thrown out of power; it has already dropped or been cast out. Nevertheless, such elitist post-populisms are animated by an enduring interest in avenging 'the people' for the past wrongs done to them by 'the fallen elite.' Such elitist post-populisms, of course, are the easy chronological successors to elitist plebeianisms and counter-elitist plebeianisms. A discourse might articulate one when 'the corrupt elite' are in power and high, and then adapt to their fall. However, they need not be preceded by them. Elitist post-populisms could equally be articulated in the absence of such a preceding ideology or discourse in a reinterpretation of past events.

The fourth is contradictory populisms-elitisms. Ideology studies and discourse analyses inevitably confront incoherence, contradiction and polysemy in the texts and performances that examine. They often endeavor to distil coherence from them. However, these contradictions are important for the meanings created in these ideologies. Indeed, politicians the world over artfully use incoherence and even direct contradict to circumvent the rhetorical challenges they face. I counsel that populism studies lean into this incoherence and embrace the contradictions they encounter in political thought. It should think of contradiction not as a shortcoming of the analyst to be eliminated in better analysis. Instead, it is a feature of discourse which analysts should interpret. I argue that this is key to making sense of many elite-leader meaning-systems previously ascribed populism. A scattering of studies recognize that particular populisms contain contradictory claims about leaders and people.[87] However, these contradictions are not recognized as features that make those meaning-systems part of a distinct variation upon populism. They should be.

Contradictory populisms-elitisms may, in accordance with theories of populist embodiment, bifurcate the social, and claim that 'the people' and/or 'the leaders' are both below and above at the time. Alternatively, they may oscillate between bifurcatory and trifurcatory logics. At times, they construct the social as consisting of two actors – 'people' and 'elite' – in accordance with populism as plebeianism. At other times, they construct the social as consisting of three actors – 'people', 'corrupt elite' and either 'virtuous elite' or 'counter-elite' in accordance with elitist plebeianism and counter-elitist plebeianism respectively. In other words, their social imaginary is not consistent or coherent.

In sum, these elitist-plebeian hybrids make up a field of variation upon populism as plebeianism. These tri-alisms express constellations of meaning which may correspond

to the elite-leader ideologies which others have analyzed as populist. Therefore, these meaning-systems should be revisited and reinterpreted. It may be that, equipped with these theoretical tools, they would be better analyzed as populism as plebeianism-adjacent ideologies.

Conclusion

Populism studies has become expansive and complex. Scholars have brought order to that complexity by distinguishing between varieties of populism: codified and reified rival ontological conceptions of populism. I have offered an alternative ordering of populism studies. Agreements and disagreements about what the essential features of populism are cut across theories within each of those conceptions. On one side stand theories of populism as people/elite division. On the other stand theories of populism as democracy-disfiguration. In the center, ostensibly, theories of populism join both of these strings. Yet within these two-string theories lies a contradiction. They insist on designating elite-leader meaning-systems as populist, which contradicts the people/elite strand. They successfully resolve this elite-leader problem only by emptying-out their concept of 'the elite' and becoming single-strand theories of populism as democracy-disfiguration in all but name. Therefore, the center fails. Theories of populism gather around two single-string poles. This amounts to a further dimension of variety in populisms. Studies ought to accept that theories at each pole are rival and make explicit which they are adopting. This will make the development and application of adjacent theories clearer in the future.

However, this first order of new varieties of populism is not the last. I have argued that the elite-leader ideologies which prove so difficult for the failed center to resolve are a source of a new field of variations upon populisms. This field of variants is significant.

Not only do they offer a resolution to the elite-leader problem and facilitate a further re-ordering populism studies. They are significant because they elucidate important differences in meaning. While the similarities between populism as plebeianism and elitist-plebeian hybrids are substantial, so are their dissimilarities. Populisms as plebeians construct 'the leaders' as part of 'the people'; elitist plebeianisms do not. They differentiate 'the people' from their leaders, and present them as allies even while holding in suspense their separateness. This alters the nature of the conflict in which they engage. Populist as plebeian discourses construct struggles as low against high. In contrast, their elitist plebeian counterparts marry a struggle in which the protagonist punches up with another in which the protagonist punches down. This in turn lends elitist and plebeian discourses to different styles of performances. While populists as plebeians seek to act-out their identity as part of 'the people' through displays of commonness and closeness, elitist plebeianisms present themselves in elite terms which draw-out their distance from the people.

This in turn affects the dilemmas that those constructed as 'leaders' face in power. Populists as plebeians face the rhetorical challenges of reconciling their positions of power and their distance from 'the corrupt elite.' They play language games which relocate 'the corrupt elite' in the deep state, business, the media or the international system. Equally, they do so by presenting themselves as in office, but not in power. In

contrast, elitist plebeians face no such rhetorical challenges. They lean-into their positions in government. They weave their locations at the apex into their constructed eliteness. They act-out their seniority and their power in their interactions with 'the people.' Their appear elevated on stage when they address 'the people' at rallies; they are differentiated from 'the people' in dress and manner; they construct imagined specialisms of role in struggle based on their differential abilities and locations. Likewise, they perform their seniority and power in their combative interactions with 'the corrupt.' Elitist plebeianism (proper) and elitist post-populists in particular present these conflicts as asymmetric. They have superior power; their opponents have inferior power. As such, their struggles are not about contests for supremacy but games of cat and mouse. They involve attempts by 'the virtuous elite' to detect, track-down, capture and eliminate or punish 'the corrupt' or 'the fallen elite, and attempts by the latter to evade, deceive or exhaust the former.

The significance of the potential differences in populist as plebeian and elitist-plebeian meaning-systems is illustrated by the corresponding different between authoritarian populist meaning-systems and their guardianship counter-parts. The ready-correspondence between elitist plebeianisms and theories of guardianship extends the differences in principle which the former can carry. To imagine 'the virtuous elite' as guardian, not representative, and 'the people' as ward, not sovereign, fundamentally upturns the political ideas with which populism is associated. Authoritarian populisms at least nominally see popular will as the ultimate source of the legitimacy of the action of 'the leaders.' As such, those leaders strive to continually make and sustain representative claims to popular audiences. In contrast, ideologies of guardianship see their superior knowledge, vision, cause-commitment or abilities of the rulers as the ultimate source of their authority. These fixations of meaning free them of any imperative to perform the correspondence between popular opinion and their ideas. Instead, they animate them to maintain that they are indeed best rulers. Consequently, these ideologies impel 'the leaders' to continually present their actions and visions as those which best serve the interests of 'the people.' Altogether, the new second-order variations upon populism express important differences in meaning. Recognizing and applying these concepts is crucial to ensure that those called-populists are accurately analyzed. The slew of elite-leader ideologies ascribed populism in the past raises the possibility that many of them may have been mis-analyzed. Altogether, this presents a compelling reason to revisit many meaning-systems which have been studied as populist in the past. Some may be due reinterpretation as populist-adjacent elitist-plebeianisms.

The expansion of populism studies shows no signs of slowing. Populism as a field is in constant conceptual evolution. The reordering of old concepts and the specification of new concept which I have offered here can make that expansion clearer. I hope that it will aid good interpretation of meanings, and avoid possible misinterpretation of meanings. That said, as the expansion continues, doubtlessly, new moments of rethinking the field will emerge. We cannot yet imagine what sorts of new theories that expansion and reflection will bring.

[1] Müller, *What Is Populism?*, 20.

[2] Müller, 30.

[3] Müller, 2.

[4] Gidron and Bonikowski, "Varieties of Populism: Literature Review and Research Agenda."

[5] Paget, "Mistaken for Populism: Magufuli, Ambiguity and Elitist Plebeianism in Tanzania"; Stavrakakis et al., "Contemporary Left-Wing Populism in Latin America: Leadership, Horizontalism, and Postdemocracy in Chávez's Venezuela"; Vergara, "Populism as Plebeian Politics: Inequality, Domination, and Popular Empowerment."

[6] Mudde, "Populism: An Ideational Approach," 40.

[7] Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*.

[8] Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach*.

[9] Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*.

[10] Glynos and Howarth, *Logics of Critical Explanation in Social and Political Theory*.

[11] Moffitt, *Populism*; Ostiguy, Panizza, and Moffitt, *Populism in Global Perspective: A Performative and Discursive Approach*.

[12] Weyland, "Populism: A Political-Strategic Approach."

[13] Mudde, "The Populist Zeitgeist."

[14] Mudde; Mudde, "Populism in Europe: An Illiberal Democratic Response to Undemocratic Liberalism (The Government and Opposition/Leonard Schapiro Lecture 2019)."

[15] Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, *Populism in Europe and the Americas: Threat or Corrective for Democracy?*

[16] Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser; Albertazzi and Mueller, "Populism and Liberal Democracy: Populists in Government in Austria, Italy, Poland and Switzerland."

[17] Moffitt, *Populism*.

[18] De la Torre, *Populist Seduction in Latin America*; Müller, *What Is Populism?*

[19] Müller, *What Is Populism?*, 22.

[20] Stavrakakis, "The Return of 'the People': Populism and Anti-Populism in the Shadow of the European Crisis."

[21] Dean and Maiguashca, "Did Somebody Say Populism? Towards a Renewal and Reorientation of Populism Studies."

[22] Glynos and Mondon, "The Political Logic of Populist Hype: The Case of Right-Wing Populism's 'Meteoric Rise'and Its Relation to the Status Quo."

[23] For advocacy of such a reorientation of populism studies, see: Dean and Maiguashca, "Did Somebody Say Populism? Towards a Renewal and Reorientation of Populism Studies."

[24] Brown, Mondon, and Winter, "The Far Right, the Mainstream and Mainstreaming: Towards a Heuristic Framework."

[25] De Cleen and Stavrakakis, "Distinctions and Articulations: A Discourse Theoretical Framework for the Study of Populism and Nationalism"; Ostiguy, "Populism: A Socio-Cultural Approach."

[26] Casullo, "How to Become a Leader: Identifying Global Repertoires for Populist Leadership."

[27] Casullo, "The Body Speaks before It Even Talks: Deliberation, Populism and Bodily Representation."

[28] Mendonça and Caetano, "Populism as Parody: The Visual Self-Presentation of Jair Bolsonaro on Instagram."

[29] Schneiker, "Telling the Story of the Superhero and the Anti-Politician as President: Donald Trump's Branding on Twitter."

30 Caiani and Kröll, "Nationalism and Populism in Radical Right Discourses in Italy and Germany."

31 Caiani and Della Porta, "The Elitist Populism of the Extreme Right: A Frame Analysis of Extreme Right-Wing Discourses in Italy and Germany."

32 Enyedi, "Paternalist Populism and Illiberal Elitism in Central Europe."

33 Csehi, "Neither Episodic, nor Destined to Failure? The Endurance of Hungarian Populism after 2010."

34 Schoor, "Where the Real People Meet the Real Elite: Exploring Mixes of Populism with Elitism."

35 Stavrakakis et al., "Contemporary Left-Wing Populism in Latin America: Leadership, Horizontalism, and Postdemocracy in Chávez's Venezuela." 63

36 Paget, "Mistaken for Populism: Magufuli, Ambiguity and Elitist Plebeianism in Tanzania."

37 Melber, "Populism in Southern Africa under Liberation Movements as Governments."

38 Mudde, "The Populist Zeitgeist," 543.

39 Laclau, "Populism: What's in a Name?," 38.

40 Müller, *What Is Populism?*

41 De la Torre, "Populism in Latin America"; Pappas, "Populists in Power."

42 Pappas, "Populists in Power"; Stanley, "Populism in Central and Eastern Europe."

43 Ward and Ward, "From Brexit to COVID-19: The Johnson Government, Executive Centralisation and Authoritarian Populism"; Kellner, *American Nightmare: Donald Trump, Media Spectacle, and Authoritarian Populism*.

44 Rogenhofer and Panievsky, "Antidemocratic Populism in Power: Comparing Erdoğan's Turkey with Modi's India and Netanyahu's Israel."

45 De La Torre, "Left-Wing Populism: Inclusion and Authoritarianism in Venezuela, Bolivia, and Ecuador"; Müller, *What Is Populism?*

46 Scoones et al., "Emancipatory Rural Politics: Confronting Authoritarian Populism"; Moffitt and Tormey, "Rethinking Populism: Politics, Mediatisation and Political Style."

47 Mudde, "The Populist Zeitgeist."

48 Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, *Populism in Europe and the Americas: Threat or Corrective for Democracy?*, 9; Mudde and Kaltwasser, *Populism: A Very Short Introduction*, 32.

49 Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, *Populism in Europe and the Americas: Threat or Corrective for Democracy?*, 8.

50 Mudde, "Populism: An Ideational Approach."

51 Mudde, "Populism in Europe: An Illiberal Democratic Response to Undemocratic Liberalism (The Government and Opposition/Leonard Schapiro Lecture 2019)," 3.

52 De La Torre and Mazzoleni, "Do We Need a Minimum Definition of Populism? An Appraisal of Mudde's Conceptualization."

53 Stavrakakis and Katsambekis, "Left-Wing Populism in the European Periphery: The Case of SYRIZA"; Katsambekis, "Constructing 'the People' of Populism: A Critique of the Ideational Approach from a Discursive Perspective"; Katsambekis, "The Populist Surge in Post-democratic Times: Theoretical and Political Challenges"; De Cleen and Stavrakakis, "Distinctions and Articulations: A Discourse Theoretical Framework for the Study of Populism and Nationalism."

54 Glynos and Howarth, *Logics of Critical Explanation in Social and Political Theory.*

55 Stavrakakis, "The Return of 'the People': Populism and Anti-Populism in the Shadow of the European Crisis"; Katsambekis, "Constructing 'the People' of Populism: A Critique of the Ideational Approach from a Discursive Perspective."

[56] Mouffe, *On the Political*.

[57] Hawkins and Kaltwasser, "What the (Ideational) Study of Populism Can Teach Us, and What It Can't."

[58] Stavrakakis, "Antinomies of Formalism: Laclau's Theory of Populism and the Lessons from Religious Populism in Greece."

[59] Stavrakakis, "The Return of 'the People': Populism and Anti-Populism in the Shadow of the European Crisis"; Stavrakakis and Katsambekis, "Left-Wing Populism in the European Periphery: The Case of SYRIZA."

[60] Ostiguy, "The High-Low Political Divide. Rethinking Populism and Anti-Populism."

[61] De Cleen and Stavrakakis, "Distinctions and Articulations: A Discourse Theoretical Framework for the Study of Populism and Nationalism," 311.

[62] Brown and Mondon, "Populism, the Media, and the Mainstreaming of the Far Right: The Guardian's Coverage of Populism as a Case Study."

[63] Stavrakakis and Katsambekis, "Left-Wing Populism in the European Periphery: The Case of SYRIZA," 123.

[64] De Cleen, Glynos, and Mondon, "Critical Research on Populism: Nine Rules of Engagement."

[65] Pappas, "Populists in Power"; Müller, *What Is Populism?*; Urbinati, *Me the People: How Populism Transforms Democracy*.

[66] Urbinati, "Populism and the Principle of Majority," 585.

[67] Urbinati, *Me the People: How Populism Transforms Democracy*, 56–59.

[68] de la Torre, "Latin American Populist Authoritarian Inclusion."

[69] De La Torre and Mazzoleni, "Do We Need a Minimum Definition of Populism? An Appraisal of Mudde's Conceptualization."

[70] Urbinati, *Me the People: How Populism Transforms Democracy*.

[71] Glynos and Howarth, *Logics of Critical Explanation in Social and Political Theory*.

[72] Vergara, "Populism as Plebeian Politics: Inequality, Domination, and Popular Empowerment."

[73] Urbinati, *Me the People: How Populism Transforms Democracy*, 15.

[74] Ostiguy, "Populism: A Socio-Cultural Approach"; Ostiguy, Panizza, and Moffitt, *Populism in Global Perspective: A Performative and Discursive Approach*; Moffitt, *Populism*.

[75] Hawkins and Kaltwasser, "The Ideational Approach to Populism."

[76] Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach*.

[77] Schoor, "Where the Real People Meet the Real Elite: Exploring Mixes of Populism with Elitism."

[78] Paget, "Mistaken for Populism: Magufuli, Ambiguity and Elitist Plebeianism in Tanzania."

[79] Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, 115.

[80] Laclau and Mouffe, 118.

[81] Vergara, "Populism as Plebeian Politics: Inequality, Domination, and Popular Empowerment"; Paget, "Mistaken for Populism: Magufuli, Ambiguity and Elitist Plebeianism in Tanzania"; Stavrakakis et al., "Contemporary Left-Wing Populism in Latin America: Leadership, Horizontalism, and Postdemocracy in Chávez's Venezuela."

[82] Paget, "Mistaken for Populism: Magufuli, Ambiguity and Elitist Plebeianism in Tanzania."

[83] Stavrakakis et al., "Contemporary Left-Wing Populism in Latin America: Leadership, Horizontalism, and Postdemocracy in Chávez's Venezuela."

[84] Paget, "Mistaken for Populism: Magufuli, Ambiguity and Elitist Plebeianism in Tanzania."

[85] Paget; Stavrakakis et al., "Contemporary Left-Wing Populism in Latin America: Leadership, Horizontalism, and Postdemocracy in Chávez's Venezuela."

[86] Filc, "Post-Populism: Explaining Neo-Liberal Populism through the Habitus."

[87] Stavrakakis et al., "Contemporary Left-Wing Populism in Latin America: Leadership, Horizontalism, and Postdemocracy in Chávez's Venezuela"; De Cleen, Glynos, and Mondon, "Critical Research on Populism: Nine Rules of Engagement."