

Left-wing populism in the UK: theory and practice

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Abstract:

The vast majority of analysis has focussed on (radical) right-wing populism. European left-populism is still rarely discussed in depth. But a study of left-populism is relevant for several reasons: first, it will contribute to the vigorous ongoing theoretical and conceptual debate about what populism is as a phenomenon. Second, it will illuminate the discussion of the growing party populism by incorporating a greater number of cases that can be compared with the 'usual suspects' on the right. Third, discussion of left-populism is very timely. The post-2007 economic depression is arguably tailor-made for left-populists, both in Europe and wider afield.

The paper broadens and deepens the rudimentary literature on European left-populism by comparing the nature of populism between two right-wing parties (the British National Party, BNP, the UK Independence Party, UKIP) and two left-wing populist parties (the Scottish Socialist Party, SSP and Respect), as well as comparing these radical parties with the mainstream UK Labour and Conservative Parties. The right-wing parties are archetypal populist parties chosen as 'control' cases to analyse what is distinct about the left, whereas the mainstream parties act as 'control' cases to focus on similarities and differences between parties of the right and left, and between populists and the mainstream.

This paper develops a new form of qualitative content analysis to parse the nature of and degree of parties' populist appeal. The core argument is that populism is a 'thin' ideology that cleaves to more developed 'host' ideologies, and therefore transforms its content according to the nature of the host ideology. A second core understanding is that all parties (including the mainstream) will have at least some elements of populism within their electoral appeal. Nevertheless, left-wing populists are both less populist and more inclusionary than those of the right.

Party populism is an undoubted growth industry in European political science. This profusion in interest can be traced to real-world events, such as the perceived electoral rise of populist parties and the (contested) thesis that populism has become integral to contemporary democratic politics to the degree that there is a populist *Zeitgeist*.¹

Nevertheless, the vast majority of such analysis has focussed on (radical) right-wing populism. Yet, the stellar success of the Greek Syriza, burgeoning poll ratings for Podemos in Spain and movements such as Occupy and 15-M have begun to confound Francis Fukuyama's contestation that there is no 'Tea Party on the left' leading a populist uprising against the political establishment.²

However, despite a plethora of analyses remarking on (particularly) Greek and Spanish left-populism as a new phenomenon, there has long been a tacit acknowledgement that left-wing populism is (in theory) possible.³ For example, Taggart has noted the 'chameleonic' nature of populism, implying that populism can be combined with basically every ideology.⁴ Before the focus on the new radical right, arguably the most successful European populists of recent decades were the left-wing Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) in the 1980s and early 1990s.⁵ There is certainly a venerable literature focusing on the nature of left-wing populism as a distinct phenomenon in Latin America.⁶ Nevertheless, most has little reference to populism in Europe.⁷

¹ Cas Mudde, 'The Populist Zeitgeist', *Government and Opposition* 39, no. 4 (2004): 542–63; Margaret Canovan, 'Trust the People! Populism and the Two Faces of Democracy', *Political Studies* 47, no. 1 (1999): 2–16; Benjamin Arditi, 'Populism, Or, Politics at the Edges of Democracy', *Contemporary Politics* 9, no. 1 (2003): 17–31.

² Francis Fukuyama, "'Where Is the Uprising from the Left?'" , *Spiegel Online*, 1 February 2012, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,812208,00.html>.

³ E.g. Dan Hancox, 'Why Ernesto Laclau Is the Intellectual Figurehead for Syriza and Podemos', *The Guardian*, 9 February 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/feb/09/ernesto-laclau-intellectual-figurehead-syriza-podemos>; Omer Tekdemir, 'Is a Socialist EU Possible via Left-Wing Populist Parties such as Syriza, Podemos and the HDP?', *openDemocracy*, 20 February 2015, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/can-europe-make-it/omer-tekdemir/is-socialist-eu-possible-via-leftwing-populist-parties-such-as-syri>.

⁴ Paul Taggart, *Populism*, 1st ed. (Open University Press, 2000).

⁵ Christos Lyrantzis, 'The Changing Party System: Stable Democracy, Contested "Modernisation"', *West European Politics* 28, no. 2 (2005): 242–59.

⁶ E.g. Jennifer N. Collins, 'New Left Experiences in Bolivia and Ecuador and the Challenge to Theories of Populism', *Journal of Latin American Studies* 46, no. 1 (2014): 59–86; Maxwell A. Cameron, 'Latin America's Left Turns: Beyond Good and Bad', *Third World Quarterly* 30, no. 2 (2009): 331–48.

Over the last decade or so, comparative analyses increasingly acknowledged that left-wing variants are an important (albeit comparatively minor) component of European populism.⁸ Most limit themselves to acknowledging the existence of left-populism, but do not try evaluate it in detail.⁹ A few analysts have acknowledged this increased importance by beginning to parse the distinctive elements of left-wing populism.¹⁰ Nevertheless, such work is still in its infancy – in-depth, comparative accounts are still few.

The aim of this article is to develop this preliminary literature on left-wing populism. It aims to provide breadth and depth, by providing a comparative account that focuses on what many scholars mention implicitly if at all: the key similarities and differences *between* left and right-wing populism. The study is relevant for several broader reasons: first, it will contribute to ongoing theoretical and conceptual debates about what populism is as a phenomenon. Second, it will illuminate the discussion of the growing party populism by incorporating a greater number of cases that can be compared with the ‘usual suspects’ on the right. Third, discussion of left-populism opens up the possibilities of wider comparisons, not least between Europe and contemporary Latin America. Fourth, discussion of left-populism is very timely, with the socio-economic conditions after the Great Recession finally beginning to prove a propitious hunting-ground for left-wing populists. Finally, the rise of left-populists has broader significance, because whereas many scholars have traditionally seen the success of populist parties in general as a sign of the ill-health of representative democracy;¹¹ conversely some argue that left-populists represent a democratic, inclusionary impetus.¹²

⁷ For one exception see Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser, ‘Exclusionary vs. Inclusionary Populism: Comparing Contemporary Europe and Latin America’, *Government and Opposition* 48, no. 02 (April 2013): 147–74.

⁸ Mudde, ‘The Populist Zeitgeist’; Daniele Albertazzi and Duncan McDonnell, eds., *Twenty-First Century Populism: The Spectre of Western European Democracy* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

⁹ Matthijs Rooduijn and Teun Pauwels, ‘Measuring Populism: Comparing Two Methods of Content Analysis’, *West European Politics* 34, no. 6 (2011): 1272–83; Stijn van Kessel, *Populist Parties in Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2015).

¹⁰ E.g. Luke March and Cas Mudde, ‘“What”’s Left of the Radical Left? The European Radical Left after 1989: Decline and Mutation’, *Comparative European Politics* 3 (2005): 23–49; Luke March, ‘From Vanguard of the Proletariat to Vox Populi: Left-Populism as a “Shadow” of Contemporary Socialism’, *SAIS Review* 27, no. 1 (2007): 63–77; Luke March, *Radical Left Parties in Contemporary Europe*, (Routledge, 2011); Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser, eds., *Populism in Europe and the Americas: Threat or Corrective for Democracy?*, (Cambridge University Press, 2012); Yannis Stavrakakis and Giorgos Katsambekis, ‘Left-Wing Populism in the European Periphery: The Case of SYRIZA’, *Journal of Political Ideologies* 19, no. 2 (2014): 119–42.

¹¹ Margaret Canovan, ‘Taking Politics to the People: Populism as the Ideology of Democracy’, in *Democracies and the Populist Challenge*, ed. Y. Mény and Y. Surel (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), 25–42;

Accordingly this article compares the nature of populism between two populist extreme/radical right parties (the British National Party, BNP, the UK Independence Party, UKIP) and two populist radical left parties (the Scottish Socialist Party, SSP and Respect) as well as comparing these radical parties with the mainstream UK Labour and Conservative Parties. The BNP and UKIP are archetypal populist parties chosen as ‘control’ cases to highlight what is distinct about the left, whereas the mainstream parties act as ‘control’ cases to focus on similarities and differences between populists and the mainstream.

Why focus on the UK? There are practical and academic reasons. First, the method chosen (qualitative content analysis) is labour-intensive and involves detailed attention on the sense of the text; it is both more expedient and more accurate to test this technique on English-language sources prior to applying it elsewhere. Second and more importantly, several studies have argued that populism is prevalent in the British political mainstream.¹³ Some have even argued that the rhetoric of public figures such as Ed Miliband, Russell Brand and Owen Jones indicates recent growth in left-wing populism in Britain.¹⁴ The ensuing analysis can show whether this alleged left-populist *Zeitgeist* finds any corroboration in UK party ideologies.

Accordingly, the questions in focus in this paper are the following:

- What are the key features of left-wing populism?
- How and why does strength and content of populism differ amongst different left-populist parties?
- What are the differences and similarities between left and right-wing populism?
- Do ‘mainstream’ left and right parties exhibit features of populism and to what extent do more radical ‘populist’ parties differ from them?

The article proceeds as follows: first, I briefly set out my definition of populism as a ‘thin ideology’; second I look at the (few) pointers the literature gives on the nature of left-wing populism; third I introduce the methodology and cases; finally I discuss the results of the analysis of

F. Panizza, ‘Introduction: Populism and the Mirror of Democracy’, in *Populism and the Mirror of Democracy*, ed. F. Panizza (London: Verso, 2005), 1–31.

¹² Stavrakakis and Katsambekis, ‘Left-Wing Populism in the European Periphery’; Tekdemir, ‘Is a Socialist EU Possible via Left-Wing Populist Parties such as Syriza, Podemos and the HDP?’.

¹³ Peter Mair, ‘Populist Democracy vs. Party Democracy’, in *Democracies and the Populist Challenge*, ed. Y. Mény and Y. Surel (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), 81–98; Tim Bale, Stijn van Kessel, and Bryan T. McGraw, ‘Thrown around with Abandon? Popular Understandings of Populism as Conveyed by the Print Media: A UK Case Study’, *Acta Politica* 46, no. 2 (2011).

¹⁴ E.g. Jonathan Freedland, ‘Behold, Ed Miliband’s New Populism of the Left’, *The Guardian*, 24 September 2013, <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/sep/24/ed-miliband-leftwing-positions-brighton-speech>.

party manifestos. The core argument is that populism is a ‘thin’ ideology that cleaves to more developed ‘host’ ideologies, and therefore transforms its content according to the nature of the host ideology. Therefore, right and left-wings populists deserve the appellation in terms of reverence to ‘the people’ as a core concept in politics; their juxtaposition of the interests of a morally pure people against corrupt elites, and their advocacy of popular sovereignty. However, the content of these concepts is very different: left-wing populists are primarily concerned with overcoming economic exploitation of their people, by opposing economic elites and advocating popular sovereignty based on egalitarian measures and political inclusivity. Right-wing populists primarily focus on the cultural/political exploitation of their people, oppose political and cultural elites and advocate popular sovereignty in a more delimited way, thereby being indeed less inclusionary. A second core argument is that even mainstream parties have some elements of populism within their electoral appeal, primarily people-centrism, although this falls some way short of being articulated as a consistent ideology. The difference between populists and the mainstream is therefore of degree, not kind.

What is populism?

It’s customary to begin discussion of populism by noting how controversial and contested the concept is. That said, this is decreasingly the case, at least as far as the study of European political parties is concerned. A tentative consensus that populism is a neutral, ‘thin-centred’ ideology, for which a minimal definition can be provided, is increasingly emerging.¹⁵

This article utilises Cas Mudde’s well-known version of the ideological definition: namely that populism is ‘*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*’.¹⁶ An increasing number of analysts now share such a core definition, albeit with individual nuances.¹⁷

¹⁵ Mudde, ‘The Populist Zeitgeist’; Albertazzi and McDonnell, *Twenty-First Century Populism*; Ben Stanley, ‘The Thin Ideology of Populism’, *Journal of Political Ideologies* 13, no. 1 (2008): 95–110; Teun Pauwels, ‘Measuring Populism: A Quantitative Text Analysis of Party Literature in Belgium’, *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion & Parties* 21, no. 1 (2011): 97–119.

¹⁶ Mudde, ‘The Populist Zeitgeist’, 543.

¹⁷ Albertazzi and McDonnell, *Twenty-First Century Populism*; Stefano Fella and Carlo Ruzza, *Re-Inventing the Italian Right: Territorial Politics, Populism and ‘Post-Fascism’*, 1st ed. (Routledge, 2009); Stanley, ‘The Thin Ideology of Populism’.

Broadly speaking, there are three main definitions of party populism in the literature: an organisational form, a style/discourse, and an ideology.¹⁸ The chief advantage of the ideological approach over other approaches is that it is a parsimonious, minimal and comparative definition that is the only definition to focus on the core (rather than peripheral or instrumental) features of a populist. The ideological focus on the ‘corrupt elite’ vs. ‘moral people’ dichotomy is a claim not shared by demonstrably non-populist political actors, whereas ‘populist’ rhetoric and culture and organisational forms are. There is certainly an elective affinity between populism and a certain ‘low’ political culture/discourse. Populism implies a distinct political style (e.g. ‘everyday’ or ‘tabloid’ language, an appeal to ‘gut-feelings’ and simplistic slogans and solutions – what Mudde refers to as *Stammtisch* [barroom politics]).¹⁹ Moreover, populism can benefit from a distinct form of organisation – centralised but fluid structures enabling a dominant charismatic leader to be ‘close to the people’.²⁰ But whilst this style and organisation clearly facilitates the ability of the populist leader to mobilise the *volonté générale*, charismatic authority, anti-institutional mobilisation, simplistic language and a reliance on slogans are features shared by many non-populist actors. Accordingly, the cultural and organisational definitions of populism are best seen as ‘flavour enhancers’ – elements that often accompany and enrich populism, but are not intrinsic to it.²¹

However, even the ideological approach needs to be used judiciously. Arguing that populism is a ‘thin ideology’ implies that it is analogous to other ‘thin ideologies’ such as nationalism, which must commingle with thicker host ideologies (e.g. conservatism or socialism) in order to develop a fuller programmatic identity.²² Moreover, since party ideologies are more eclectic and diverse than philosophies, and often indeed absorb elements of competing philosophies, we should not expect populist ideas always to be expressed consistently or verbatim.

Another implication of the ideological approach is that analysts that populism is an ordinal (relative) not a nominal (absolute) category. That is, whereas it is might be possible to distinguish between clearly populist and non-populist cases, many cases sit on a spectrum between a low propensity and high propensity to populism. This is also the implication of Mudde’s theory of the

¹⁸ For more see Rooduijn and Pauwels, ‘Measuring Populism’, 3.

¹⁹ Mudde, ‘The Populist Zeitgeist’.

²⁰ Taggart, *Populism*; Kurt Weyland, ‘Clarifying a Contested Concept: Populism in the Study of Latin American Politics’, *Comparative Politics* 34, no. 1 (1 October 2001): 1–22, doi:10.2307/422412.

²¹ Koen Vossen, ‘Populism in the Netherlands after Fortuyn: Rita Verdonk and Geert Wilders Compared’, *Perspectives on European Politics and Society* 11, no. 1 (2010): 22–38.

²² Michael Freeden, ‘Is Nationalism a Distinct Ideology?’, *Political Studies* 46, no. 4 (1998): 748–65.

populist *Zeitgeist* – populism has become so routinised in contemporary politics that the majority of actors will have some populist elements.²³

Therefore, strict operational criteria for observing populism need to be adopted. Logically in order to qualify as populist, an actor must consistently invoke the ideology of populism in their public (and especially electoral) appeals. But in order to judge whether such an ideology is present, we need more defined lenses. Accordingly, this chapter below adopts three indices developed clearly from the three-fold ideological definition above: *people-centrism*, *anti-elitism* and *popular sovereignty*.

What is left-populism?

Despite the attention now devoted to southern European left-populism, it is far from a new phenomenon. Being a thin ideology implies that populism has no intrinsically right-wing nature and can be as easily combined with socialism as conservatism.²⁴ Moreover, while leftists themselves often regard populism as right-wing and distrust its cross-class appeal and ideological amorphousness, some have found affinity with elements which are *prima facie* “a wishlist for a socialist and radical-democratic agenda”: anti-elitism, empowerment, morality and welfarism.²⁵ Even Marxism-Leninism was informed by the Russian populists (*Narodniki*), in particular their radical rejection of constitutional limits on the state and assertion of the revolutionary potential of the peasantry, as well as concepts like ‘people’s democracies’.²⁶ Nevertheless, it is unsurprising that left populism did not get much traction in Cold-War Europe – the dominant radical left parties were communist parties whose Marxism-Leninist concern with doctrinal purity and correct class politics only drastically weakened in the 1980s and was followed by a decade or so of ‘decline and mutation’.²⁷

In the 2000s, it began to be acknowledged that some European left parties (chiefly radical

²³ Mudde, ‘The Populist Zeitgeist’.

²⁴ Catherine Fieschi, ‘Introduction’, *Journal of Political Ideologies* 9, no. 3 (2004): 235–40; Paul Taggart, ‘Populism and Representative Politics in Contemporary Europe’, *Journal of Political Ideologies* 9, no. 3 (2004): 269–88.

²⁵ Arditi, ‘Populism, Or, Politics at the Edges of Democracy’, 18.

²⁶ For more see March, *Radical Left Parties in Contemporary Europe*.

²⁷ March and Mudde, “‘What’s Left of the Radical Left? The European Radical Left after 1989: Decline and Mutation’.

parties) exhibited features of populism.²⁸ Such ‘social-populist’ parties (such as the German Left Party and Scottish Socialist Party) were far less Marxist and more doctrinally eclectic than traditional democratic socialists and shared the typical populist concern with juxtaposing ‘the moral people’ against ‘the corrupt elite.’ They no longer professed to be the ‘vanguard’ of the proletariat, but rather the *vox populi*, and placed particularism (national, regional or ethnic concerns) before internationalism. Even some formerly ‘orthodox’ communist parties such as the Russian and Czech communists toned down their references to class struggle and focussed on attacking elites for their corruption and dependency on Western influence in traditional populist terms. The crisis of Marxism-Leninism and the rightwards drift of Blairite social democratic parties opened up space for competitors to battle for traditionalist blue collar voters on the vacant ‘left’ of the political spectrum.

Luke March later refined these arguments, distinguishing between ‘populist socialist’ and ‘social populist’ parties.²⁹ The former have an ideological core little different from other radical left parties, albeit overlaid with a far stronger anti-establishment and cross-class appeal. That populism is not *the* core element of their ideology but related to their status as ‘outsider’ parties is shown by ideological moderation as some confront the possibility of national office. Indeed, it is doubtful whether the Dutch Socialist Party still classifies as populist.³⁰

On the other hand, social populist parties have a more eclectic ‘social’ (rather than socialist) ideology, having no systematic critique of capitalism but rather focussing on defending the social rights of the people against the economic rapaciousness of the elite. For these parties, populism is far more prominent in the ideological core and they approximate to ideal-typical populist parties, fusing left-wing and right-wing themes behind an anti-establishment appeal. Currently Podemos (contrary to Syriza, which incorporates more standard radical left anti-neo-liberal and Marxist positions) appears an archetypal ‘social populist’ party, with its emphasis on being neither left nor right, and on general democratic mobilisation against the corrupt political caste (*la casta*).

So to sum up, left populists of all stripes may be judged as left in their emphasis on egalitarianism, and overcoming (economic) inequity as their mission statements. They may be

²⁸ Cas Mudde, ‘Extremist Movements’, in *Developments in West European Politics 2*, ed. Paul Heywood, E. Jones, and M. Rhodes (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), 135–48; March and Mudde, “What’s Left of the Radical Left? The European Radical Left after 1989: Decline and Mutation”.

²⁹ March, *Radical Left Parties in Contemporary Europe*.

³⁰ Dan Keith, ‘Ready to Get Their Hands Dirty. The Socialist Party and GroenLinks in the Netherlands’, in *Left Parties in National Governments*, ed. Jonathan Olsen, M. Koß, and Dan Hough (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2010), 155–72.

judged as populist in that the “moral people versus corrupt elite” dichotomy is central (albeit to varying degrees) to their ideology.

But beyond this egalitarian emphasis, what distinguishes left and right-wing populisms? There are two main positions in the literature. One argues that populism trumps core ideology. Right and left are essentially similar *qua* populist parties, and are generally seen as an equally potent and/or dangerous challenge to political elites and/or democracy.³¹ A study of the UK’s BNP and Respect parties also argues that right-and left-wing populism are not polar opposites but share many attributes.³² Indeed, the differences are less of kind than degree: although ideological features are relevant, the populism of these parties makes them ‘More Similar Than They’d Like to Admit.’ Certainly, several left-wing populists have drawn ethnocentric and identity issues usually associated with the right into their ideological arsenal, and like the former Russian Motherland bloc, they attempt to combine ‘protest populism and identity populism’.³³

The second position is that core ideology trumps populism. Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser argue that right and left-wing populism *are* distinct, and have provided three useful criteria for distinguishing them.³⁴ First, right-wing populism is allegedly more focussed on ethnic identity than socio-economic issues. Left-wing populism is predominately focussed on socio-economic issues (above all economic egalitarianism). Second, right-wing populism is primarily exclusionary because of its nativism (an exclusivist ethnic nationalism that demarcates key groups such as Muslims as outsiders), while left-wing populism is primarily inclusionary (focussed on policies of economic, cultural and political incorporation). Third, although host ideology is important, its salience differs: populism is less important than nativism in the ideology of the populist right, but conversely left-wing populists are populists first and socialists second. Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser do concede strong similarities between left-and right-wing populists, particularly in their attack on the elites, their distrust of liberal democracy, and their preference for mechanisms of plebiscitary democracy such as referenda. However, and particularly in a later work, they argue that

³¹ Takis S. Pappas, *Populism and Crisis Politics in Greece* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2014), 105.

³² Alistair Clark, Karin Bottom, and Colin Copus, ‘More Similar Than They’d Like to Admit? Ideology, Policy and Populism in the Trajectories of the British National Party and Respect’, *British Politics* 3, no. 4 (December 2008): 511–34.

³³ Marlène Laruelle, *Rodina: Les Mouvances Nationalistes Russes Du Loyalisme À L’opposition* (CERI-Sciences Po, 2006), 7, www.ceri-sciencespo.com/archive/mai06/artml.pdf.

³⁴ Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser, *Voices of the Peoples: Populism in Europe and Latin America Compared*, Working Paper (Kellogg Institute, 2011).

ideology is paramount: differences between left and right-wing populists emanate from differences in underlying ideology, not the nature of their populism.³⁵

Mudde and Kaltwasser's examples of left-populism are from Latin America. However, that their conclusions might also apply to European cases is plausible. For instance, the dichotomy between ethnic identity and egalitarianism could be borne out in European parties' Euroscepticism. EU integration is an elite-led project that impinges on national sovereignty, and has become a 'sitting duck' for populist mobilisation.³⁶ However, we might expect critiques of the EU to vary depending on ideological position: the right-wing populist critique of the EU is traditionally regarded as focussing on its threats to national identity and sovereignty, the left-wing critique much more on economic insecurity engendered by neo-liberal globalisation and the EU's internal market.³⁷ Second: the exclusionary-inclusionary division might be borne out in approaches to welfare issues. One of the distinguishing features of right-wing populists is said to be 'welfare chauvinism', i.e. parties defend the welfare state but only for the native people: outgroups like immigrants and the unemployed may be excluded.³⁸ On the other hand, populist socialists like the German Left Party have aimed to mobilise excluded groups of the population, such as the unemployed and socially deprived.³⁹ Left-populism's emphasis on egalitarianism can be seen as *relatively* 'civilized' and inclusive because it focuses on the *demos* not the *ethnos*.⁴⁰ Indeed, a recent study of Syriza argues that it is profoundly democratic and emancipatory.⁴¹ Additionally, when some argue that social democratic parties should become more left-populist, this involves mobilising those left behind by economic and cultural modernization and the technocratic 'policies of 'Third Way' social democrats.⁴²

³⁵ Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, 'Exclusionary vs. Inclusionary Populism'.

³⁶ Canovan, 'Trust the People! Populism and the Two Faces of Democracy', 6.

³⁷ E.g. Catherine De Vries and Erica Edwards, 'Taking Europe To Its Extremes', *Party Politics* 15, no. 1 (2009).

³⁸ Cas Mudde, *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*, (Cambridge University Press, 2007).

³⁹ March, *Radical Left Parties in Contemporary Europe*.

⁴⁰ March, 'From Vanguard of the Proletariat to Vox Populi'.

⁴¹ Stavrakakis and Katsambekis, 'Left-Wing Populism in the European Periphery'.

⁴² R Cuperus, 'The Populist Deficiency of European Social Democracy', *Internationale Politik Und Gesellschaft* 3 (2003): 108; Owen Jones, 'How Ed Miliband Can Harness the Right's Tactics to Bring in a Wave of Left-Wing Populism in 2014', *The Independent*, 1 January 2014, <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/comment/how-ed-miliband-can-harness-the-rights-tactics-to-bring-in-a-wave-of-leftwing-populism-in-2014-9032903.html>.

Mudde and Kaltwasser's third point is more debatable: there is no *a priori* reason to think that socialism will be less important than populism to European left-populists. As noted above, left-populists may devote less attention to doctrinal purity and internationalism, and more to regionalism and nationalism.⁴³ The dominance of populism over socialism in Latin America may be more due to context, namely the prevalence of presidentialism and personalistic politics, than to something intrinsic in left-populism. The ensuing analysis tests the validity of the populism-trumps-ideology and ideology-trumps-populism theses. But first it turns to methodological issues.

Operationalising populism

Recent years have seen a growth in 'methodological populism': attempts to measure party populism systematically and comparatively. They have emerged out of disappointment with older discussions of populism, which either tend to be single-party case studies or to declare certain parties populist 'by fiat', often without any obviously clear or consistent criteria.⁴⁴ The dominant approach to observing populism is still the Sartorian approach, which identifies minimal (ideological) criteria applied to decide whether a party is populist.⁴⁵ Despite the detail and geographical scope this approach brings, its shortcomings include its assumption that populism is a nominal category (i.e. parties are either populist or not), and its lack of clarity over the categorisation principles for many parties.⁴⁶

Latterly then, a number of authors have sought to measure populism more systematically via content analysis, which provides both temporal and spatial consistency. This study adopts a qualitative content analysis approach adapted from Rooduijn and Pauwels.⁴⁷ While rather laborious and not suitable for large-n studies (for which they advocate computer-based procedures), only this approach provides the requisite level of detail for an in-depth analysis of populism where the

⁴³ March and Mudde, "'What's Left of the Radical Left? The European Radical Left after 1989: Decline and Mutation'.

⁴⁴ Kirk A. Hawkins, 'Is Chávez Populist? Measuring Populist Discourse in Comparative Perspective', *Comparative Political Studies* 42, no. 8 (2009).

⁴⁵ Mudde, *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*; March, 'From Vanguard of the Proletariat to Vox Populi'; Vossen, 'Populism in the Netherlands after Fortuyn'; March, *Radical Left Parties in Contemporary Europe*; Mudde and Kaltwasser, *Voices of the Peoples: Populism in Europe and Latin America Compared*.

⁴⁶ Pauwels, 'Measuring Populism'.

⁴⁷ M. Rooduijn and Teun Pauwels, 'Measuring Populism in Comparative Research Two Content Analysis Methods Compared' (Politiciologenetmaal, Leuven, 2010).

emphasis is not just quantitative (counting the instances and proportion of populism) but more qualitative (understanding how populism is constructed, what is meant by it and how it differs between parties). Moreover, the approach is consistent with mine in that it also argues that populism is a thin-centred ideology that is most appropriate to evaluate via party manifestos. True, these documents are not always widely read, and may only gain a snapshot of a party's ideology, but since they are the party documents that most succinctly summarise parties stances for the benefit of a wider audience, and are (relatively) easy to access, they are the best starting point for tracing the evolution of party ideas *comparatively over time*, relative to studies which analyse party broadcasts, leaders' speeches or a panoply of party statements, and which are generally limited to an even smaller-n sample.⁴⁸ An additional virtue of this approach is that it too argues that populism is relative rather than absolute and allows a more fine-grained analysis. Alternative approaches taking an absolute categorisation can encounter trouble. For example Hawkins uses three indices (nonpopulist; mixed; populist).⁴⁹ His finding that George W. Bush is coded as populist leads him to conclude that his scale is wrong.⁵⁰ Yet, a more sensitive ordinal scale might have concluded that George W. Bush did possess some elements of populism, without necessarily fulfilling all the ideological requisites for the term.

This analysis has two principal differences from that of Rooduijn and Pauwels. First, I use 'quasi-sentences' rather than paragraphs as the unit of analysis, considering that paragraph coding is too broad-brush to allow qualitative analysis, whereas conversely, whether words like 'people', 'elite' and 'democracy' have a populist meaning depends on context that using just words as the unit of analysis ambiguous and slippery may fail to comprehend.⁵¹ Therefore I adopted the approach of the Comparative Manifestos Project, which sees the 'quasi-sentence' as the main unit of analysis, a quasi-sentence being a sentence or clause that encapsulates a discrete relevant and meaningful statement.⁵² Accordingly, prior to analysis, each manifesto was divided into quasi-

⁴⁸ J. Jagers and S. Walgrave, 'Populism as Political Communication Style: An Empirical Study of Political Parties' Discourse in Belgium', *European Journal of Political Research* 46, no. 3 (2007): 319–45; For leaders' speeches see Hawkins, 'Is Chávez Populist?'; For other statements see Vossen, 'Populism in the Netherlands after Fortuyn'.

⁴⁹ Hawkins, 'Is Chávez Populist?'.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Emmanuelle Reungoat, 'Anti-EU Parties and the People: An Analysis of Populism in French Euromanifestos', *Perspectives on European Politics and Society* 11, no. 3 (2010): 292–312; M. Rooduijn, S.L. de Lange, and W. van der Brug, 'A Populist Zeitgeist? Has Populism Become Mainstream in Western Europe (1988-2008)?' (ECPR General Conference, Reykjavik, 2011).

⁵² Annika Werner, Onawa Lacewell, and Andrea Volkens, 'Manifesto Coding Instructions (4th Fully Revised Edition)', in *The Manifesto Data Collection. Manifesto Project (MRG/CMP/MARPOR)*, by Andrea Volkens

sentences.

The second difference from Rooduijn and Pauwels is that whereas they use a two-fold index of populism (people-centrism vs. anti-elitism), I add a third (popular sovereignty). While agreeing that the first two indices are the core components in the ideological definition, and satisfy the first clause of Mudde's definition (the pure people versus corrupt elite dichotomy), to be consistent with the definition, we also need a category that satisfies the last (politics as expression of the *volonté générale*). Popular sovereignty does this. Moreover, as an ideology, populism has both descriptive and proscriptive elements. Whereas populists may, on occasion claim to be 'reluctantly political' and disgusted by the reality of politics, the reality is that, if populism is to exist as more than an obscure doctrine, it has to develop an explicitly political, mobilisational aim.⁵³ That is '[p]opulism arises from a dissatisfaction with existing politics but also is an attempt to fix its representational failures.'⁵⁴ Therefore this last element is essentially about the operationalisation of the first two: the specific mechanisms and policies whereby the polity can be changed (and the elite disempowered) to further people's power.

Most analyses do concur that people-centrism and anti-elitism are *the* core concepts, but add a different range of supplementary ones. For example, some focus on exclusionism or 'claims for democracy'.⁵⁵ Others focus on Manicheanism or 'sense of crisis'.⁵⁶ Yet most of these supplementary elements can be incorporated in the existing indices. Exclusionism is the most problematic, because some analysts argue that an 'exclusion strategy' is an intrinsic part of populism, i.e. the antagonistic relationship between the people and elite, the emphasis on homogeneity of these terms, and populism's Manicheanism mean that certain 'outsider' groups which do not fit into the 'true people' are denigrated.⁵⁷ Meny and Surel further add that this exclusion works in two dimensions, a *horizontal* relationship between people and 'dangerous

et al. (Berlin: Berlin: Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung (WZB), 2011), <https://manifesto-project.wzb.eu/>.

⁵³ Taggart, 'Populism and Representative Politics in Contemporary Europe', 276.

⁵⁴ Jon Beasley-Murray, *Posthegemony: Political Theory and Latin America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 27.

⁵⁵ Vossen, 'Populism in the Netherlands after Fortuyn'.

⁵⁶ E.g. Hawkins, 'Is Chávez Populist?'; Matthijs Rooduijn, 'The Nucleus of Populism: In Search of the Lowest Common Denominator', *Government and Opposition* 49, no. 4 (2014): 573–99.

⁵⁷ Jagers and Walgrave, 'Populism as Political Communication Style'; Albertazzi and McDonnell, *Twenty-First Century Populism*.

others' and a *vertical* one between people and the elite.⁵⁸ However, whereas the latter is undoubtedly intrinsic to populism, there is nothing necessarily exclusivist about the concept of people, and the nature of this concept may differ markedly between right and left populists. Whereas (especially extreme) right-wing populists typically 'Other' groups such as ethnic minorities, immigrants, non-standard religious groups, welfare-state dependents or the unemployed, it is claimed that left-wing populism is inclusionary precisely to such these groups. Accordingly, including exclusionism within the core definition of populism would *a priori* bias the definition towards right wing-populism.⁵⁹ 'Claims for democracy' or direct democracy are not espoused by all populists, but where they exist are part of general demands for popular sovereignty. Manicheanism is implied by the central dichotomy between the pure people and turpitudinous elite. Finally, the notion of 'crisis' is undoubtedly important but is integral to the central people-elite dichotomy: for the populist, any grave crisis will be elite-generated, will dramatically impinge on the people, and will be resolved by a return to true popular power.⁶⁰

Analysis took two stages. In the first stage, I calculated the percentage of quasi-sentences referring to the three indices, which were used to make an initial assessment of the degree of populism in each party. After this, I undertook more detailed qualitative content analysis of each party manifesto with the aim of illustrating the similarities and differences between populism as espoused by each party. The nature of the indices is as follows (fuller details are provided in the Appendix):

People-centrism

People-centrism goes beyond the simple invocation of the 'people' (few political actors will *not* do this at some point), but to support the ideological definition of populism, the people needs to be seen as 1) a main political referent: 2) invoked in unambiguously positive terms, 3) a unified, homogenous entity; 4) co-terminous with the populist entity. Therefore coding for people-centrism starts with simply measuring whether the manifestos refer to the 'people', but does not stop there. The 'people' can be referred to in many different ways (e.g. 'citizens', 'the country', 'everyone'). Who precisely the people are will depend on party and context. De Raadt et al. provide two useful

⁵⁸ Y. Mény and Y. Surel, 'The Constitutive Ambiguity of Populism', in *Democracies and the Populist Challenge*, ed. Y. Mény and Y. Surel (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), 1–21.

⁵⁹ Rooduijn and Pauwels, 'Measuring Populism in Comparative Research Two Content Analysis Methods Compared'.

⁶⁰ Taggart, *Populism*, 93–4; Hans-Georg Betz, 'Conditions Favouring the Success and Failure of Radical Right-Wing Populist Parties in Contemporary Democracies', in *Democracies and the Populist Challenge*, ed. Y. Mény and Y. Surel (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), 198.

ways of categorising ‘the people’ which will be employed further below.⁶¹ First is the nationalism of the people – whether it is defined in civic, ethnic or regionalist terms. Second, parties may speak of the people in a general vis-à-vis government (‘collectivist populism’) or refer more often to subgroups of the population as examples of the whole (*partes-pro-toto*), e.g. using terms such as ‘the working population’ or ‘tax-payers’. This is ‘particularistic populism.’

Thus a populist party can refer to its people as nation, ethnic group or even class, provided that the party identifies completely with this group and sees them as a homogenous identity counterposed to the elite.⁶² As Deegan-Krause and Haughton note, a helpful way of elucidating populism is determining what are resolutely non-populist ideas.⁶³ For example, the concepts of *partes-pro-toto* needs to be delineated carefully: if subgroups of the population are not clearly identified with the ‘people’, but the interests of ethnicities, regional groups or classes are seen as different from those of the general population, then this is inherently antithetical to populism. This is a potential difficulty for analysing left-populism, because some may still appeal to ‘workers’ and the ‘working class’. To count all references to the working class as populist without checking whether the appeal is to the workers as a class concept or as *pars-pro-toto* risks seriously distorting the results.⁶⁴ For instance, it will make a difference whether the appeal is to the working class vs. the capitalists (class appeal) or to ‘working people’ or ‘our workers’ vs. ‘the big-business elite’ (a populist dichotomy). An important part of people-centrism is where parties do not explicitly mention the people but imply commonality with them (by using terms such as ‘we’, ‘all of us’), since populist parties claim not to be different from the people, but to be guided by their ideas and ‘common sense’.⁶⁵

Anti-elitism

Anti-elitism is evidenced by a Manichean dichotomy between the moral people and the corrupt elite.

⁶¹ Jasper de Raadt, David Hollanders, and André Krouwel, *Varieties of Populism: An Analysis of the Programmatic Character of Six European Parties*, Working Papers Political Science (Amsterdam: Vrije Universiteit, 2004).

⁶² Margaret Canovan, *Populism* (Junction Books, London, 1981); Mudde, ‘The Populist Zeitgeist’; Panizza, ‘Introduction: Populism and the Mirror of Democracy’, 5.

⁶³ Kevin Deegan-Krause and Tim Haughton, ‘Toward a More Useful Conceptualization of Populism: Types and Degrees of Populist Appeals in the Case of Slovakia’, *Politics & Policy* 37, no. 4 (2009): 821–41.

⁶⁴ As to some extent does Reungoat, ‘Anti-EU Parties and the People’.

⁶⁵ Catherine Fieschi and Paul Heywood, ‘Trust, Cynicism and Populist Anti-politics’, *Journal of Political Ideologies* 9, no. 3 (2004): 289–309.

In order to qualify as populist, an actor needs to see the elite as 1) a main political referent; 2) unambiguously negative, and (in mirror image to the people) as a unified, homogeneously corrupt entity; 3) the major adversary of the populist actor. For this index, I start with the basic question of whether the party manifesto mentions elites, whether these elites are construed positively or negatively, what kind of elites are mentioned, and what their relationship is to the people. As with the people-centrism index, the (negative) view needs to be expressed towards the elite in general, rather than just elements of that elite. Similarly, there is no room for nuances: the elite must be profoundly hostile and destructive towards the people, the principal cause of a wholesale political crisis.

Again, it is helpful to examine what is not populist. As Deegan-Krause and Haughton note, while few parties will argue that elites are wholly a good thing (some conservative and fascist parties may be exceptions), some might argue that elite rule is justified because of greater ‘experience, expertise, competence, and probity’.⁶⁶ Criticism of specific elements within an elite (a certain politician or political party) is not populist but a normal part of politics: a populist appeal must regard the elite *in its entirety* as anathema. Nevertheless, elements of the elite may act as *partes-pro-toto*, as specific examples of the horror of the whole. Again, de Raadt et al. provide useful categorizations: they distinguish between ‘anti-elite’ populism, whereby parties detail the allegedly corrupt behaviour of a political class *in toto* and ‘anti-intermediaries’ populism, i.e. where populism focuses on intermediary organisations and institutional/cultural frameworks that (allegedly) stand between the people and those that rule them and are used by the latter to maintain this difference – invocations against ‘bureaucrats’ or ‘political correctness’ may count. Moreover - anti-elitism can oppose wide range of differing elites in different locations, be they regional, national or international: a political elite (politicians in general, political parties, the ‘established’ political order, EU bureaucrats), an economic elite (multinationals, business elites, bank executives or capitalists in general), a cultural elite (intellectuals), a media elite (journalists) and a legal elite (judges), or their terms may be more generalist ‘the regime’ ‘the establishment’ etc.

Popular sovereignty

Popular sovereignty is present when populism moves beyond extolling the virtues of the people to a claim for greater *politicisation* in the name of the people.⁶⁷ Populism is not directly anti-democratic, but rather supports an unfettered plebiscitary democracy against the institutional and constitutional

⁶⁶ Deegan-Krause and Haughton, ‘Toward a More Useful Conceptualization of Populism’.

⁶⁷ Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, *Populism in Europe and the Americas*.

limits on the common sense of the people integral to *liberal* democracy.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, democracy is not seen as a virtue in itself but a means to full people's power – populists may advocate non-democratic options such as charismatic leadership or centralized party structures as often as they espouse referenda, popular initiatives and plebiscites.⁶⁹

To measure popular sovereignty, I start by identifying any quasi-sentences that call for increased power to be given to the people. Some of these will be general calls for greater popular involvement or unfettered leadership to further popular sovereignty. Although any positive invocation of the people implies potential overlap with category one, these statements were only coded once: the distinction drawn is that if the message goes beyond extolling the virtues of the people or factual claims about the people and is action-orientated or normative (power *will be* or *should be* returned to the people), this was coded under popular sovereignty rather than people-centrism. Non-populist claims will be those that re-affirm existing political and economic institutions that mediate between the popular will and policy outcomes and essentially support the elite status quo.

Again, de Raadt et al's categorisations will be used below to further delineate popular sovereignty. We can identify 'abstract populists': parties that talk about sovereignty in the abstract (promises to 'get people involved' or 'increase popular control'). Conversely, there are 'pragmatic populists', who have more concrete proposals (e.g. calling for greater direct democracy or referenda). Moreover, we could expect right-left divisions over socio-economic equality to be borne out in relative emphases on political sovereignty versus economic democracy (e.g. greater popular control over corporations). Key markers of whether sovereignty is 'exclusive' or 'inclusive', will be where there is an explicit 'Other' identified (the expectation is that right-wing populists augment the rights of the 'native' population, but the left is more inclusive of non-indigenous groups).

A note on the case studies

For the content analysis, I examined the electoral manifestos for four populist parties: The British National Party (BNP), UK Independence Party (UKIP), the Scottish Socialist Party (SSP), and the Respect party, as well as the mainstream Labour and Conservative parties, in all Westminster and Scottish elections from 1999-2015. The Scottish emphasis was chosen because of the focus on the SSP, which has been seldom examined in detail but is seen as an archetypal left-wing populist party in the literature, and, whilst falling on harder times lately, was one of Europe's most successful

⁶⁸ Mudde, 'The Populist Zeitgeist'; Mény and Surel, 'The Constitutive Ambiguity of Populism'.

⁶⁹ Canovan, *Populism*; Taggart, *Populism*.

radical left parties in 1999-2007.⁷⁰ The SSP does not run outside Scotland but has regularly produced lengthy manifestos that provide detailed data. Conversely, all the other parties analysed have contested Scottish elections. Accordingly, combining UK and Scottish elections over a sixteen-year period maximizes the available database.⁷¹

As well as the SSP, the other populist parties have also been seen as typical ‘populist parties’ in the literature, and so are ideal cases for establishing whether the populist label is substantiated. Their precise features do differ, and might be expected to affect our findings. For instance, the BNP is an ‘extreme right’ party with a documented propensity to nativism, authoritarianism and xenophobia, albeit becoming more moderate and populist in recent years.⁷² UKIP is a *relatively* more moderate radical right populist party, more democratic but with a similar hard Eurosceptic and anti-immigrant emphasis.⁷³ Respect is to some degree the UK-wide analogue of the SSP (and long had an agreement not to compete with it in Scotland). However, whereas the SSP is separatist (calling for an Independent Scottish Socialist Republic), Respect is unionist and also has a strong communalist element, emerging as part of the anti-Iraq war movement in 2004 and retaining its strongest roots in Muslim communities, such as in Bradford where its sole MP George Galloway has his seat.⁷⁴

Analysing the level of populism

Mainstream parties

Table 1 analyses populism in the two mainstream ‘control’ cases. On first glance, these results are surprising. The general proportion of populist statements is high, rarely under 10 percent, with an average score of 13.43 percent and some significant highs (22.12 percent for the Conservatives in 2010, 19.35 percent for Labour in 2015). On closer analysis, we can see that, although the mainstream parties certainly possess elements of populism, this is loaded very heavily on to the

⁷⁰ March, *Radical Left Parties in Contemporary Europe*.

⁷¹ Some manifestos were missing. E.g. I included the 2006 Respect regional manifesto because of its relatively few documents available.

⁷² Piero Ignazi, ‘The Silent Counter-Revolution. Hypotheses on the Emergence of Extreme Right-Wing Parties in Europe’, *European Journal of Political Research* 22, no. 1 (1992): 3–34.

⁷³ Amir Abedi and Thomas Carl Lundberg, ‘Doomed to Failure? UKIP and the Organisational Challenges Facing Right-Wing Populist Anti-Political Establishment Parties’, *Parliamentary Affairs* 62, no. 1 (2009): 72–87.

⁷⁴ Clark, Bottom, and Copus, ‘More Similar Than They’d Like to Admit?’; March, *Radical Left Parties in Contemporary Europe*.

people-centrism index (an average of 10.73), with far less on the other two indices and an almost miniscule score for anti-elitism (0.33 per cent, with several manifestos having zero references). Given that we have defined popular sovereignty as politicising populism, and the people-centrism vs anti-elitism emphasis as the core one, this means that these parties do not adequately fit the full ideological definition of populism.

Table 1. Populism in mainstream parties

	No. of quasi-sentences	People-centrism	Anti-elitism	Popular sovereignty	Total percentage of populist statements
Conservatives					
1999 (Scotland)	564	47 (8.33)	5 (0.87)	15 (2.65)	11.88
2001 (UK)	743	68 (9.15)	8 (1.07)	12 (1.62)	11.84
2003 (Scotland)	557	60 (10.77)	1 (0.18)	5 (0.90)	11.85
2005 (UK)	443	61 (13.76)	0 (0.0)	20 (4.51)	18.28
2007 (Scotland)	833	57 (6.84)	5 (0.60)	4 (0.48)	7.92
2010 (UK)	1257	199 (15.83)	7 (0.56)	72 (5.73)	22.12
2011(Scotland)	400	22 (5.50)	0 (0.00)	3 (0.75)	6.25
2015 (UK)	1470	190 (12.93)	4 (0.27)	12 (0.82)	14.01
Total	6267	704 (11.18)	30 (0.48)	143 (2.28)	13.94
Labour					
2001 (UK)	1705	139 (8.15)	3 (0.18)	35 (2.05)	10.38
2005 (UK)	1154	114 (9.88)	2 (0.17)	26 (2.25)	12.31
2007 (Scotland)	1351	124 (9.19)	0 (0.0)	20 (1.48)	10.66
2010 (UK)	1322	173 (13.09)	4 (0.30)	34 (2.57)	15.96
2011 (Scotland)	746	69 (9.25)	0 (00)	8 (1.07)	10.32
2015 (UK)	920	153 (16.63)	4 (0.43)	21 (2.28)	19.35
Total	7198	772 (10.73)	13 (0.18)	144 (2.00)	12.91
Average score for mainstream parties		10.96	0.33	2.14	13.43

A closer look still reinforces this. The mainstream parties are not averse to invoking the people in terms that could appear verbatim in the more radical parties' manifestos, (e.g. 'our social fabric is frayed and our political system has betrayed the people' [Conservatives 2010]; 'we can change

direction, begin to return power to people' [Labour 2015]).⁷⁵ Most often though, people-centrism is implicit as they identifying with the common sense of the people and their aspirations (the Conservatives' 2010 claim that 'we are all in this together' is apposite here). Such a demotic idiom, which often uses folksy language, reference to 'ordinary' people or the life-histories of real people, is difficult to disentangle from these parties' role as large catch-all parties who are aiming to encapsulate the median voter.

Symptomatically, where it exists at all, these parties' anti-elitism is rarely focussed on a systemic critique (and exceptions like the Conservatives' comments on the political system are brief and not elaborated), and most often is focussed on 'anti-intermediaries' populism – such as 'centralised bureaucracy' or political elites in the vaguest sense: 'unaccountable politicians', 'a privileged few at the top' etc.). Moreover, the parties' populism appears more strategic and situational than ideological – it is perhaps not coincidental that the highest average score (19.04) as well as that for popular sovereignty (4.2) was in 2010 in the immediate wake of the financial crisis and Westminster expenses scandal. With the exception of the SSP, none of the radical parties' highpoints are in that year, despite the apparently fertile issue opportunities.

Overall, these results certainly seem to endorse the idea of the populist *Zeitgeist* and the UK as a polity with a high propensity to populism. However, although these parties possess populist elements, populism is scarcely their defining or dominant feature.

The radical parties

The further results of the analysis can be seen in Table 2 (comparison between mainstream and radical parties) and Table 3 (detailed party analysis). As Table 2 shows, the indices of populism hold up well. Despite the high benchmark set by the mainstream parties, the radicals are clearly more populist (nearly twice as much in the case of the right), and each exceeds 15 percent in total. Moreover, the statements are more evenly distributed across the indices, with the clearest difference being the level of anti-elitism, which is the second-biggest score for left and right radicals. This appears to justify the populist label. Notable too is the left-right difference – parties of the right (mainstream and radical) are more populist than the left. The substantial difference between left and right radicals is in the level of people-centrism (over six percent higher for the right-wing radicals, which accounts for the majority of the difference between them and (unlike for the left) is also higher than the mainstream parties. Why this should be the case will be explored further below.

⁷⁵ Conservatives, *Invitation to Join the Government of Britain. The Conservative Manifesto 2010* (London: The Conservative Party, 2010); Labour, *Britain Can Be Better. The Labour Party Manifesto 2015* (London: The Labour Party, 2015).

Table 2: Levels of populism: mainstream versus radicals

	People-centrism	Anti-elitism	Popular sovereignty	Total percentage of populist statements
Right-wing				
Mainstream	11.18	0.48	2.28	13.94
Radicals	12.79	5.57	5.39	23.74
Left-wing				
Mainstream	10.73	0.18	2.00	12.91
Radicals	6.14	5.49	4.60	16.23

Table 3 provides the specifics for each party. Evidently, there are wild variations in the levels of populism in each manifesto (for example, the SSP's populism score ranges from 11.08 to 44.54). Generally these differences are explicable simply by the length of manifesto: with the shortest manifestos tending to be the most populist. The shorter manifestos allow parties to concentrate on core themes rather than specifics, so populist messages appear more strongly. The longer manifestos have detailed policy proposals with often no direct relation to populism (for example, policies on road tolls or workplace legislation).

Examining people-centrism

Of all parties, the BNP perhaps gets closest to a 'folksy' demotic style, reflected in its high people-centrism score (9.82). Often, this is simply reflected in general phrases indicating a common popular identity (e.g. 'our population', 'our community' or 'our country.') The party is most prone to express classically populist sentiments, such as in 2003 arguing that: '[E]merging from the hitherto passive and silent majority is a voice that is getting louder each day. The voice of ordinary people who are frustrated and angry about the present and fearful of their future'.⁷⁶ Similarly, the party expressly identifies itself with the people: as in 2010 when it calls its members the 'trustees for future generations'.⁷⁷ As might be expected, the concept of people is usually infused with a strong ethnic nationalist sentiment with the term 'nation' being used as often as more purely populist terms ('once proud nation'), and being qualified by terms which imply a cultural or racial

⁷⁶ BNP, *BNP Scotland Manifesto. Freedom: The Manifesto of the British National Party* (Glasgow: BNP Scotland, 2003).

⁷⁷ BNP, *Democracy, Freedom, Culture and Identity. British National Party General Elections Manifesto 2010* (Welshpool: BNP, 2010).

Table 3: Levels of populism: Right vs. left

	No. of quasi-sentences	People-centrism	Anti-elitism	Popular sovereignty	Total percentage of populist statements
BNP					
2001 (UK)	55	12 (21.81)	2 (3.63)	5 (9.09)	34.54
2003 (Scotland)	183	24 (13.11)	15 (8.20)	8 (4.37)	25.68
2005 (UK)	893	95 (10.64)	94 (10.53)	61 (6.83)	28.00
2007 (Scotland)	340	24 (7.06)	11 (3.24)	17 (5.00)	15.29
2010 (UK)	1293	118 (9.13)	85 (6.57)	65 (5.03)	20.73
2011 (Scotland)	290	27 (9.31)	24 (8.28)	22 (7.59)	25.17
Total	3054	300 (9.82)	231 (7.56)	178 (5.83)	23.21
UKIP					
2001 (UK)	614	84 (13.68)	27 (4.40)	20 (3.26)	21.34
2005 (UK)	384	80 (20.83)	18 (4.69)	27 (7.03)	34.38
2007 (Scotland)	103	26 (25.24)	2 (1.94)	10 (9.71)	36.89
2010 (UK)	379	26 (6.86)	20 (5.28)	30 (7.92)	20.05
2011 (Scotland)	144	13 (9.03)	6 (4.17)	24 (16.67)	29.86
2015 (UK)	1265	226 (17.87)	30 (2.37)	32 (2.53)	22.77
Total	2889	455 (15.75)	103 (3.57)	143 (4.95)	24.27
Average score for right-wing populists		12.79	5.57	5.39	23.74

Table 3 cont.

	No. of quasi-sentences	People-centrism	Anti-elitism	Popular sovereignty	Total percentage of populist statements
SSP					
1999 (Scotland)	179	7 (3.91)	25 (13.97)	23 (12.85)	30.73
2001 (UK)	318	6 (1.89)	23 (7.23)	22 (6.92)	16.04
2003 (Scotland)	1038	54 (5.20)	32 (3.08)	29 (2.79)	11.08
2005 (UK)	1074	69 (6.42)	57 (5.31)	47 (4.38)	16.11
2007 (Scotland)	1128	101 (8.95)	26 (2.30)	41 (3.63)	14.89
2010 (UK)	36	4 (9.09)	9 (27.27)	3 (9.09)	44.44
2011 (Scotland)	664	42 (6.33)	22 (3.31)	30 (4.52)	14.16
2015 (UK)	614	56 (9.12)	36 (5.86)	27 (4.40)	19.38
Total	5051	339 (6.71)	230 (4.55)	222 (4.40)	15.66
Respect					
2005 (UK)	633	33 (5.21)	39 (6.16)	31 (4.89)	16.27
2006 (local)	731	40 (5.47)	43 (5.88)	34 (4.65)	16.00
2010 (UK)	106	10 (9.43)	5 (4.71)	8 (7.55)	21.70
2011 (Scotland)	73	3 (4.11)	12 (16.44)	1 (1.37)	21.92
Total	1543	86 (5.57)	99 (6.42)	74 (4.80)	16.79
Average score for left-wing populists		6.14	5.49	4.60	16.23

belonging ('indigenous British people', 'the native British people'). The party ties itself in knots balancing Scottish manifestos where it refers to 'the Scottish nation', and UK ones where it reinforces that Scots and others are integral parts of the 'native British peoples of our islands'.⁷⁸ The party rarely refers to particularist groups (except occasionally the white working class and pensioners) and so its view of the people should be seen as profoundly ethnic and collectivist.

Alone of the parties here, the BNP expounds an archetypal vision of the populist 'heartland': a clean, beautiful country, free of pollution in all its forms, where pensioners live well.⁷⁹ This is a country revelling in its historical achievements, military, architectural and cultural, bound together by Christianity, traditional values and (in the case of Scotland) '[T]he wisdom inherent in the old crafts of weaving, musical instrument manufacturers, farriers, saddlers, stane dyke building and others'.⁸⁰ This is a nation where the '[T]he pub has in fact become part of our cultural heritage and has become as symbolic of Britain as the red telephone box or Dover cliffs'.⁸¹ The ethnic nature of the BNP's nationalism is reinforced by the manifestos' concern with mass immigration, multiculturalism, the black population's alleged propensity to crime, and the threat of militant Islam, all of which are existential challenges to this idyllic heartland.

UKIP in contrast claims a civic concept of nation-hood. Directly seeking to demarcate itself from the BNP, the party declares that: 'UKIP believes in civic nationalism ... open and inclusive to anyone ... regardless of ethnic or religious background. We reject the "blood and soil" ethnic nationalism of extremist parties'.⁸² However, this nationalism is not altogether without ethnic elements, as the party declares 'UKIP opposes multiculturalism and political correctness, and promotes uniculturalism - aiming to create a single British culture embracing all races and religion'. Beyond its concern for 'British-ness', UKIP's concept of people is for the most part, culture-neutral, referring to 'citizens', 'taxpayers', 'the electorate' and 'the public'. UKIP's 'heartland' is referred to only implicitly: it idealises a 'free, democratic' and crime-free Britain run by Westminster not Brussels, with the family and British values at the core of its stability.⁸³ As

⁷⁸ BNP, *Rebuilding British Democracy. British National Party General Election 2005 Manifesto* (Welshpool: BNP, 2005).

⁷⁹ For the concept, see Taggart, *Populism*.

⁸⁰ BNP, *BNP Scotland Manifesto. Freedom: The Manifesto of the British National Party*.

⁸¹ BNP, *Democracy, Freedom, Culture and Identity. British National Party General Elections Manifesto 2010*.

⁸² UKIP, *UKIP Manifesto April 2010. Empowering the People*. (Newton Abbot: UKIP, 2010).

⁸³ UKIP, *Say No to the European Union. UK Independence Party European Elections Manifesto June 2004* (Birmingham: UKIP, 2004).

important is that this Britain should be free from bureaucratic regulation and the ‘rules and rights’ allegedly ‘killing off the virtues of trust, initiative, responsibility and respect that make society work’.⁸⁴ Although some of the features are similar to the BNP’s (the role of family, stability, the priority of law and order), UKIP’s view of Britain is not recognisably different from that of the mainstream Conservative Party. This is particularly evident in 2015 – the party’s rising support has allowed it position itself as a credible contender for those who ‘believe we should seize the opportunity for real change in our politics’. The manifesto is replete with demotic invocations to protect ‘our borders, ‘our NHS’ etc. in ways which blend the catch-all intentions of the mainstream parties and the party’s more authentically populist aims to put it [power] back into the hands of the people of this country’.⁸⁵

The SSP shows some similarities. It is unequivocally a populist party in discourse, aiming to ‘improve the lives of ordinary people’ who are ‘abandoned by the mainstream politicians’.⁸⁶ There is some overlap with the aforementioned parties; notably, although unlike them, the SSP speaks for an independent Scotland, this is on the basis that Scotland is a nation. The SSP even claims to be a more consistent advocate of this position than the Scottish National Party. However, there the similarities end. The SSP’s nationalism is unambiguously civic (it promises to accord citizenship to all inhabitants of an independent Scotland irrespective of place of birth). Moreover, while it talks in glowing terms of Scottish culture and how to improve it, its preferred term of reference is the ‘people of Scotland’ not the ‘Scottish people’ or ‘nation’ and despite the separatist bent it is in other ways a traditional radical left party. For instance, it declares its adherence to internationalism and ‘democratic socialism’, and its concept of people is internationalist: ‘[T]he SSP stands for co-operation and solidarity among the peoples and nations of the European continent’.⁸⁷

What’s more, despite the prevalence of populist terms, the party has not altogether transcended its class rhetoric. Although it often talks of ‘working people’ or ‘workers’ (a populist *partes-pro-toto* term), it as frequently talks of ‘the working class’. In 2015 it tried to bridge these inconsistencies with reference to Scotland’s ‘working class majority’.⁸⁸ Moreover, much of its

⁸⁴ UKIP, *UK Independence Party Manifesto 2005. WE WANT OUR COUNTRY BACK* (Birmingham: UKIP, 2005).

⁸⁵ UKIP, *Believe in Britain. UKIP Manifesto 2015*. (Newton Abbot: UKIP, 2015).

⁸⁶ SSP, *Scottish Socialist Party Manifesto for the 1999 Scottish Parliamentary Elections: The Socialist Road to Holyrood* (Glasgow: SSP, 1999).

⁸⁷ SSP, *The Scottish Socialist Party MANIFESTO 2001* (Glasgow: SSP, 2001).

⁸⁸ SSP, *Scottish Socialist Party 2015 General Election Manifesto. For an Independent Socialist Scotland: Standing up for Scotland’s Working Class Majority* (Edinburgh: SSP, 2015).

attention is devoted to particularist subdivisions of the Scottish people: women, the disabled, young people, the unemployed etc., whose interests are not obviously identified with those of the people as a whole. Indicatively, the SSP's heartland is barely referred to: it does not openly advocate a return to a past golden age. Where it can be gleaned, the SSP's vision is rooted in economics: Scotland's 'colossal reserves of oil; a highly skilled and well-educated workforce; a rich cultural heritage; and a talented artistic community [can] build a radical new Scotland which will stand up to the forces of globalisation and capitalism.'⁸⁹

As expected, Respect has much overlap with the SSP. However, the nuances are different. Respect claims to be an internationalist party, and this aspect is much more developed than in the SSP. Of all the parties, Respect is least nationalist. Respect does not acknowledge Scottish independence, and actually spends relatively little time addressing the British people. Much of the time that the concept of 'people' is invoked, this is a people far-flung: the Venezuelan, Palestinian or Kashmiri people. This is consistent with Respect's anti-war message and its concern to 'stand in solidarity with people throughout the world whose lives are blighted by war and exploitation'.⁹⁰ However, when it does address the British people, the terms are classically populist: 'Respect is the natural home for those who feel disenfranchised and dispossessed'.⁹¹ No clear concept of nationhood is put forward; however, on the basis of indirect inferences, Respect's concept is civic: it talks of 'British citizens' and 'the British people.'

However, like the SSP, Respect is strongly particularist. Even though (unlike the SSP), Respect manifestos do not mention socialism or anti-capitalism explicitly, the working-class focus is more developed still: '[A] vote for Respect is a vote to reverse the rightward march in British politics and to help create a clear, radical, working-class voice'.⁹² To an even greater extent than the SSP (and indicative of its communitarian emphasis), Respect is focussed on the needs of specific subgroups (women, pensioners, ethnic minorities and immigrants, although not LGBT groups).

Anti-elitism

No-one could deny that the BNP is an anti-establishment party. It has the most anti-elite references of the four parties examined (7.56 percent). There are three principal targets of the BNP's invective.

⁸⁹ SSP, *The Scottish Socialist Party MANIFESTO 2001*.

⁹⁰ Respect, *Homes, Jobs and Peace: Manifesto for a Hung Parliament* (Manchester: Respect, 2010).

⁹¹ Respect, *Another World Is Possible. Policies of Respect—the Unity Coalition* (London: Respect, 2006).

⁹² Respect, *Peace, Justice, Equality. The Respect Manifesto for the May 2005 Election* (London: Respect, 2005).

National political elites are lambasted for their corruption, incompetence, cultural insensitivity and alleged anti-democratic tendencies: '[T]he present regime and its collaborators are engaged in an undeclared cultural war against the British people and have employed Orwellian methods of intellectual terrorism to suppress opposition'.⁹³ Indeed, the political elite is often portrayed as totalitarian or 'racist' (since they allegedly do not understand that ethnic groups have profound immutable differences and foist multiculturalism on the population). By far the biggest target, however, are the European elites (and other unnamed foreigners): these control the political, cultural and financial levers of UK policy: '[T]he European Union is an aspiring super state which would deprive the British people of their right to democratic self-government; subject us to alien rule in the interest of a bureaucracy which has no loyalty to the United Kingdom and bring about the eventual liquidation of Britain as a nation and a people'.⁹⁴ The BNP claims that 'we love Europe but hate the EU' and advocates withdrawal.

However, the third main element that the BNP identifies is anti-intermediaries populism. It attacks various bureaucrats, but above all insidious 'political correctness' and the 'cult of global warming' which allegedly straightjacket the population and force them how to think. These are the main prongs of the BNP's attacks. However, the party also attacks the media's alleged lies and lack of democratic accountability. Moreover, a few denigratory swipes are made at economic elites, namely (foreign) 'corporate industrial and commercial giants' who buy up Britain's infrastructure and (allegedly) its political parties.

In contrast, UKIP is barely concerned with national political elites, except when they are the 'regional agents' of its main enemy, Brussels. Indeed, within the UK political system, UKIP is not an anti-establishment party at all, as reflected by the lowest anti-elite score of all the populists (3.57). It wholeheartedly supports the traditional British political institutions (monarchy and parliamentary sovereignty), with minor modifications to the electoral system and the neutering of the devolved assemblies. The BNP in contrast wants an English parliament and a referendum on the future of the monarchy. True, UKIP inveighs against the 'old political parties' and 'the LibLabConsensus' and like the BNP, pays special attention to political correctness and multiculturalism, but the main target of its ire remains Brussels: withdrawal from the EU will mean that '[W]e will no longer be governed by an undemocratic and autocratic European Union or ruled by its unelected bureaucrats, commissioners, multiple presidents and judges'.⁹⁵ Tellingly, UKIP generally devotes

⁹³ BNP, *Democracy, Freedom, Culture and Identity. British National Party General Elections Manifesto 2010*.

⁹⁴ BNP, *Rebuilding British Democracy. British National Party General Election 2005 Manifesto*.

⁹⁵ UKIP, *UKIP Manifesto April 2010. Empowering the People*.

little attention to economic elites, except in 2015, perhaps with the Labour vote in mind, swiping at multinational corporations. Its obsession with excessive bureaucracy and lack of interest in the sources of economic power emanates from an essentially neo-liberal economic position: the party supports a low-tax, free-trade economic agenda.

In contrast, the SSP's anti-elitism is almost completely focussed, either directly or indirectly, on economic elites. Certainly, there are classically populist attacks on the political elite: the mainstream parties and the establishment: '[O]ur vision of the future stands out in luminous contrast to the grey uniformity of the big political parties whose ideas are neither modern nor original'.⁹⁶ In 2010, the party sought to exploit the recent expenses scandal by fulminating against corruption and the 'out of touch' politicians at Westminster.⁹⁷ But for the most part, the political elites are distrusted because of their economic policy: Scottish and UK parties are the 'big business parties' funded and controlled by a 'clique of multi-millionaire bankers' or 'private fatcats'.⁹⁸ Above all, the SSP aims to 'stand against the phoney consensus that asserts that the free market and private ownership of the economy equals competence and efficiency' and asserts that 'most of the key decisions that affect our everyday lives ... are taken behind closed doors by bureaucrats and business moguls'.⁹⁹

Relative to UKIP and the BNP, the SSP says next to nothing about intermediaries obfuscating the will of the people: as in the above quote, bureaucrats are usually mentioned in the same breath as big business, and the party has little specific against bureaucrats as such. Moreover, although critical of the EU, the party says little about it either in Scottish manifestos (where EU politics is hardly an issue) or UK ones, beyond a few critical marks about its allegedly pro-capitalist, undemocratic and anti-popular essence: it rejects 'the naive notion that the European Union is a benevolent institution serving the ordinary people of Europe'.¹⁰⁰ The SSP will not withdraw from Europe but seeks 'a voluntary and democratic confederation of socialist states' with economic policy devolved from the Bank of England and European Central Bank to the people of

⁹⁶ SSP, *Scottish Socialist Party Manifesto for the 1999 Scottish Parliamentary Elections: The Socialist Road to Holyrood*.

⁹⁷ SSP, 'For an Independent Socialist Scotland No Cuts, No Wars, for an End to Corruption' (SSP, 2010), http://www.scottishsocialistparty.org/new_stories/election2010/ssp-mini-manifesto.html.

⁹⁸ SSP, *Scottish Socialist Party Manifesto for the 1999 Scottish Parliamentary Elections: The Socialist Road to Holyrood*; SSP, *The Scottish Socialist Party MANIFESTO 2001*.

⁹⁹ SSP, *The Scottish Socialist Party MANIFESTO 2001*.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

Scotland.¹⁰¹ Accordingly, in terms of our typology, the SSP's anti-elitism is primarily focussed on the national economic and political elite, rather than foreign elites or intermediary institutions.

Respect's position is essentially similar, although its language is distinct, and it is still more focused on economic issues. Although it refers to the establishment's 'tyranny, prejudice and... abuse of power' and 'shallowness and cynicism', particularly towards immigrants, the vast bulk of its critique is directed towards 'big business and the mainstream politicians who do its bidding'.¹⁰² It attacks 'big corporations and the wealthy', 'the rich elite' and the 'cutthroat privateers'.¹⁰³ Unlike the SSP it *is* more concerned with foreign elites, but these are exclusively the foreign economic elites – the multinationals, the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. Above all, the party claims to be with the 'millions, not the millionaires'.¹⁰⁴

Like the SSP, Respect has nothing to say about bureaucratic or other intermediaries, and little to say about the EU, except in passing. Similarly, Respect claims to support Europe, but is against the current EU, which is 'dominated by big business interests'. The abortive EU constitution is decried for its anti-working class character and for transferring power from elected parliaments to unelected bureaucracies.¹⁰⁵ All in all, the foreign elite invective makes Respect more anti-elitist than the SSP, yet marginally so since much critique is couched in more classically class-based and less genuinely populist language.

Popular sovereignty

The BNP says much about popular sovereignty, both in the abstract and the specific: in general its view of popular sovereignty is inevitably tied up with its nationalism: 'ensuring British people have a homeland, national self-sufficiency'.¹⁰⁶ In addition, the party stands for more open, non-bureaucratic government that is closer to the people. It also has a lot of specific democratic proposals including the introduction of 'Citizens' Initiative Referenda on the Swiss model' to

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Respect, *Peace, Justice, Equality. The Respect Manifesto for the May 2005 Election*.

¹⁰³ Ibid.; Coalition Against Cuts, 'Vote George Galloway – Coalition Against Cuts Manifesto' (Coalition Against Cuts, 2011), <http://www.votegeorgegalloway.com/2011/04/vote-george-galloway-coalition-against.html>.

¹⁰⁴ Coalition Against Cuts, 'Vote George Galloway – Coalition Against Cuts Manifesto'.

¹⁰⁵ Respect, *Peace, Justice, Equality. The Respect Manifesto for the May 2005 Election*.

¹⁰⁶ BNP, *Rebuilding British Democracy. British National Party General Election 2005 Manifesto*.

provide ‘a vital check and balance on the political class’.¹⁰⁷ In addition, the party proposed a ‘Back us or sack us!’ contract, whereby if the electorate could gather signatures to sack poorly-performing BNP representatives after 12 months in office.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, the party offers many initiatives that look democratic, even liberal, such as the rejection of ID-cards, local devolution and referenda, as well as laws to protect opposition and oppose political violence.

But the BNP’s proposals are not confined to politics: a large proportion of the manifestos is concerned with economic sovereignty, or what the BNP calls ‘economic nationalism’. This involves state control of strategic sectors of the economy (including re-nationalisation if necessary). Principally, this entails the protection of the welfare state and ‘free, fully funded National Health Service for all British citizens’, but also involves commitments to full employment and labour protection.¹⁰⁹ This might begin to look rather inclusive (indeed the BNP is committed to creating ‘a society of ‘stakeholders’ and a representative popular democracy’).¹¹⁰ However, the BNP makes clear the limits to these rights: new jobs are for ‘native Britons’, the health service is for ‘British citizens’, foreign workers are to be removed from the NHS and above all there will be ‘a halt to all further non-white immigration, the immediate deportation of criminal and illegal immigrants, and the introduction of a system of voluntary resettlement whereby those non-white immigrants who are legally here will be encouraged, but not compelled, to return to their lands of ethnic origin’.¹¹¹

UKIP’s version of popular sovereignty has strong similarities, although it is notably less draconian and authoritarian, as well as being less detailed (indeed, UKIP’s vision is more abstract than the BNP’s): there is an emphasis on national-self sufficiency: withdrawal from the EU will enable the UK government to operate with freedom and flexibility to support its national interests (although in contrast to the BNP’s isolationist vision, UKIP will stay engaged with NATO and seek to expand foreign trade contacts). UKIP also places great emphasis on popular referenda, transparent non-bureaucratic governance and localism, indeed it claims to want to ‘give meaningful power back to the British people and not just talk of localism’.¹¹² Such new powers include ‘local referendums on any major local issue’ and ‘more visible decision-making processes’ for local

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ BNP, *BNP Scotland Manifesto. Freedom: The Manifesto of the British National Party*.

¹⁰⁹ BNP, ‘Where We Stand!’ (BNP, 2001), <http://www.politicsresources.net/area/uk/e01/man/bnpstand.htm>.

¹¹⁰ BNP, *The Voice Of Ordinary People. British National Party Scotland General Election Manifesto 2011* (Turiff: BNP, 2011).

¹¹¹ BNP, ‘Where We Stand!’.

¹¹² UKIP, *UK Independence Party Manifesto 2005. WE WANT OUR COUNTRY BACK*.

governments’.¹¹³ There will be ‘binding national referenda on controversial public law and order issues that are outside party politics’, and elected health and police boards. In contrast to the BNP, and consistent with its neo-liberal economic position, UKIP says almost nothing about restoring economic sovereignty, beyond 2015 pledges for extra funding for an NHS free at the point of use, saving money and increasing economic opportunities by repatriating powers from Brussels. Again, lest this begin to look like an inclusive version of popular sovereignty, UKIP makes it clear that its vision applies primarily to British citizens. It would limit immigration, in 2015 by an Australian-style points based visa system and moratorium on unskilled immigration. Full NHS access would be reserved to those with a permanent right to remain who have paid UK taxes for five years: ‘[T]he NHS is the National Health Service, not the International Health Service.’¹¹⁴

The contrast with the SSP could not be clearer. There are certain similarities, particularly in and an emphasis on national sovereignty: the SSP ‘believes that Scotland is a nation and has the right to control its own economy, its own welfare system and its own defence policy’.¹¹⁵ Moreover, the SSP makes emphases (although vague) on local democratic control. However, this is achieved less through referenda than through empowering communities: ‘[S]chools to be turned into wider community facilities, providing adult education and cultural activities in the evenings and at weekends’.¹¹⁶

Relative to the BNP and UKIP, there are almost no references to sovereignty in the abstract. Indeed, almost all references refer to returning economic control to the Scottish people. It is not that the SSP does not have political proposals (for example the abolition of the monarchy), just that these are not put in explicitly populist terms and are drowned out by the economic arguments. For example, the SSP supports ‘extension of public ownership to include other key sectors of the economy including North Sea oil, the big banks and financial institutions, and the major construction, transport, and manufacturing companies’.¹¹⁷ More specifically, the party advocates ‘a new democratically-run NHS in which representatives of the medical profession, health workers and local communities are involved in planning healthcare provision...the transfer into community

¹¹³ UKIP, *Manifesto: Scottish Parliament and Local Elections 3 May 2007. Sack the MSPs, Restore Democracy And Leave the EU* (Dalgety Bay: UKIP Scotland, 2007).

¹¹⁴ UKIP, *Believe in Britain. UKIP Manifesto 2015*.

¹¹⁵ SSP, *The Scottish Socialist Party MANIFESTO 2001*.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

and public ownership [of] all unoccupied and unutilised land’ and ‘a publicly-owned and democratically-run rail, bus and ferry system’.¹¹⁸

Moreover, in stark contrast to the aforementioned parties, the vision of the Scottish people is demonstrably inclusive: ‘[T]he SSP is striving to build a tolerant socialist society in which racism, sectarianism, homophobia, ageism and discrimination against women, disabled people have no place’.¹¹⁹ The party manifestos have several sections that advocate an open-borders policy towards asylum seekers and immigrants. In addition, while the party makes a key part of its appeal to the poor, disadvantaged, and the working class, it also aims to reach ‘the hearts and ... minds of those ... a little bit better off financially ... professional workers ... home owners ... those who have escaped the housing schemes, the dead end jobs and the dole queues’.¹²⁰

In most significant aspects, Respect is similar, although its emphases are different. It has a still greater accent on inclusion towards minorities and migrants in a multiracial society, but a similar emphasis on economic sovereignty to the exclusion of political sovereignty. Again, its focus on political sovereignty is somewhat vague and fragmentary (e.g. ‘[E]ncouraging the full participation of all communities in the political process’).¹²¹ It has only three specific political proposals: ‘[T]he radical democratisation of our constitution with a fair proportional voting system, abolition of the appointed House of Lords and cleaning up parliament’.¹²² The party does say more about abstract sovereignty than the SSP, as it argues for ‘[T]he organisation of society in the most open, democratic, participative, and accountable way practicable based on common ownership and democratic control’.¹²³ However, in most significant ways, the view of sovereignty is similarly focussed on economic issues: the ideal is that ‘public services should be publicly owned and democratically controlled by those who use them and those who work in them’.¹²⁴ This means greater public ownership of ‘key sectors of the economy’ including transport, water, gas and electricity services and a commitment to a ‘fully-funded, publicly-owned NHS, delivering care free at the point of use’.

¹¹⁸ SSP, *Scottish Socialist Party Manifesto for the 1999 Scottish Parliamentary Elections: The Socialist Road to Holyrood*.

¹¹⁹ SSP, *The Scottish Socialist Party MANIFESTO 2001*.

¹²⁰ SSP, *Scottish Socialist Party Manifesto for the 1999 Scottish Parliamentary Elections: The Socialist Road to Holyrood*.

¹²¹ Respect, *Homes, Jobs and Peace: Manifesto for a Hung Parliament*.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Respect, *Peace, Justice, Equality. The Respect Manifesto for the May 2005 Election*.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

Conclusions: Similar after all?

We can now typologise these parties in terms of the aforementioned criteria; ultimately there are significant similarities and differences among the parties (Table 4). The BNP is the only party to have an ethnic nationalist and collectivist view of the people. Neither the SSP nor Respect focuses on intermediaries in their anti-elitism. Only the SSP does not focus on a foreign elite, and only UKIP does not focus on an economic elite. In terms of popular sovereignty, all but the SSP focus on abstract as well as specific sovereignty. All but UKIP address economic sovereignty. The BNP's and UKIP's view of popular sovereignty is primarily exclusionary (although markedly more so in the case of the BNP; UKIP is more ambiguous), the SSP's and Respect's is more inclusionary.

How do these typologies help identify the primary differences between left-wing and right-wing populism? On one hand, there is clearly no absolute dichotomy between left and right-wing variants. They are not polar opposites and share several attributes. On first view, this appears to corroborate the populism-trumps-ideology view that differences between left-and right-wing populism are less of kind than degree. Where, then, does this leave the ideology-trumps-populism thesis? We can take each of Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser's three criteria for examining left and right-wing populism in turn.

First, is right-wing populism more focussed on ethnic identity than socio-economic issues? Broadly speaking this is true, but with caveats. At one end of the scale, the BNP is clearly a nativist party, with its populism replete with appeals for the preservation of ethnic and cultural homogeneity, national isolationism and ethnic (implicitly racial) purity. However, it does have a strongly economic element to its populism: economic protectionism and state ownership, and it also attacks economic elites. This economic emphasis is a principal reason why Clark et al. observe fundamental similarities between left and right-populism.

Certainly the SSP and Respect's focus is primarily on the economic deprivations of the people, and their economic vision is similarly focussed on the virtues of public ownership. They too attack globalisation and the EU, albeit less stridently. However, there is still a fundamental difference: not only is their critique devoid of cultural complaints, but it is universalist and not national-isolationist. The BNP defends the indigenous people and the white working class, and provides welfare rights only to them: archetypal welfare chauvinism. Respect and the SSP's view is internationalist (seeing 'the people' as part of a global community). Most significantly of all, these cases corroborate the issue identified by Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser and ignored by Clark et al.: that left-wing populism does not ignore ethnic issues but is predominately focussed on socio-

Table 4: Typologies of Populism

Party	People-centrism				Anti-elitism				Popular sovereignty				
	Ethnic	Civic	Collectivist	Particularist	Political	Economic	Foreign	Intermediaries	Abstract	Political	Economic	Inclusive	Exclusive
BNP	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
UKIP		X		X	X		X	X	X	X			X
SSP		X		X	X	X					X	X	
Respect		X		X	X	X	X		X		X	X	

economic issues and above all economic egalitarianism. Both the SSP and Respect do take account of ethnic issues (SSP by support for Scottish independence, Respect by its support for the multiracial society), but both place consistent emphasis on equality. In contrast, the BNP rejects equality as a 'politically correct' Marxist dogma that ignores the supposed reality of fundamental individual and cultural differences. UKIP says relatively little about economics (it does not criticise economic elites and is not concerned with economic sovereignty). However, this emphasis clearly emerges from its neo-liberal economic position; hence its opposition to bureaucratic interference, preference for tax reduction and (implicit) criticism of state intervention in the economy. With its preference for flat-taxes, UKIP also declares itself to be anti-egalitarian.

Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser's second point was that right-wing populism is primarily exclusionary while left-wing populism is primarily inclusionary. This division is largely borne out by this analysis, even though *no* form of popular sovereignty is completely exclusionary or inclusionary. For example, both the BNP and UKIP call for a radical devolution of power to the people that looks inclusionary, but seek significant restrictions on immigration. Certainly the BNP's vision: isolationist, authoritarian, and motivated by a purist view of the nation is least inclusionary of all. UKIP's, with an assimilationist but vague notion of Britishness and equally vague anti-immigrant policies is far less exclusionary (at least to the British people, although it barely acknowledges the rights of the Scots and Welsh). On the other hand, its ideas of popular sovereignty are relatively weak because of all the parties here it is least anti-establishment, and its idea of people's power mainly implies the UK's freedom from the EU, increased localism and marginal tinkering with the Westminster electoral system.

In contrast, both the SSP and Respect make repeated declarations of their internationalism and lambast the attacks on immigrants and minorities that they observe in establishment policies and those of the extreme right. However, their celebratory inclusiveness should not necessarily be taken at face value. Clark et al. note that Respect has few specific proposals for improving the democratic rights of the people, a fact that undermines its ostensibly left-libertarian emphasis; moreover its proposals for greater economic control are poorly defined: greater 'public' control of the economy can entail the greater state dirigisme of a planned economy that is far from inclusive. In addition, Respect has been criticised for its alleged inattention to gender and sexual minority concerns.¹²⁵ Similar criticisms about economic dirigisme can be addressed to the SSP, although it is more libertarian, particularly in its support for the environment and LGBT rights.

¹²⁵ E.g. Benjamin Cohen, "'What Was the Right Answer for the Question?'" George Galloway and Gay Rights', *PinkNews*, 21 February 2006, <http://www.pinknews.co.uk/2006/02/21/what-was-the-right-answer-for-the-question-george-galloway-and-gay-rights/>.

Moreover, Table 4 showed that the ‘popular sovereignty’ scores for the two left-wing populists are (marginally) lower than those for the right-wing populists. There are three main reasons for this: 1) as mentioned, and consistent with classic Marxist reasoning, the left-populists give scant attention to issues of political democracy separate from popular economic control; 2) relatedly, many of the left-populists’ arguments for greater public control are not couched in populist terms. For example, a prevalent argument made by both parties for the extension of public ownership is the divisive and exploitative nature of private ownership and the market – a classically socialist not populist argument; 3) finally, many of the arguments for greater democracy are made in the name of sectoral groups within the population rather than the people as a whole; be they the homeless, the disabled or the working class. Again, these could not be coded as populist arguments.

Overall, this means that the left-populists should be seen as less inclusionary than they claim, but clearly still more inclusionary than the right-wing populists; after all they respect minority rights, diversity and the principle of reconciliation between divergent interests to a far greater degree, and do not (openly at least) promote coercive measures towards outgroups (except, obviously, the elite).

Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser’s third point that populism is less important than nativism in the ideology of the populist right and that left-wing populists are populists first and socialists second is not borne out: conversely the right-wing populists are markedly more populist than left-populists, in their overall score and their emphasis on people-centrism in particular. Both left-wing populists have a marked socialist slant (explicitly so in the case of the SSP). Although they are replete with populist discourse, they meld this with traditional socialist concerns such as egalitarianism, the primacy of public ownership, internationalism and the rights of the working class and the impoverished, rather than the people as a whole. These parties are socialists first and populists second, as befits March’s depiction of them as *populist socialist* parties.

How then to reconcile these findings? The populism-trumps ideology thesis rightly observes marked similarities between left-and-right populists: however, these cases do not support the contention that the similarities are as significant as the differences. This supports the first two of Mudde and Kaltwasser’s propositions. The fact that the third one is not borne out does not refute the substance of their views, but merely the (regionally-specific) emphasis. They argue that the key differences between left-and right-populism are borne out of the host-ideology. I would go further and argue that the host-ideology is all-important in the nature of party populism and is vital in explaining the key similarities and differences between left-and right-wing populists and the nuances in parties of each genus. Approaches which focus on the ‘threat’ of populism without taking into account the host ideology risk reifying populism and distorting the real nature of that threat.

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Appendix

Ideological factor	Index	Meaning	Populist phrases	Non-populist phrases
‘Pure people’	People-centrism	Positive valorisation of homogenous people	The people, our people, our citizens, our country, our values, the/our community, our nation, we, the ordinary person, our society, all/each/everyone of us, everyone, working people, the British/Scots etc, the average person/family, common sense (of ordinary people), mainstream majority, our (when referring to something owned by the people as a whole (‘our countryside’), but not when it refers to a subgroup of the people itself (‘our communities/bankers’)	The nation (implying that nationalism is the core ideological concept), the country (where there is no specific identification with country), other such terms where they are not directly identified with a people (e.g. Britain, the society), communities (where this implies regional subdivisions), negative references to the people, focus on interests of subgroups of people (e.g. pensioners, workers) where these are not seen as representative of people as a whole <i>even when</i> the focus is on <i>our</i> pensioners, <i>our</i> workers etc, we where it refers to party interest/programme and not interests of broader people, phrases such as ‘people and businesses’ where implicitly the interests of the people are not homogeneous
‘Corrupt elite’	Anti-elitism	Negative valorisation of homogenous elite	The elite(s), the establishment, those in charge, those in power, political class/caste, old parties, the oligarchy, professional politicians, the authorities, partocracy, the State, the mainstream parties, the regime, them. Arguments against the elite will often counterpose them against the virtuous people. <u>In this case the people-centrism argument is also made, but the argument should be coded only once under anti-elitism</u>	Criticism of specific persons or parties when not implicitly or explicitly seen as representative of elite as a whole, positive references to elites, any reference to heterogeneity in elite, elite seen as pragmatic and compromise possible
<i>Volonté générale</i>	Popular sovereignty	Calling for ‘power to the people’: greater popular involvement, control or participation, greater democracy or unfettered leadership to further popular involvement	Popular sovereignty: referenda, direct democracy, power, sovereignty, independence, others, us, them, public control/ownership, power to people, self-government. Popular sovereignty necessarily implies a conception of the people. <u>In this case the people-centrism argument is also made, but the argument should be coded only once under popular sovereignty</u>	The quasi-sentence does not refer to popular sovereignty, or if it does, it 1) refers to it either negatively or in neutral terms; 2) highlights the success of existing democratic mechanisms or 3) reaffirms the elite and institutional status quo